

NOV 2014

Appendix B

12 Magnolia Avenue
Wigmore
Gillingham
ME8 0TR.
01634 377267

4th November 2014.

Head of Democratic Services,
Medway Council,
Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR.

Your ref: 40/2014. For attn. Lauren Wallis.

Dear Ms Wallis

Petition: Removal of unsuitable large trees on Kingsfrith Playing Fields, Wigmore.

Yesterday (3rd Nov) I received a response from Robin Cooper regarding the above Petition (his letter dated 28th Oct., ref RC/LAT/GE31/RL). I do indeed feel that the council has not dealt with the Petition properly, and formally request that the matter be reviewed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee as advised in your letter dated 17 October 2014.

First, the petition is not only from me and just concerning my particular case, but is from numerous other householders in the area, just as badly affected, and who feel just as strongly as I do that the matter and our concerns are not being addressed by the Council officers. We have individually and sometimes collectively tried to get our concerns redressed over a long period now and are becoming increasingly desperate to break this deadlock.

Second, Mr Cooper in his letter is being premature in stating that the Local Govt. Ombudsman has concluded his deliberations on my particular complaint about the Council and the trees, and that they were fully satisfied with the Council's actions. My case is still under review, principally because initially the LGO applied a policy of not looking at complaints that were more than 12 months old, which of course made a nonsense of my case complaining about the planting of trees: they acknowledged this would constitute a "catch 22" situation and my case is being reconsidered by an Ombudsman officer not previously involved. A lot of evidence has been submitted that the Tree Officers are not abiding by what they state are their professional guidelines in their own Tree Management Policy in several important ways.

The statements in the Tree Management Policy and what has actually happened in practice are two different things and this deserves wider examination by the public and elected officers. In effect Medway Council's Tree Policy has allowed the tree officers absolute power over when, where and what types of trees are planted with no requirement to consult or even inform the unfortunate ratepayers who may be greatly affected. Then, once planted, the Policy states that the trees will not be removed, apparently leaving us helpless. It is important to note that in the case of the homes whose owners have signed this petition, our
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houses were built and occupied by us BEFORE any trees were planted by the Council and no consideration whatever was given to us— huge forest-type trees like sycamores densely planted so close to our walls, giving endless and literally ever-growing problems, when instead, with a little consideration, the officers could easily have planted smaller or more ornamental trees at a safer distance to create a “visual enhancement”. Ever since, the tree officers have stubbornly refused to justify their actions or rethink the situation.

Thus we would really appreciate the chance for a consideration of our Petition by the wider Council.

If by any chance you do not think the above constitutes enough reasons to proceed to the next stage, please advise me immediately, as we have many more pertinent points that can be submitted. We will be happy to furnish any further evidence now or at any time, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Mr L. D. Lisgarten

Cc Cllrs. R and D Chambers