

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LDP](#)
Subject: Development in Newburgh.
Date: 29 June 2020 10:10:33

Dear Sirs

I recently read the proposed local development plan for Newburgh with a sinking heart. I am not surprised but deeply saddened by the planned increase of residential housing for this tiny village that sits on the edge of an NNR. I have lived here for 12 years and during that time have seen a gradual erosion of the quality of the dunes, the wider habitat of the protected species of the reserve, and yet more housing will only exacerbate these problems.

I knew almost nothing about nature when I moved here, but now, especially during lockdown it has become a significant part of my life and of many local people. However, the increase of visits from locals who were not working due to furlough or working from home and their dogs made me, and probably many other residents, more aware of a lot of disturbance for the wild life. Birds on the south side of the estuary are constantly disturbed, mostly due to dogs running off the lead. Dog mess increased significantly so that you could smell it in the air at access points, even though we have many responsible dog owners and people who voluntarily go and clean it up.

Now building significantly more houses here will only make this worse. Newburgh has only a small number of play parks. There are no recreational parks where people can go and take their dogs. The gala has to happen in the school field. So people who live here see the beach and dunes and even the NNR as an amenity for recreation and not usually in a way that is sensitive to wild life. When you build homes here people are attracted by the beach and think it is a great opportunity to walk there and get a dog. I am not a dog owner but so many people who come here think it would be a great place to move to and get a dog, and all the publicity for new houses stresses what a great place this is to do exactly that. I would think that 160 houses would probably be at least 100 more dogs to a place which is pretty much bursting at the seams with dogs as it is. A resident recently posted to the noticeboard asking if there was any time at which it was possible to visit the beach without meeting a dog off the lead, and the general conclusion was that it wasn't. While this is not great for those who do not like dogs, it is so much worse for the wildlife as the dogs are constantly running through their home, usually unchecked, because that is why their owners go there. With migratory birds (which is what the majority of the estuary is) this could easily be a death sentence for the birds, and in the UK and globally there is a significant decline in bird species.

The numbers of visitors to the southern dunes has started to make them broken down, lower in height and shapeless. That side of the beach is increasingly empty of birds and wildlife. Gradually our beach area is beginning to look like Balmedie, tired, polluted with dog excrement with unattractive habitats for nature. I understand that Balmedie is a country park and not a nature reserve but it is sad that it looks so devastated by visitors. The granting of a public licence to the golf club in Newburgh will attract even more people to visit the beach and our community will not benefit from this, it will just be exploited by even more visitors who will allow their dogs to defecate on the beach and will litter.

I am not going to write at length on the impact on the roads locally (it will be difficult as main street is already over loaded at peak times and probably unsafe) or about the affect on the primary school as these problems are probably fixable by better local planning and improving the infrastructure. However increasing visits to the beach by development of more local housing is effectively a process of un-wilding an area through simply having constant visitors, almost urbanising a space through proximity to larger numbers of visitors, and is not fixable by the kind of development planning the council has in mind. We should be looking to protect this space, re-wilding it, having plans in place to maintain and increase the number of species and looking after it through actively encouraging citizen science, inspiring local children to be guardians. Instead of building so many homes nearby it would be great to see the local council protecting an area which has been a mental and physical lifeline for residents over the recent period. But, instead, we will build a large number of houses within easy walking distance of the beach with no protection or restrictions on its use, provide no alternative recreational space, and in fact allow developers to market it as a reason for moving here.

I think this is an extremely shortsighted and destructive plan environmentally and will, long term,

create a southern estuary full of dog poo and broken down dunes and a northern estuary used as a public park with reduced space for wildlife, despite its being an NNR.

In short, the heart of Newburgh is not really the village, but the wildlife on its borders. By constantly expanding the housing you threaten the wildlife and kill off the quality of the environment, and the village will become an overly residential commuter settlement with no character and no difference from any other community. We should, instead be seeing plans for alternative transport, cycling routes and green developments like community composting. We should be limiting any building to reduce impact on our vulnerable neighbours - the wildlife.

I know this email will be unlikely to make a difference to your plans as the whole planning process is not for the protection of the environment but for developing housing and an economy [REDACTED] for building companies, but I am saddened by the effects it will have on our non-human community, and in the longer term to the human community too if they remember what they have lost.

Yours faithfully

Jane Waters