

Press release by friends of *Ecological Owlthorpe*

“Sheffield City Council, alongside local MP Clive Betts, has set out an exciting new proposal to improve and develop the green corridor running along Ochre Dyke and stretching from Ivy Lane at Beighton through to Waterthorpe Park.” The plans can be viewed on website:

<https://www.sheffieldsoutheastlabour.org.uk/2021/03/14/ochre-dyke-green-corridor> the project shows boundaries and detailed maps of all areas included in the project, Grange Road, Drake House Lane, Crystal Peaks Meadows, Warterthorpe Open Space, Clayton Hollow open space, Ochre Dyke Fields and Waterthorpe Park.

These open spaces were all created many years ago and local residents of each area have enjoyed the use of them over the years for relaxation, leisure, recreation and recently for Wellbeing. But they all have one thing in common: they are all downstream areas of the Ocher Dyke which has its header waters in Birley Woods standing 650ft above sea level. The Ochre Dyke passes through the upstream area of Owlthorpe before reaching Crystal Peaks standing at 178ft above sea level. The boundaries of Owlthorpe can be seen by zooming in to interpretation boards on smart phones: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-12InterpretationBoardEntrance.pdf> You can also see the vast amount of work carried out in creating our oasis which was opened by our MP Clive Betts 16th March 2012.

The web site states: “The recent Pandemic has shown just how important our green spaces are to us as a society. Open green areas, relaxation and leisure space help us to keep fit, exercise and are an invaluable aid to maintaining our own mental health and well being. The plans that have been drawn up will protect the Ochre Dyke green corridor from unwanted development and provide a welcome respite for both local residents and local wildlife.” This is all well and good but what about the mental health and well being of residents of Owlthorpe? Also what about our protection from the unwanted development by Avant Homes? To our MP Clive Betts: before the last general election I attended the hustings at Rainbow Forge Primary school. All the candidates wishing to become MP for Sheffield South East showed their ‘green credentials’. You were happy to say you had just signed up to the Climate Emergency Policy. I asked the question about deforestation causing downstream flooding. All the candidates agreed that we need to plant more trees up stream to stop downstream flooding. You said it was deforestation in the Pennines that had caused down stream flooding. I have seen the deforestation around Lady Bower, but the river from Lady Bower is the River Derwent which passes through Derby before it’s confluence with the River Trent which passes through Nottingham. It is the Rivers of Sheffield that cause downstream flooding in Beighton, Rotherham, Doncaster and Fishlake.

Julie Gledhill: Labour candidate for the Beighton Ward. In your leaflet said “Before becoming a teacher you worked as a lawyer and manager for the Environment Agency specialising in Flood Risk Management.” I took part in the Public Enquiry regarding Avant Homes proposal to build in Owlthorpe. Evidence can be seen here: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/publicinquiry.htm> I have always been concerned about upstream deforestation causing downstream flooding in evidence Original Objection 21st Feb 2020: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-01OriginalObjection21stFeb2020.pdf> this is my original objection to planning Application 19/03143/FUL, building in Owlthorpe, submitted 21 February 2020 to Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA). My objection was completely ignored by Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) and now also by the Building Inspector. There were many other objections submitted by the local Beighton ward community which can be seen by inserting 19/03143/FUL into <https://planningapps.sheffield.gov.uk/online-applications> Please take some time and review the objections from constituents of the Beighton ward. Please read my editorial in Yorkshire By-lines.

Evidence: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-02EcologicalOwlthorpeanenvironmentalapproach.pdf> Ecological Owlthorpe an environmental approach George Eustace MP <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbYXEDczL-U> explains the Government's approach to UK flooding: £4bn spending on flood defences. This is supported by Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England who have jointly committed to "nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency", to

which Ecological Owlthorpe has the potential to make an excellent contribution. It seems to me that Robert Jenrick MP and the Building Inspectorate are in direct conflict with George Eustace MP and all other environmental departments. Why, when I put a valid suggestion to protect Owlthorpe as an upstream nature based solution and stop downstream flooding by moving the Avant Housing Development to the derelict aerodrome at Norton (which would not contribute to flooding) am I completely ignored by Sheffield (LPA) and Government officials? Evidence Matters: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-03thisistheaccountofoneofthevictimsoffloodinginfishlake.pdf> This is an account of one of the victims of the flooding in Fishlake Jenny Palmer (resident of Fishlake) makes many relevant points which I have highlighted in yellow. Please read her statement carefully. Remember: All the water that flooded Fishlake came from Sheffield Rivers including some from the disused mine works under Owlthorpe courtesy of the Ochre Dyke.

Evidence Matters: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-05Floodriskassessment.pdf> Flood risk assesment: Ecological Owlthorpe sets out the reasons not to build in Ecological Owlthorpe using local knowledge and understanding. The first photo shows the colour Ochre Dyke turns when the disused mine workings are flooded and Ochre washes out. This can be best seen in Link to Video:Ochre Dyke flooding. The second and third photos show scenes of flooding in Beighton, and the fourth of flooding in Fishlake. Evidence Matters: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-17ListoffloodsinSheffield.pdf> List of floods in Sheffield I was caught up in the Sheffield flood of 2007: On 25 June, Sheffield suffered extensive damage as the River Don over-topped its banks, causing widespread flooding in the Don Valley area of the city. A 14-year-old boy was swept away by the swollen River Sheaf and a 68-year-old man died after attempting to cross a flooded road in Sheffield city centre. The Meadowhall shopping centre was closed due to flooding with some shops remaining closed downstairs until late September and Sheffield Wednesday's ground Hillsborough was under 6 feet (1.83 m) of water. A number of people had to be rescued by RAF helicopters from buildings in the Brightside area. The pressure of water overwhelmed the drainage system, water shot up 5ft in the air out of the grates.

Evidence Matters: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-19SitevisitWednesday20thJanuary2021.pdf> Site visit Wednesday 20th January 2021 : I showed the Government Inspector, Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) and representatives from Avant Homes the water retention on site E by placing a ruler in the tracks left by the off-road bikers. Local residents of Owlthorpe understand that how in wet months millions and millions of gallons of water are stored in site E and gently released into the Ochre Dyke. It seems to me that none of the officials understood the significance of standing water and the effect it has on downstream flooding in bad weather conditions. This is better demonstrated on our website, Please view: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Water.mp4> Plot D is where Avant Homes suggest a SUDS system should be located according to their flood risk assessment and drainage strategy. As we passed the point where the SUDS system is proposed, a major flooding event would overwhelm the drainage system because of water pressure. Proof that the SUDS system would fail came during a site visit to the proposed development area. As we passed by the spot where the SUDS system would be, the path had turned into a river that we all had to paddle through. This was not a rainy day but surface water was pouring off the land. Members of (OAG) are witnesses to this fact. The Building Inspector, Howard Baxter of Sheffield (LPA) and Avant Homes representatives seemed oblivious to this fact. It is the water pressure from Birley Wood Golf Course standing approx.: 650ft above sea that cause the problem as by the time water reaches Moss Way 212ft, it is too powerful for the drainage system to cope. Ochre washes out of the mine workings this can be seen behind Crystal Peaks 178ft video of <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Water.mp4> flooding taken at the same time as flooding occurred in Beighton, Rotherham and finally Fishlake standing approx.: 23ft above sea level.

Kind Regards

Michael Meredith