

Mrs H L Rowntree

20 Valley Road

Holywell

Whitley Bay

Tyne and Wear

NE25 0LG

6th May 2022

Ref: The Northumberland County Council (Land at Holywell Village First School, Valley Road, Holywell) Tree Preservation Order 2022

(No. 03 of 2022)

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012

Dear Linda Jackson

I wish to object to the Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

In 26 years that I have lived at this address the landscape has changed. It was very different to how it is now and the Sycamore tree at the bottom of my garden which is situated within the school's grounds was not imposing, but because the tree has not been maintained and has grown considerably over the years, it attracts hundreds of birds the majority of which are wood pigeons and they leave excrement in my garden. This is a health hazard. Being constantly exposed to the excrement and with ever increasing amounts, this exacerbates my already serious respiratory condition. This is also poses a health hazard to my pet cocker spaniel who ends up with excrement on him when he is let out into the garden and it becomes embedded in his fur and he also tries to eat it.

My grandchildren no longer want to go into the garden because of the amount of bird excrement. I am not able to have BBQs or have anyone in my back garden due to the excrement and the health hazard this poses.

The school has mentioned in the TPO the reasons for making the order were that "The trees appear prominent within the surrounding landscape and contribute to the visual amenity of the site." This would protect the view for the school staff and children which is seen by them for a few hours each day during term time. However, myself and the other residents live with the issues caused by these trees every hour of every day, this is something that we have to live with and it affects our lives, our physical health and mental health. During the height of Covid lockdowns our back gardens were our only escape from being in the house and for many of us these were not inviting spaces and had an adverse effect on our health at an already very difficult time. If we were able to cut the trees back it would not spoil the view and even if some trees were completely cut down, there are many trees bordering around the back of the school as it backs on to a nature reserve.

I find the school's approach to the issues we are having has been very aggressive with no consultation. There has been no thought or consideration given to the residents of Valley Road who have been living with these problems for many years and who have had numerous requests to meet with the school constantly ignored and a refusal to engage and come to some kind of compromise.

These issues have become so problematic that we have had numerous meetings and conversations about the trees and the issues that they have caused. A lot of the residents have very similar problems with the bird excrement. Another hazard is slipping on the wet soggy leaves on the decking and path. My dog also chews on the many branches and leaves that fall. It is a constant clean up operation which when I have finished takes days, I have to start all over again.

The residents including myself would like to arrange a meeting with you at your earliest convenience. We would like you to hear from us in person before a decision is made. We would also like Holywell First School to join this conversation so that they can hear from the residents and so that we can engage constructively.

The residents in Valley Road are constantly cleaning bird poo from our path, grass, fences, garden furniture our washing, our pets and ourselves. There is footage of bird poo on our pets and our clothes. The residents are currently in contact with the Environmental Health Department (Northumberland County Council) and sending footage of the amount of bird droppings.

The school also stated a reason for making a TPO was that, "The trees which have been identified as meriting protection have been found to be deemed to fall within an immediate threat category." However, the school has not maintained these trees within the 26 years I have lived in this property and have ignored maintenance requirements. Residents have paid a considerable amount to have trees cut back which had been over hanging into properties. I paid £560 to have my tree cut back a couple of years ago. All my cut branches were thrown back over the fence onto the school's side because I was aware that it is classed as theft if I did not return them and unfortunately when my tree was being cut the tree surgeons were shouted at and had been told to stop and I had no idea that the police had been called but because of the start of the Covid pandemic they came out two months later in May 2020. I felt physically sick when I saw a police woman coming to my door as I thought something had happened to my grandchildren or children. Many residents over the years

have tried to resolve the problems we have had with the trees but we had never managed to secure any meetings with the school and they would not engage with us at all so we were unable to put our cases forward and be heard.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hazel Lorraine Rowntree

(Resident of 20 Valley Road)