

Woodthorpe Cottage
138 London Road
Lynsted/Teynham
ME9 9QH

5th April 2016

Dear Councillor Lewin and Planning Policy Office,

“SPECIAL GREEN SPACES” NOMINATION

We are writing in response to the recent newspaper article (23rd March 2016, KentOnline) alerting readers to the opportunity to propose candidates for “Special Green Spaces” status.

We attach a nomination based on the democratic process that led to the creation of the Lynsted Parish Design Statement (LPDS). The LPDS consultations included Swale Borough Council who adopted the LPDS into Planning Guidance in 2002.

Within the LPDS, the land to the south of the A2 was identified as a “sensitive edge”; argued in terms of historic patterns of development, rural character of the Parish and the importance of access for residents on the A2 (both Lynsted and Teynham sides) through the network of historic paths, rural lanes and bridlepaths.

Please let me know if you need more. You will see that we are uncertain who owns the land that abuts the narrow ribbon of houses between Claxfield Lane and Lynsted Lane but we have made an enquiry through the Citizen Portal (Land Registry).

Yours sincerely,

Nigel and Lis Heriz-Smith

SPECIAL GREEN SPACES

Land to the south of the A2, London Road, Lynsted (ME9 9QH)

The lungs of Lynsted for those who live on the A2, allowing us to “live” here, rather than just “exist”.

The land to the south of the A2 on London Road (ME9 9QH) was designated a “sensitive edge” in the Lynsted Parish Design Statement (LPDS), adopted by SBC as Planning Guidance in 2002.

Although this “sensitive edge” could have been interpreted as “nimbyism”, the democratic process undertaken in the production of the LPDS found the protection sought was mainly due to the open landscape that reflects centuries of land-usage and patterns of development across the whole Parish. This includes the historically significant “coffin path” between London Road and Lynsted Village that allows the small communities of Bogle and Batteries to be joined safely to Lynsted Village and the A2.

Lynsted Parish settlement patterns are invariably narrow linear development along edges of highways. This pattern gives very strong connection to open agricultural use for those living on the A2. Following confirmation by SBC that the residents of the A2/London Road through Lynsted/Teynham are living with “exceedances” of statutory levels of harmful pollution, this green space has become especially precious. Pollution exceedances were not measured during the production of the LPDS in 2002, the protection of the land south of the A2 is now even more important to the health and well-being of residents and workers. The protection of this “sensitive edge” gives relief to increasing noise and air pollution coming from the ever-increasing traffic levels, HGV numbers in particular. That concern extends from Ospringe to Sittingbourne where monitoring instruments have been Ordered by SBC (including the Teynham/Lynsted Parish boundary along the A2). Department of Transport data shows that traffic is the same from Ospringe and central Sittingbourne, raising the same concerns and threats throughout the built stretches of the A2.

The amenity value of this close relationship to open agricultural land benefits residents on both sides of the A2 and throughout the parish of Lynsted with Kingsdown. It is a regular and popular route for dog-walkers, walkers, joggers and runners, and ordinary pedestrians between Lynsted Village and the shops, post office, churches, schools, library, dentist and doctors. It is the only safe route for pedestrians. There are significant numbers of elderly people, young parents, and those without cars in our community on both sides of the A2 for whom the easy access to open countryside is an important contributor to quality of life and health. Access to the village and services along the A2 and Lynsted Lane means negotiating dangerous parking, narrow or no pavement, noise, pollution and passing vehicles including HGVs. During wet weather the spray thrown up by traffic, lorries in particular, and the poor condition and frequent damage to the surface of the road causing pooling, makes the A2 a no go area for pedestrians.

We understand that the area north of the A2 has been earmarked for development in the more urban pattern of modern-day Teynham. Over the past hundred years, “Teynham” has evolved to meet the industrial expansion of brick-making and cement works (Conyer). That urban evolution has had no place south of the A2. In short, protection from development of the land to the south is important for residents, historic patterns of development and access to open spaces of people living to the north and south of the A2.

Living along the A2 in Lynsted Parish. Many of us make our primary living and sleeping areas to the rear of our properties. Ventilation is only possible through opening windows to the rear of our

properties and our gardens in particular are an important sanctuary to us. The reasons for this are rooted in the combination of pollutions – noise, streetlights and harmful NO2 and particulates. Urbanisation to the south would further pollute under these three headings.

The open space abutting all our gardens brings abundant wildlife to our own small green spaces. We have recorded in our garden alone:

Mammals and reptiles: Slow-worms, hedgehogs, foxes, frogs, toads, voles, field mice, wood mice, several bat species and squirrels.

Birds: Pheasants, sparrows, woodpeckers, blue tits, great tits, long tail tits, blackbird, thrush, fieldfares, chaffinch, greenfinch, goldfinch, wren, goldcrest, robin, dunnoek, starlings, black caps, brambling, little owls, barn owls, tawny owls, collared doves, wood pigeons, jackdaw, rook, song thrush, mistle thrush, pied wagtail, crows, turtle dove, sparrow hawk, kestrel, herons and various gulls.

The “sensitive edge” field also hosts an abundance of skylarks (the sound of which is a pleasant relief from the noise of traffic), lapwings, and more recently buzzards and red kites.

This sensitive edge is celebrated by residents who are proud of living in an area of such rich agriculture on our doorstep. It is a place where we encourage the younger generations to appreciate what the land produces for us and how the changes of seasons can be witnessed in safety away from traffic and in eyeshot of home. There is always a hubbub of excitement when the tractors or combine-harvesters arrive. Those working on the land have taken time to interact with the children who become spectators from nearby homes.

Our nomination of this “sensitive edge” reflects both the democratically established view published in the LPDS and the wider benefit it offers to all residents of **both** Teynham and Lynsted and of all generations.

We have made enquiries of Land Registry and are waiting for confirmation. We know the company producing brickearth [Weinerberger, for Smeed Brickworks, Sittingbourne] or the local farmers, possibly Derek Holt (F.T.Holt & Son(Farms)), Loyterton Farm, Tickham Lane, Lynsted, ME9 0HW). But whether they own or are tenanted is not known and we hope we can confirmed this through our enquiry of the Land Registry.

*Nigel and Lis Heriz-Smith
Woodthorpe Cottage
138 London Road
ME9 9QH
Tel: 01795 522842*