

To Whom it may Concern:

Re: Tree Preservation Order 072; Land between 20 Woodside Grove and 1 Cranborne, East Herrington.

We are writing this letter with respect to the above matter as a Community and why we believe strongly that the TPO should be granted, and we also want to voice our overall concerns of the sale of the green space that was brought to our attention in early May 2017.

We would like to address Objection 2 which has been brought by MS Beverley Steele , Director of Highcrest Homes NE Ltd, the potential developer, who states that in a recent visit she had been approached by a 'disgruntled' residence who voiced concerns. We would like to disagree that the TPO was a recent instrument to avoid development. Mrs K Hubbard raised this TPO on 07 May 2017, as we wish to protect these precious assets on our doorstep. While we can appreciate Ms Steele's comments that they have been in discussions for 12 months, the TPO has been in progress for at least 17 months, and the tree evaluations had been conducted on 15 February 2018. We respectfully ask that this is taken into consideration, that the community that want to protect these trees are not penalised for the clerical error by the council (Jillian Wright, Planning Officer) for not advising Ms Steele that the TPO was in progress.

We would also like to raise further concerns that Ms Steele states that this is for the development of 6 affordable houses, and again we wish to respectfully disagree that there is a shortage of this type of housing within the area. A recent search (Rightmove.co.uk) on the 05 October 2018 found 105 properties for sale in a one mile radius of this Communities green space. Further analysis has been carried out as to the price ranges:

20 Flats between £45 and £50K; 28 Houses (2/3 bed) between £65 and £100K; 40 Houses (3+ beds) £100-£250k; 16 Houses (3+ beds) £250 to £500k; 1 House (5+ beds) £500k+

Also 20 properties were found for rental between £400 and £650 per month. Our argument here is with 125 properties for sale or rent in a mile radius, we personally feel that there is not a shortage of housing at all, but the sale of this land is for pure financial benefit for Ms Steele's company and they have a blatant disregard for the green space that she will be taking away from a close knit community that has used and valued this land for over 70 years. This view has been further compounded and backed by a letter from Peter McIntyre (Appendix 1) from the 25 September 2018, that the trees are at risk should there be development and the TPO should remain.

Ms Steel also goes on to say that there will replacement trees planted as part of their proposed scheme, but the community feel that this is not a suitable option as these trees are likely to be juvenile and of a single variety. We are concerned that this would be detrimental to the biodiversity of the area. Trees are vital for the biodiversity of an area and these trees are vital to maintain ecosystems and thereby pollinators. Trees of a mature or semi mature nature, such as the 4 beautiful trees on our green space help support these ecosystems. We have all heard the plight and significant decline of pollinating insects and to reduce their habitat further would be incredibly detrimental. Those insects support a variety of other birds and animals, such as hedgehogs and bats and the extensive variety of bird species that the residence of the area welcome into their gardens.

As a community, we can say with some degree of certainty, that our trees make that possible, and their absence would be immensely detrimental. In a recent newspaper article (Appendix 2) our current Prime Minister defends plans from her environmental department which 'encourages green spaces' and also 'national tree champions'. The view from the community which is backed by our Prime Minister is that our trees are valuable and as such need protecting, put simply the very reason that the residence want the TPO to remain and be made permanent .

We would now like to respond to the first Objection received by Mr Andrew Jones, Head of Property for Gentoo Group Ltd, the seller, who believes that the trees are of 'no particular merit' 'poor quality with no ecological value'. We have already made clear links with our above objection that there is significant benefit to the ecological system of the area made possible by our trees, and we wish to dispute and echo Mr Peter McIntyre's letter (Appendix 3) who objects in a letter to this point. Our trees have been thoroughly assessed on 15 February 2018 by an independent Arboriculturist (Appendix 4) and it is considered that the trees are in good form and have significant contributions to the amenities of the locality. The age of the tree also means that they have the potential to benefit the community for a significant period of time. The Council believe that it is not sufficient to replace these trees and to remove what is already there would be a loss to the area and any replacement would take a significant period of time to reach a condition whereby the quality and value equates that of the existing specimens, again put simply the TPO should remain and be made permanent.

It is not just the visual pleasure of the trees that the community want to defend, it is the other health benefits that the green space brings to the community. In a review from the Forestry Commission (Appendix 5) research confirmed the health benefits of green spaces and in particular street trees within a community. This is not just one persons research, and the positive health benefits have been considered for many years, that green spaces and street trees benefit those, physically and mentally in the community who have access to them (Appendix 6)

In an article from the Telegraph dates 07 May 2018, campaigners have warned against the sale of fields and green spaces, just like ours, and believe that this could save the NHS approximately £100 million a year by people just having access to green spaces. This article focuses on parks and green spaces that are at threat from developers, just like ours, which are being sold by 'cash strapped authorities'. This article also states that there is a considerable loss to the economic and well being benefits that a green space can bring. It also goes on to say 'there is valuable evidence that a loss of green space is hugely damaging to people's welfare'. Furthermore the article believes that it is short sighted to sell the land for a quick financial gain and will actually cost the country more in long run than what is saved (Appendix 7).

We feel passionately that our community needs an outdoor space and in particular we want to preserve the land as it is for the families of the area, to ensure that they have a safe space to play. There has also been research carried out around how nature and being outdoors can significantly help in the battle with obesity. We must be mindful that the children of Sunderland unfortunately have a worse than average level of obesity, 11.4% for children aged 4-5 and 24% of 10-11 year olds in Sunderland are classed as obese (Data from Public Health: England). We actively encourage our community to use this green space for play for play and exercise. The trees are a significant part of this. Our children have learnt to respect and care for the trees, and they have been used for school

homework, for instance counting the number and variety of the birds visiting the trees. This would all be lost forever , and we think it is short sighted and ignorant of Gentoo to consider this sale for new homes that we have already stated are just not needed in this area.

This is not the first time that the community has needed to fight to save our green space and our beloved trees. In 2013 we fought with the help of Chris Mullens and any sale of the land was dropped. The community also in numbers attended a public meeting with Gentoo on 25 May 2017 (Appendix 8 notes not verbatim). Our green space was initially used as a play field for the Children's home that was on site in 1963, the home has gone but the field and the trees remain, and has been used by generations of children to play. Families have been drawn to the area because it has a green and safe place for a young family to enjoy and for children to socialise and play together in safety. Young and old use this space for social gatherings, and it is an integral hub of our established community.

In summary, we contest both of the objections raised, with the backing of the Council for one of the objections, and the other with evidence that the TPO was registered in early May 2017. There are numerous and significant amounts of evidence to show that green spaces with trees will continue to help with the mental and physical well being of people in the area. The Community will continue to fight the proposal for the sale of the land, and the argument that new homes are needed is factually incorrect and for profit only. We believe that the sale and destruction of our green space is short sighted, and has a blatant disregard for the current established community and is significantly detrimental for the future of this community, which is both disgraceful and immoral. We are currently awaiting to hear about a village green application that has recently been admitted.

Yours Sincerely

The Community and users of the Green Space, Woodside Grove/Cranborne, East Herrington