

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: SCC Draft Local Plan Consultation- Friends of Wardsend Cemetery response.
Date: 19 February 2023 21:04:17
Attachments: [Comments on the Draft Sheffield Local Plan by Friends of Wardsend Cemetery.docx](#)

Please find attached comments on the Draft Local Plan from Friends of Wardsend Cemetery

Kind regards

Howard Bayley
Chair of Friends of Wardsend Cemetery

Comments on the Draft Sheffield Local Plan by Friends of Wardsend Cemetery

20th February 2023

Introduction

The Friends of Wardsend Cemetery recognise that the Draft Local Plan is a huge piece of work and are broadly supportive of its stated Vision, Aims and Objectives however we feel that there is a serious and worrying lack of detail regarding how these objectives will be met particularly with regard to the green-blue network, specifically:

- b) Protecting and enhancing the Green-blue network
- c) Restoring bio-diversity and wildlife connectivity
- d) Promoting active travel and healthy lifestyles
- e) Making the most of Sheffield's distinctive landscape setting

We are also extremely concerned that there is no mention in the local Plan of the need for a new site for the 'New Age' travellers who have been living adjacent to our Victorian Wardsend Cemetery since June 2019, a period of nearly 4 years.

Who we are

The present Friends of Wardsend Cemetery have been active since 2013 becoming a constituted group in 2015. In that time the group have worked tirelessly to sensitively conserve the previously neglected Victorian Wardsend Cemetery. In 2016 we adopted the name Wardsend Cemetery Heritage Park to better reflect our aspirations.

Our themes are well documented and evidenced by our activities and partnerships over the past 10 years

- Nature/Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Education
- Creativity
- Community
- Remembrance

As a group of volunteers, we are very proud of the progress we have made in transforming a neglected space where anti-social behaviour was commonplace to one that is loved and respected by the local community and one used by local primary and secondary schools, Sheffield College and both Sheffield's universities. However, we recognise there is much more we can do.

Our activities have included:

- Climate education
- Monitoring and improving water quality
- Biodiversity improvement
- Landscape and habitat management
- Woodland management
- Wood crafts/skills
- Bird surveys
- Butterfly surveys
- Moth trapping
- Bat walks
- Bird walks
- Bio-blitzes

Our 'theatre in the woods'

The space has already been used for:

- Drama
- Musical performance
- Film screening
- Nature events
- Poetry
- Remembrance service

Our vision for the surrounding area covers Wardsend Cemetery, the River Don, the National Grid non-operational land, the local woodland and green space known as White's Tip, the Herries to Hillfoot section of the Upper Don Trail and improvements to local footpaths to and around Wardsend Cemetery Heritage Park with the aim of creating an environmental centre in what is one of the least affluent parts of the city. This will help to address some of the inequalities with regard to access to nature and health and well-being that exist across the city.

We have been working with partners to improve access to the River Don and the wider green space including woodland, streams, heath and acid grassland at the Northern end of Parkwood Springs. We are in conversation with partners about developing an environmental centre with toilet and washroom facilities. Some of the best outdoor facilities are located in some of the most affluent parts of the city. We would like to see something similar or better close to some of the least affluent.

Comments on the Draft Local Plan

We would like to begin by putting on record our support for, and endorsement of, all the comments on the Local Plan made by Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and Upper Don Trail Trust.

We feel that there are specific considerations at Wardsend Cemetery Heritage Park which falls within Northwest sub area 4.55.

North West sub area 4.55. The sub-area's role and function is shaped by the River Don and River Loxley, as well as established residential areas and a prominent industrial landscape. Parkwood Springs is a key asset for the sub-area and it extends to 150 hectares of open space. Parkwood Springs is valued for its outdoor recreation and heritage in the form of the Victorian Wardsend Cemetery

For the reasons given above we don't feel this description of Wardsend Cemetery Heritage Park does justice to its unique character and location with its combination of heritage and nature, its heathland, woodland and the River Don and the activities and events outlined above.

We note that the cemetery and river at Wardsend are marked on the interactive map as Local Wildlife Site. We believe it would be helpful in terms of conservation, biodiversity net gain and equality of access to nature that Wardsend Cemetery Heritage Park be designated a local nature reserve with support for our proposal of an environmental centre. We believe this will help to deliver Policy BG1 locally.

POLICY BG1 - BLUE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

All blue and green infrastructure in the city will be protected, managed and enhanced, wherever possible, to help increase biodiversity, provide wider environmental benefits to combat climate change, deliver opportunities for outdoor recreation and strengthen the city's landscape character.

Very significant weight will be given to the protection and enhancement of Sheffield's Green Network of urban greenspace and countryside (including the Local Nature Recovery Network) especially:

● the main river corridors (Rivers Don, Porter, Sheaf, Rivelin, Loxley and Blackburn Brook); and

● major parks and green spaces of citywide importance for recreation and/or biodiversity (Concord Park, Parson Cross Park, Norfolk Heritage Park, Graves Park, Ecclesall Woods, Endcliffe Park/Bingham Park/ Whiteley Woods, Greno Woods, Millhouses Park, Meersbrook Park, Shirebrook Valley, **Parkwood Springs)**

New Age Travellers on Club Mil Road

We are extremely surprised and disappointed that there appears to have been no consideration given to the new age travellers currently occupying the riverside Club Mill Road at Wardsend. They have been there nearly four years since the council evicted them from a site at the other end of Parkwood Springs. Their presence is a barrier to community use, and ecological improvement, of the riverside Club Mill Road. This has a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of the local community and is preventing river restoration, stewardship, education, flood management and net biodiversity gain along this stretch of the River Don. More importantly however is the danger to life. Club Mill Road was flooded in 2007. The traveller community occupying the site which includes children and vulnerable adults has had three near misses in the time they have been there. Not least 20th February 2022 when the River Don was very close to breaking its banks.

Policy H1 fails to recognise the need for a permanent site to accommodate this group of travellers referring only to the need for a site for show people at Beighton. For this reason we feel that policy H1 is unsound

Upper Don Trail

We agree, and associate ourselves with, all the comments on the Draft Local Plan made by the Upper Don Trail Trust. Substantial sections of the trail are already in place and we were very disappointed to see no reference to it in the Draft Local Plan. The Herries to Hillfoot section of the Upper Don Trail will be of great significance to our current and future activities including educational and community, conservation and enhancement of the Wardsend Cemetery Heritage Park component of what appears in the Draft Local Plan to be an incomplete green blue network. The Upper Don Trail should be named in the Local Plan with a commitment to its development and completion.

In summary we believe that elements of the Draft Local Plan need reviewing before publication to address the comments made here by Friends of Wardsend Cemetery.

Howard Bayley

Chair of Friends of Wardsend Cemetery