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Planned Housing Development West of Napier Avenue, Bathgate.

I strongly object to the housing development earmarked for the west of Napier Avenue, Bathgate as per the evolving local plan.

I was born and have lived most of my life in the same house at [REDACTED] And have enjoyed walking my dogs in this area for almost 50 years whilst enjoying the panoramic views afforded and observing wildlife such as roe deer, buzzards, kestrels and pipistrelle bats.

Some interesting history - The area in question was initially purchased from the Edinburgh Merchant Company (who once owned much of the land Bathgate was built on) in 1920 as part of the Veteran's Cottages development to allow wounded servicepersonell returning from WW1 a new home with much green space adjacent to help with their long recuperation - my maternal great uncle [REDACTED] was one such person - he was the first tenant at no 2 Veteran's Cottages after returning from the war with the loss of a limb during the carnage of the Battle of the Somme where my Grandfather served also.

The whole area was planted with potatoes during WW2 during the "dig for victory" campaign, there was also a searchlight located on the mound area after the Menzies Steel Foundry (where Morrison's supermarket now is) was targeted by a Nazi bomb.

Since WW2 the area has been used by generations of locals (4 generations of my family !) as a pleasant open green space and is home to kestrels, pipistrelle bats and more recently buzzards. The area was (shamefully in my view) sold by the Council some years back to a local developer who (I'm told) subsequently sold it to an Isle of Man registered developer who will undoubtedly only care about financial return not green space and loss of wildlife habitat as everyone in my local community headed by Bathgate East Tenants and Residents who successfully fought and won on two previous occasions when development was proposed here.

My concerns in winter conditions

The problems that would be created if the exit from the new housing estate were to be onto Glebe Road. This is because of the junction of Napier Avenue and Glebe Road, where the steep downhill gradient meets the steep uphill gradient at a 90°. This is not helped by the fact that the camber of the road falls away to the right and this tends to induce a skid in icy and snow conditions. From experience it is not always possible to turn left into Glebe Road in winter weather. Vehicles driving down Napier Avenue must approach the corner with sufficient momentum to allow them to turn into Glebe Road and continue the upwards direction to Crosshill Drive. If Napier Avenue had to give way to traffic from the proposed new estate, this would without doubt create a dangerous situation with a complete road block. Drivers reluctant to stop would take a chance and not give way. Equally if the cars from the new road have to give way to Napier Avenue traffic from the left, they too will have difficulty pulling away at the junction in bad weather (if indeed they were able to ascend the incline at all from the proposed estate).

Over the years the situation has got worse as now several households in Napier Avenue and Glebe Road have 2 or even 3 cars, many of which are parked at the roadside overnight. This adds to the problems as they restrict your vision as you approach the turn into Glebe Road.

Because of the altitude of Napier Avenue we always encounter worse winter weather conditions than experienced down in the town. There is often a delay in clearing the streets up this hill of snow and ice, as evidenced by the numbers of cars parked on both sides of Kirk Road and in [REDACTED] at the bottom of the steep Crosshill Drive - when they have been unable to ascend Crosshill Drive, thereby causing additional congestion and visibility hazards. Such parking in Kirk Road will only increase with the additional numbers of cars failing to return to the new estate via Crosshill Drive / Glebe Road in poor weather.

In addition many residents in Academy place are concerned that an access to this site could be driven through this quiet residential street if the Glebe Road entrance was rejected (although the bungalow nearest the Glebe Road entrance was cynically sold to the first developer by a [REDACTED] who initially stood with all his neighbours but then abandoned his community by selling to those he had previously condemned.

The depth of feeling against a development here is enormous – there will be literally hundreds of protesters banded together if this area is zoned for housing – I campaigned against this development long before becoming a Councillor hence why I'm free to campaign now .

Harry Cartmill

