

Michael Meredith  
22 Royston Avenue  
Owlthorpe  
Sheffield S20 6SG  
Email: [ecologicalowlthorpe@gmail.com](mailto:ecologicalowlthorpe@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 07869 223277

Public opinion is a very powerful tool. The public needs the media to ask searching questions of those in authority.

I feel that a nationally important issue regarding flooding has been totally ignored by the Government appointed Building Inspectorate.

I attended the public inquiry into development in Owlthorpe, Sheffield. The evidence I supplied about the flooding on behalf of Residents of Owlthorpe, Beighton, Rotherham, Doncaster and Fishlake was completely ignored. Downstream flooding occurred, which inundated Fishlake because of deforestation and the fact that Sheffield is so hilly. The rivers of Sheffield caused downstream flooding in low lying areas. We need to do more to alleviate this problem.

It is also worth remembering, as Jenny Palmer, a resident of Fishlake who was affected by flooding in 2019 mentions in Evidence <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-03ThisistheaccountofoneofthevictimsofthefloodinginFishlake.pdf> it was HRH Prince Charles and Prime Minister Boris Johnson who visited Fishlake to console with the victims of flooding. All the water that finished up in Fishlake came from Sheffield Rivers: Rivers Loxley and Rivelin confluence at Malin Bridge; Loxley confluences River Don at Owlerton Sheffield; Don confluences River Sheaf at Lady's Bridge in Sheffield City Centre; Ochre Dyke confluences with River Rother at Beighton; Rother confluences River Don at Bow Bridge, Rotherham. As a result of these progressive confluences the River Don is swollen and subsequently floods Fishlake. It repeated in the winter of January 2021 and no doubt will do so again unless precautions are taken to prevent downstream flooding. This is surely a wake up call to Sheffield LPA to deal with this at source.

Re Avant Homes wish to build in Owlthorpe. At the inquiry I suggested that they move their development to the derelict aerodrome at Norton, which would not cause downstream flooding.

My name is Michael Meredith and I took part in the public enquiry and presented evidence <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/publicinquiry.htm> .

Public enquiry evidence <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 concern has always been about deforestation and downstream flooding. We all need to do more to prevent downstream flooding. My objection was completely ignored by Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) and now also ignored by the Building Inspector at this public enquiry. Please read in full.

26th May 2020 I requested that George Eustace MP call in the planning application made by Avant Homes Ref: 19/03143/FUL. This is in line with Government directive which states that the application has to be made before the (LPA) makes its final decision. Sheffield City Council (LPA) sat 2nd Jun 2020, so my appeal was in time. [holly.dutton@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:holly.dutton@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) says my appeal is rejected by Robert Jenrick MP and will be heard by the building inspector. Her reasons are that my objection is only of local interest. I requested clarification from both George Eustace MP and Robert Jenrick MP, but up to date I have not received a reply. Perhaps Robert Jenrick MP and Holly Dutton are in need of a geography lesson as Fishlake stands 31.2 miles down stream from Owlthorpe.

**Evidence matters:** <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> this video shows that Ochre is been washed out of the old mine workings under Owlthorpe, which flooded Beighton, before joining up with the River Rother and then the River Don flooding Rotherham, Doncaster and finally finishing up in Fishlake.

**Evidence:** <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-02EcologicalOwlthorpeanenvironmentalapproach.pdf> Ecological Owlthorpe an environmental approach George Eustace MP interview with Sophy Ridge <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, the Building Inspectorate, Howard Baxter, Colin Walker Sheffield (LPA), Clive Betts MP Sheffield South East and Avant Homes are in direct conflict with George Eustace MP and all other environmental departments.

Why, when I put a valid suggestion to protect Ecological 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 Government officials?

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-03thisistheaccountofoneofthevictimsoffloodinginfishlake.pdf> This is an account of one of the victims of the flooding in Fishlake I have highlighted some of the main points Jenny Palmer makes which were completely ignored by the Building inspector.

**Evidence Matters:** <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-04RiverDonFloodRiskatFishlake.pdf> The flood-warning information.service.gov.uk/station/8259 shows the last 5 days river levels up to 18th January 2021 have been above the 3.18m water level: Flooding is possible. Jenny Palmer says that before purchasing her house in Fishlake in March 2019 flood risk assessment for Fishlake was very low. The concrete flood defence you see in evidence EO-04 was built in Sheffield to stop flooding in the east of the city but this is the main cause of flooding in Fishlake along with some confluence of water from the Ochre Dyke. This evidence was completely ignored by the Building inspector.

January 2021, Just after the public enquiry had finished Fishlake flooded again as you can see in this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6ABoXGUgR4> there is extensive flooding in the fields around Fishlake but about 9mins into this video, it shows the erosion to the tow path at the side of the river Don. This is a frightening prospect. If we do nothing there will be fatalities down stream from the Rivers of Sheffield. Wakeup Sheffield (LPA).

**Evidence Matters:** <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-05Floodriskassessment.pdf> Flood risk assessment 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 mineworkings are flooded and Ochre washes out. This can be best seen in Link to Video: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> Ochre Dyke flooding. The second and third photos show scenes of flooding in Beighton, and the fourth of flooding in Fishlake. This evidence was totally ignored by the building inspector.

**Evidence:** <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-06HeightaboveseaLevelandGPSCo-ordinates.pdf> Height above sea Level and GPS Co-ordinates This evidence shows how steep Ecological Owlthorpe is. The source of Ochre Dyke is on Birley Wood Golf Course standing 650ft above sea level, Fishlake is 23ft above sea level. This difference of 627ft is evidence in itself that downstream flooding is likely to occur if Owlthorpe is deforested and concreted over with New Housing. Holly Dutton seems to think Fishlake is local to Owlthorpe, but it is 31.2 miles downstream.

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. This evidence was completely ignored by the planning inspector.

Evidence Matters: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-18ReviewofPlanningMeeting.pdf> Review of Planning and Highways Committee Meeting 2nd June 2020 Prior to the public inquiry I requested in a number of correspondences to Holly Dutton, Helen Skinner, George Eustace MP and Robert Jenrick MP that the Government review Sheffield City Council's Planning Meeting on 2nd June 2020. I believe that Sheffield (LPA) may have misled the Government with regards to the true outcomes of this meeting. At the inquiry, I specifically asked the Planning Inspector that he review the meeting 2nd June 2020. He declined. I personally think this was a dereliction of the Inspector's duties as an independent arbitrator in this inquiry. However, he did allow me to review the said meeting, which was arranged by Guy Williams, Sheffield City Council Barrister, and Lucy Bond, Area Team Manager. I was surprised to find that the video evidence from June 2020 had been removed from Sheffield Council's website. The reference number 19/03143/FUL remained the same throughout all enquiries. I thought that all evidence had to be made available to all parties until the Planning Inspector made his decision. Cllr Chris Rosling- Josephs explained that traffic in the area is horrendous; not only around Crystal Peaks but also in the surrounding area and that a full independent traffic assessment needs to be taken before the council considers any more developments in the area. Colin Walker, Interim Head said "I think there is a significant risk if you throw Highways impact into this as a reason for refusal and that risk is that you effectively neutralise the site in residential terms." Why was Highways impact removed from the legal document and not even considered by the Inspectorate?

Facts Matter: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-19SitevisitWednesday20thJanuary2021.pdf> Site visit Wednesday 20th January 2021 I showed the 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 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: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Water.mp4> Please view.

Facts Matter: As we continue around our nature reserve, we see many of the Interpretation boards <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-12InterpretationBoardEntrance.pdf> which show the extent of work carried out by school children and members of the local community supported by Crystal Peaks shopping mall and Retail Park. Our local MP, Clive Betts was involved in this project. On all the interpretation boards is the map of our nature reserve which show all the work carried out under the direction of Natural England under their higher level stewardship scheme. Ochre Dyke woods is clearly marked on all notice boards, it is number 7. I had hoped that the interpretation boards would have explained the location of where Ochre Dyke Woods is but it seems that the Inspector, Avant Homes and Sheffield City Council representatives are totally blinded by their wish to build on our Nature Reserve. This totally ignores the evidence that local residents know, many of whom were involved with their children building our nature reserve. Many parents use the interpretation board to educate their children as they explore our oasis and are at a total loss to understand why Sheffield (LPA) supported by Clive Betts MP Sheffield South East want to destroy our Oasis. Clive Betts forgets March 16th 2012 he helped open our Oasis assisted by local school children and many others.

Facts Matter: Plot D is also where Avant Homes suggest where a SUDS system should be located according to their flood risk assessment and drainage strategy, produced by AVIE Consulting LTD Leeds. As we passed the point where the SUDS system would be, it looks very pretty on the drawing board, but in a major flood event the drainage system will be overwhelmed because of water pressure. If you needed any more proof that the SUDS system would fail it 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 level, Culvert opposite Garden centre: 420ft, capped off Colliery Drift 382ft 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 <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Water.mp4> of flooding taken at the same time as flooding occurred in Beighton, Rotherham and finally Fishlake standing approx.: 23ft above sea level.

**Fact Matter:** Are the old flooded mine works under Ecological Owlthorpe safe? <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/floodedmineworks.pdf> Public Enquiry Evidence CD2.27: The Coal Authority, Mining Report SITE AT, MOORTHORPE GATE, OWLTHORPE, SHEFFIELD. The statement that the mine was last worked in 1932 is ambiguous. Please read extracts from post by Ken Wain December 19th 2013 Sheffield history Professor. Who suggests the mines were worked until the 1970s. "Therefore, if development proposals are being considered, technical advice relating to both the investigation of coal and former coal mines and their treatment should be obtained before beginning work on site."

**Facts Matter:** What I do not see in AVIE Consulting LTD Leeds flood risk assessment is how they intend to deal with the flooding from the disused mine workings?

It seems to me that the public enquiry into proposed development in Owlthorpe is a mere game of smoke and mirrors played by Robert Jenrick MP Secretary of State for Housing, Holly Dutton and Helen Skinner Planning Inspectorate, O S Woodward's Planning Inspector, Richard Sager Barrister for Avant Homes, Guy Williams Barrister for Sheffield (LPA), Howard Baxter, Colin Walker Sheffield (LPA) and Clive Betts MP Sheffield South East. They all want the same thing: to build New Housing in Owlthorpe at speed. It is worth remembering it was Sheffield City Council, heavily supported by Clive Betts MP that put the land up for sale in the first place. Thank you for your attention and I will be grateful if this is of interest to the media as the public are being totally ignored by Officialdom.

Kind Regards

Michael Meredith

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/index.html>