

Winwick ^{really} Matters

Issue 29 Christmas 2006



The Newsletter of Winwick Parish Council, covering Winwick Village, Winwick Park, Houghton Green, Hermitage Green, "White City", part Grasmere/Greenwood Estate and part of Cinnamon Brow/Fearnhead

Winwick Parish Council hope that you have a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



PARKSIDE PLANS –HELP US FIGHT THEM!

How will a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) on Parkside affect our community?

Astral Developments Ltd has submitted a planning application in October 2006 to St. Helens and Warrington MBCs, for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI). This proposal will not only be the land that was the original "footprint," or former colliery site i.e. 34 hectares, but also on Green Belt land surrounding this site. Astral plan to 'develop' on Green Belt land eight times the size of the original Parkside Colliery footprint; on high quality agricultural land that has been farmed for generations and 'relocate' the Grade II listed buildings of Newton Park Farm. The area of the SRFI is to be a massive 272 hectares (672 acres); is equivalent to 670 football pitches and equates to a loss of over 30% of Newton-le-Willows existing Green Belt. *If this application were to be granted, then residents from across St. Helens, Warrington and Wigan would have to live in the shadow of Europe's largest road / rail freight terminal.*

The Parish Council believes that a freight terminal on Parkside will mean unprecedented road congestion and danger for local residents with Parkside generated traffic traveling along minor roads; increased noise and light pollution, increased air pollution in a residential area that is already acknowledged by St. Helens, Warrington and Wigan Councils as being above nationally recognised air quality specifications and massive job relocation, not creation. As the West Coast Main Line (WCML) is already congested, Parkside will be increasingly used as a road freight terminal, not a rail freight interchange. Owing to the congested WCML, any freight trains using Parkside will have to run at night. As Parkside is directly inaccessible from the WCML, we believe that these ½ mile long rail freight trains would cause massive disruption to the thousands of Newton and Earlestown residents who live within earshot of the Manchester-Liverpool Main Line. The concept of road-to-rail is a perfectly environmentally sound idea, but has been hijacked to facilitate the construction of a road freight terminal. Astral conservatively estimate 5,000 HGVs accessing Parkside per day; that's 10,000 HGV movements, entering and exiting Parkside, which amounts to an HGV every 10 seconds, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As the Parkside SRFI will be the biggest in Europe, and along with the poor capacity of the WCML, it is likely that this figure will in fact be many thousands more.

Loss of Habitat

In a report presented to St Helens MBC in 1997, it is stated that 36 plants in particular were “rare” or “locally occasional” in St Helens Borough. Of these plant species, 6 are described as having “no previous record in the St Helens Borough database”.

The database referred to in the report, is the St Helens JCA Plant Database (Joint Character Assessment of Landscapes) which was commissioned by DEFRA. In another report, submitted to the council in 2001, reference is made to over 30 species of birds, which use the site as their natural habitat. Of these birds, 7 species are of particular concern. In the same 2001 report, mention is made to a bat survey. It states that the site is widely used as a bat feeding ground although no mention is made, that the site may be being used as a roost for the animals. This report does not rule out the possibility that bats may be using Parkside as a roost. Brown Hares, bats, foxes, rabbits, hedgehogs, pheasants and owls have also been regularly seen Parkside.

If the SRFI were to be granted planning permission, it is believed that Astral Developments would fell somewhere in the region of 160 mature trees. These trees form an “avenue” along each side of the track leading to Newton Park Farm and are all subject to a Tree Preservation Order granted by St Helens Council in 1993. One of the trees, a beech, is believed to be in the region of 150 years old.

Loss of Heritage

Astral Developments state that it is their intention to dismantle, remove and rebuild, 2 Grade II Listed Buildings, which are on the site. These buildings are Newton Park Farmhouse and Newton Park Barn. Unfortunately, both buildings are in severe need of restoration work, which has been granted planning permission by St Helens Council on October 10th 2006. This restoration is due to be carried out by Interland UK, a local firm that is unrelated to the Astral Development proposal.

The two buildings were the detailed subjects of “An Historical Assessment and Study of Newton Park Farmhouse and Barn” which was published by the Northwest Archaeological Trust in 1988. If the buildings were to be removed from their present settings then their history, heritage and character would be lost forever.

A Draft of the Town & Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction 2005, issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, states:“ The Government has made clear that it remains committed to the principles of the Green Belt. It has no plans to review current national planning policies on the Green Belt, or to relax planning controls on Green Belt land. The Government has set a target for each English region to maintain or increase the area designated as Green Belt land in local plans.” The proposed Parkside SRFI is in direct conflict with this statement. In fact, the granting of planning permission by Warrington and St. Helens to build an SRFI, on Green Belt at Parkside, would have a devastating effect on the quality of living for thousands of local residents. In accordance with PPG2, and the existing St. Helens Council UDP, Parkside is a vital green buffer zone between the urban conurbations of Warrington and Newton-le-Willows and should remain as Green Belt. PAG believes that the Parkside SRFI needs to be stopped in its tracks.

Dates and Venues of Public Meetings to be held by the Parkside Action Group

Croft Memorial Hall- Wed 29th November 7.30 pm
St. Aelred's, Newton-le-Willows Tues 5 December 7.30 pm
Winwick Leisure Centre Wed 6 December -7.30 pm
Earlestown Town Hall Tues 12th December 7.00 pm

Lowton Civic Hall --TBA
Lane Head South --TBA

**Helen Jones
MP for
Warrington
North, has
expressed her
opposition to
the Parkside
proposals**

The following is a suggested letter of objection to Warrington & St Helens Councils.

Mr Michael Davies
Environment Services Directorate
New Town House,
Buttermarket Street,
Warrington.
WA1 2NH
Quote ref P/2006/09364
Deadline for comments– 28th
November 2006 (this may be
extended)

and

Scott Bracken
Town Planning
Town Hall
Victoria Square
St Helens
Merseyside
WA10 1HP
Quote ref P/2006/1296
Deadline for comments –18th December 2006

I am objecting to the proposed Parkside Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI), planning application number: 2006/09364, on the following grounds:

- Parkside is Green Belt land and development is contrary to PPG2 and the existing St. Helens Council UDP
- Loss of up to 272 hectares of Green Belt would lead to urban sprawl.
- Increased air, noise and light pollution.
- Increased congestion on the M6, M62, A580, A49 and other roads, leading to longer journey times.
- Increased Parkside SRFI traffic on the A580, A49, A572, A573, A579 and minor roads which will endanger the lives of local residents.
- Loss of local heritage with the relocation of Grade II listed buildings at Newton Park Farmhouse and Newton Park Barn.
- Loss of high grade agricultural land.
- Loss of environmental habitat.
- Loss of visual amenity.
- Noise and disruption to residents living near the West Coast Main Line and Manchester-Liverpool Main Line with rail freight running through the night.
- Potential for job displacement rather than creation.
- The location of the Parkside SRFI is inappropriate due to the close proximity of residential housing.
- The lack of rail pathways, questionable predicted growth in rail freight volume and problematic rail access to the West Coast Main Line would all result in the inappropriate use of Parkside as a road freight terminal.
- More appropriate locations for SRFI and Intermodal terminals need to be considered, both regionally and nationally.
- Adverse and disruptive vibration from the setting of pile foundations during the construction period.
- Adverse impact on drainage and watertable.
- Above all, the Parkside SRFI development would mean an unprecedented disruption in the quality of living for thousands of local residents.

As a local resident I strongly object to this inappropriate proposal.

**New Years Eve Party
at
Winwick Leisure Centre
Dancing till 1.00 am to "Bradley Thomas"
Top DJ & entertainer
Tickets cost £5 and are available from Winwick
Leisure Centre and Post Office
Free buffet & prize draw**

***Winwick Leisure Centre
Christmas & New Year
Opening Times***

Christmas Eve-12.00 pm-6.00 pm last orders 5.30 pm and 7.30 pm-12.00 am- last orders 11.30 pm.

Christmas day-12.00 pm-2.30 pm last orders 2.00pm.

Boxing Day –Closed

**New Years Eve (Millennium Lounge only)
12.00 pm-5.00 pm last orders 4.30 pm.**

New Years Day-closed

Don't forget to recycle!

For those of you who do not know, the Parish Council now provides a glass recycling facility which is sited at the rear of Winwick Leisure Centre. Please come along and use it.

Garden Hedges

**Garden hedges are a real asset to our environment, as well as giving us privacy and security. They can however become a nuisance and a danger to passes by if they are not properly maintained. The Parish Council urges those residents who have hedges to consider others and keep them trim and tidy.
Thank you.**

Winwick Leisure Centre

Our extensively stocked bar open 7 nights a week from 7.00 pm and 12.00 noon weekends

Rooms for hire at highly competitive rates for that special occasion or for your company training and seminars. We can supply training equipment and refreshments as well as arranging catering and DJ's

**For further information contact
Winwick Leisure Centre
Tel 01925 637490 or 07984 333723**

Careless Parking

One of the issues which is consistently raised with the Parish Council is that of careless car parking. In particular parking on pavements which pushes people into the road to enable them to pass. In the last 12 months this behaviour has caused a number of thankfully minor accidents to occur in Winwick village. Parents dropping off and picking up their children from Winwick CE school have been identified as the main culprits. The Parish Council would urge all motorists to think carefully before either parking on the pavement or parking such as to create an obstruction which may cause harm to others.



**If you have any comments, complaints or compliments regarding this Newsletter, or the work of the Parish Council please contact the Editor:-
Les Higgins, Clerk to the Parish Council, PO Box 348
Wigan, WN3 6WA or tel. 01942 213104.**