

DRAFT DUDLEY LOCAL PLAN 2023

REPRESENTATIONS OF CORBETT MEADOW ACTION GROUP [CMAG]

SUMMARY

These representations **support** the following policies of the Draft (Reg 18) Local Plan:-

DLP LGS1 Corbett Meadow Local Green Space

DLP 31 Nature Conservation

In particular the designation of Corbett Meadow as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation

DLP 60 Areas of High Historic Landscape Value

In particular the proposed designation of Corbett Hospital and the greenspace adjacent to it as AHHLV

Background

Corbett Meadow Action Group (CMAG) was formed in 2019 to promote the protection & enhancement of the Corbett Meadow as the remaining green space gifted to the people of Stourbridge by John Corbett in 1893.

CMAG's involvement in the development plan preparation process began with its support for the proposition that Corbett Meadow be designated a Local Green Space first put formally to Dudley MBC by Amblecote History Society in response to the Black Country Plan Call for Sites in August 2020 - see site ID 10516 here <https://blackcountry.oc2.uk/document/forms/8865/11>

Since then:-

* the Draft Black Country Plan published in July 2021 proposed the designation of Corbett Meadow as a Local Green Space - see page 434 et seq. here <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/18612/draft-bcp-jdi-version-v2-2907.pdf>

* the Draft BC Plan's proposed designation of Corbett Meadow as a Area of High Historic Landscape Value and as a Site of Local Interest for Nature Conservation is also notable.

* The LGS proposition was widely supported by representations from local people see <https://blackcountry.oc2.uk/document/rep/9604>

* a planning application for residential development of the Meadow (DMBC ref P22/1050) was submitted in July 2022 and was strongly opposed by local people (approx. 400 individual objections) citing the value of the Meadow to the character & quality of the local ecology & landscape and the land being a legacy gifted to the people of Stourbridge for use as a hospital & parkland - see [http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AniteIM.WebSearch/\(S\(5cn1xe45gugdxxff2yxwed45\)\)/Results.aspx](http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AniteIM.WebSearch/(S(5cn1xe45gugdxxff2yxwed45))/Results.aspx)

* following updated survey & review, the Meadow was designated a regionally significant Site of Interest for Nature Conservation by DMBC in October 2022 - see <https://cmis.dudley.gov.uk/cm5/Meetings/tabid/116/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/543/Meeting/6444/Committee/468/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx> and <http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00655832.pdf>

* new & more detailed information on the historic significance of the Meadow was brought to light via representations on the planning application (for example see <http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00648599.pdf>); via the Black Country Local Heritage List project commissioned by the four BC Councils in Autumn 2021 <https://www.blackcountrylocalist.org.uk/>; and via preparation of "The Last Meadow" https://www.friendsofcorbettmeadow.com/files/ugd/db9101_caa75fad87264f0083a2639462dc62a8.pdf and its submission to the Council by email 22/4/2023

* Planning permission for the proposed development was refused by DMBC January 2023 citing the need to protect its heritage and nature conservation value - see <http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00655830.pdf> and <http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00655832.pdf>

DLP LGS1 Corbett Meadow Local Green Space

NPPF para 102 states that “The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is ... demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value... tranquillity or richness of its wildlife ...”

Taking each criterion in turn:-

- that Corbett Meadow is special to the local community is amply demonstrated by the outcry over its proposed development, the weight of objections that were made against the subsequent planning application and the explicit support that its designation as LGS received when first mooted
- The Meadow sits above and rolls down into the Coalbournebrook Valley and is a key element of Amblecote’s landscape & identity. Its beauty, both intrinsically and as a structural component of the character of the wider area, is self-evident but is also supported by Tree Preservation Orders and by SINC and AHHLV designations - see below
- its historic significance, from its earliest days as a rural hamlet, through to it being parkland associated with an eighteenth century mansion “The Hill” to the present day when it represents the only remaining greenspace of John Corbett’s legacy is clearly special and well documented, most recently in “The Last Meadow” 2023 (see above)
- Its recreational value has been demonstrated in the past through myriad uses by the local community. It is no longer accessible to the public but holds great potential for informal recreation, education, health & well-being. Indeed, the Friends of Corbett Meadow <https://www.friendsofcorbettmeadow.com/> vision & programme for delivery for the better use of the Meadow for public benefit is taking shape, led by the Stourbridge Community Land Trust and supported by local health practitioners.
- The richness of the Meadow’s wildlife is demonstrated by its upgrade from a SLINC (local interest) to SINC (regional significance) through a proper and fully evidenced process in October 2022. It is noted that the full site assessment is included in the Council’s evidence base <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/media/joricypg/corbett-hospital-grounds-local-site-assessment-report-form-2022.pdf>

Therefore the proposed designation of Corbett Meadow as a Local Green Space is fully warranted.

DLP 31 Nature Conservation

CMAG support the hierarchy of protection for sites important for nature conservation; and also support the designation of Corbett Meadow as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

As noted above, the Meadow was upgraded from a SLINC (local interest) to SINC (regional significance) through a proper and fully evidenced process in October 2022 <https://cmis.dudley.gov.uk/cm5/Meetings/tabid/116/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/543/Meeting/6444/Committee/468/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx> and <http://planningdocuments.dudley.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00655832.pdf> and so its protection as such is provided by the provisions of the adopted Black Country Core Strategy and Dudley Development Strategy.

However the Draft Local Plan provides the first opportunity for public & other stakeholder comment on the SINC designation; and so CMAG would wish to record here its full & strong support for such designation.

Again it is noted that the full site assessment is included in the Council’s evidence base <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/media/joricypg/corbett-hospital-grounds-local-site-assessment-report-form-2022.pdf>

DLP 60 Areas of High Historic Landscape Value

CMAG support the designation of AHHLVs as providing necessary & appropriate protection for a key component of the Borough's heritage and character; and in particular welcome the proposed designation of Corbett Hospital and the greenspace adjacent to it as AHHLV.

The historic interest & value of this area is comprehensively set out & referenced in "The Last Meadow" https://www.friendsofcorbettmeadow.com/files/ugd/db9101_caa75fad87264f0083a2639462dc62a8.pdf and need not be repeated here.

However CMAG would request that the detail of the proposed boundary adjacent to the new housing built on the site of Hill House be reviewed to ensure that all potential archaeological remains are protected - see plan below:



(Drawing courtesy of Robert Bevan-Jones)

Lance Cartwright
for Corbett Meadow Action Group

14 December 2023