

Greensands meeting 15/7/23

Anne's house

Present: Anne Lindsay, Sally Hinchcliffe, Jeanette Abendstern, John Dowson, Simon Jones

We talked about the proposed new car park at Greensands. This involves concreting over a beautiful green space in order to build a car park, not because people will use it but simply to tick a box for the advancement of the Whitesands flood scheme.

That scheme is in doubt but because the Planning Applications Committee recently granted planning permission the car park can go ahead.

On discussion it emerged there were two strands of conversation:

- 1) The technical. How the development will proceed and by what means we can continue to contest the development.
- 2) The argument based on our values: green space, nature, not spending money simply to tick a bureaucratic box, the safety of the kids who use the park on their way to and from school.

Cycling Dumfries are opposed to extra car parking in town having completed a detailed survey proving we are already over-supplied with parking. Sally explained that at the busiest times drivers can check the most popular car parks – Whitesands, Charlotte St, Loreburn and then complain that “there’s no parking.” At this time both Brooms Road and, ironically, Greensands will invariably have free car parking. Sally said that you can’t fix a shortage of car parking where people want to park by building car parking somewhere people don’t want to park.

That said Cycling Dumfries main focus is on doing positive things for cyclists and they don’t have capacity to commit to very time-consuming actions on this matter.

Cycling Dumfries agreed to send Anne their parking survey.

Cycling Dumfries sent the following clarification:

Just to clarify one point about our parking survey. We carried it out while the fair was in town in March (and hence most of the Whitesands closed). I wouldn't like to pretend that it was a definitive picture of parking demand in the town, we just wanted to provide a counterpoint to the claim that additional parking is needed for those few occasions when the Whitesands is closed. There's more information here, including a link to some of the information

gathered <https://cyclingdumfries.wordpress.com/2023/03/22/is-there-really-nowhere-to-park-in-dumfries/>

or a copy of the spreadsheet is here <https://cyclingdumfries.files.wordpress.com/2023/03/parking-availability-cycling-dumfries-final.pdf>

We focused on the main close car parks to the town centre, but also took some snapshots of others as you will see.

We asked the question what are we campaigning about?

As far as possible we don't want this campaign to be about the flood project, simply about protecting this lovely park.

There needs to be a hearts and minds campaign, aimed at persuading councillors and their voters that the park is precious and that bulldozing it is not in the best of interests of the town no matter how we proceed on the flood project.

SJ asked if an alternative site, such as the currently unused NCP site on Shakespeare St, could be used to satisfy the demands of the Whitesands Project.

Turning to the technical:

DGC have a policy of one for one parking – if parking is removed or built on it is replaced one for one.

SJ agreed to research the extent of the permission granted by the Planning Applications Committee.

This is the report that was agreed to:

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s51096/230196S42%20Whitesands%20Report.pdf>

From this meeting:

<https://dumfriesgalloway.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MID=5751#AI11703>

In short it allows them to build the Greensands car park subject to conditions set out in Sections 5.3 to 5.9. (mostly the preparation of reports)

Where we may wish to take an interest now is in the financing of these works and these reports. We can't argue (technically) on the basis of the kids, the wildlife, that it's stupid and pointless because those aspects were considered at the 28th June hearing and we lost.

We may however be able to challenge the allocation of resources to the project.

JD and SJ agreed to submit a Participation Request to participate as Loreburn Community Council in the "Greensands Improvement" project.

We also discussed asking questions, specifically around the financing through CCES.

We agreed to write to Ian Blake and David Slater asking if we can count on their support if this matter comes to Full Council.