



## Charity Makes Formal Request for Local Plan Amendments

### **Irongate Field Remains at Risk of Development**

Harrogate based charity Pinewoods Conservation Group (PCG) has formally asked in a letter to local Councilors that Harrogate Council amends its draft local plan at the planned Cabinet Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Last month the PCG reported that following a campaign the main section of the woods had been granted green status areas known as Rotary Wood and Irongate Field had specifically been excluded.

Following that report the group has reviewed the many local plan documents and concluded that there is no obvious justification for Irongate Field to have been excluded. The letter raises concerns regarding information used by the council in reaching its conclusion including:

- **That Irongate Field is not part of the Pinewoods:** Minutes of a local plan working group on 18th July request that Irongate is removed from the submission as “this is a separate site”. Irongate Field has been part of the Pinewoods for at least over 10 years as indicated by the councils own management plan so this statement is incorrect.

- ***There is planning permission for Irongate Field:*** The “*Harrogate District Local Plan: Local Green Space Assessments Update Report*” states that “*The landowner (HBC Estates) has requested an amended site boundary to take account of the extant planning permission on Irongate Field.*” There is no planning permission in any form for Irongate Field so this statement is incorrect.
- ***Consultation support referred only to the mature woodland area of the site:*** In an email on 10th Nov the Planning and Development Department said “*almost all comments of support received in relation to the designation of the site clearly referred only to the mature woodland area of the site*”. The consultation portal shows that not only were the vast number of comments made supporting the Pinewoods in general, many made specific reference to Irongate Field so this is incorrect.

PCG Chairman Neil Hind said “*Despite our best efforts the council have refused to amend the local plan or even acknowledge that incorrect assumptions may have been made in the exclusion of Irongate Field. We have therefore asked our local councilors to formally raise our concerns at the full cabinet meeting.*”

*Our originally application made clear mention of Irongate Field and the same information has been provided to cover the entire Pinewoods footprint. Its exclusion therefore remains not only a mystery but also raises serious concerns about the councils plans for this land.*

*We know there is still opportunity for the local plan to be amended before the final consultation next year and hope that with our councilors support this will be done.”*

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### **What Next?**

Since writing to Councilors the council has suggested we complete a new application during the next consultation period just for Irongate Field. We are

reluctant to spend time on what would be a 3rd application for that site without the council acknowledging the mistakes we think they have made in dealing with the last application and without giving detailed feedback as to why Irongate has been excluded from the recent submission. The council could of course reject this for a 3rd time.

### **Why Rejected?**

This remains a mystery! Members will be more than aware of the constant development pressures in this area. Neighbouring Harrogate Spring Water Limited has outline planning now into Rotary Wood, Linden Homes have build opposite and a recent application on the neighbouring field (Duchy of Lancaster on Cornwall Road) was recently rejected. We are not aware of any current plans for development on this site but ensuring green designation would offer much more protection. We know that the Asset of Community Value that does apply carries little weight with the council.

### **What Can We Do?**

Members and residents have been incredible patient, helpful and supportive during the earlier application processes and the number of requests for further information from the council. (Why they didn't ask for more information to support the Irongate area specifically if they needed it is also a mystery!) You have persevered with the local plan consultation site showing the importance of this site and the Pinewoods in general. You have sent us photos and lists of birds, animals and plant to show the diverse bio-diversity of the site.

You may wish to lobby your [favourite councillor](#) before next Wednesday Cabinet Meeting (Royal Hall 5pm!) to raise your concerns. We may need to come back to you again in the New Year to again support Irongate Field specially on the consultation site.

We will of course keep you informed of progress.....