

## **Mr Desmond Kelly**

**Comment submitted date: Sun 12 Jan 2020**

I wish to strongly object against the proposals to fell important mature trees to make way for the proposed Ness Castle Primary School.

In particular, I object to the proposals shown on Drawing 111602 to fell the following trees:

T980-A1: A mature Scots Pine with 40+ years of life expectancy, described in the Tree Report as "A fine landscape feature tree", which lies outwith the footprint of the proposed school.

T981-B1: Another mature Scots pine described in the Tree Report as "well suited to retention within a development"

T5328-A1: A very old sessile oak, described in the Tree Report as "an important veteran tree" and a "tree with enormous potential. Not presenting a current hazard".

"These veteran [trees] are recognised for their importance ecologically, culturally and aesthetically, and can provide an irreplaceable contribution for many generations, if managed appropriately."

These are just a few of some 90 trees earmarked for felling to make way for the new school.

There has been too much felling of mature trees in the Inverness area to make way for new development. I urge planners to review the layout of the school and associated sports pitches to retain more of these important trees.

Yours Sincerely

Des Kelly

## **Ms Lucy Clarke**

**Comment submitted date: Tue 21 Jan 2020**

With reference to plan 19/05203/FUL, proposed Ness Castle Primary and Nursery School development, I wish to register a strong objection to planned tree felling.

Trees outlined in the Tree Protection Order, particular reference to T5328, T980 and T981, include destruction of veteran trees, some of which have a live expectancy of more than 40 years. They play an important part in biodiversity and some are detailed in the Tree Schedule as "excellent landscape features" and an "important veteran tree . . . with enormous potential".

Much of the planned tree felling is not in accordance with the Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). Point 20.23 Trees and Development where is clearly states "Trees and woodlands are a resource of multiple benefits with substantial contributions to landscape character and distinctiveness, biodiversity, the climate change agenda, and opportunities for recreation . . . They play a vital role in integrating any new development into the surrounding area."(page 104)

Further more, Policy 51 states "The Council will support development which promotes significant protection to existing hedges, trees and woodlands on and around development sites. The acceptable developable area of a site is influenced by tree impact, and adequate separation distances will be required between established trees and any new development. Where appropriate a woodland management plan will be required to secure management of an existing resource." (page 104)

I have not seen a woodland management plan for this planned development and I am not aware of the existence of one.

Scottish National Heritage also provide guidance on trees and woodland with regards to planning and development. They very clearly state "Ancient and semi-natural woodland

is an important and irreplaceable national resource. It must be protected and enhanced, as should be all native and mature woodlands." <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/advice-planners-and-developers/planning-and-development-trees-and-woodland> (accessed on 21/1/2020) and mature woodland

Therefore, I urge planners to adopt the guidance given in the Tree Schedule. Revisit the proposed plans and redesign the layout of this proposed development. Special attention needs to be paid to the all-weather pitch and multi-use games area. Doing so will minimise damage and destruction to these important trees.

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**Mrs J Stribley**

**Comment submitted date: Tue 21 Jan 2020**

I'm writing to express my disappointment and objection to Highland Council for electing to chop down veteran trees on the new plans for Ness Castle School. Living in Sheffield

and witnessing the destruction of veteran and mature trees has given me an understanding of how important these trees are for carbon capture, but also the living creatures that rely on them. The experts have had their say also, in your own planning, yet you choose to ignore them. I can understand the trees needing to go that are on the exact footprint of the new school, but struggling to see how felling an ancient oak tree, virtually alive through a multitude of mankind's most celebrated inventions and achievements, felled simply to not interrupt a playing field aesthetic. You, as a council, have a responsibility to embrace your cultural history and teach the future generations about protecting precious living testaments that cannot be replaced. A sapling, no matter how well planted, will not replace the aged veteran. Your beautiful school will fall before any replacement tree can reach the magnitude of the oak you propose to take out on one afternoon.

Imagine having the oak as the symbol of the new school, the strong roots, the perseverance. A logo with the tree front and centre. If you asked any child if they would fell the tree for a perfect flat playing field, they would say NO. Kids are very aware of the poor decisions adults are making on their behalf. Put a fence around this lovely oak, please, if it offends, and let the birds and the beasts return to it year upon year. Retain also the veteran Scots pines, that also will be removed against expert advice, for simple aesthetics. Please, listen to your experts and do the best thing for your children there.

### **Mrs Emily Williams**

**Comment submitted date: Tue 21 Jan 2020**

I am writing to object to the lack of provision of access for active travel to the proposed Primary School. As a new build school on a greenfield site, there is the opportunity to create a streetscape that prioritises active travel above the needs of private cars, thus promoting sustainable and healthy attitudes to travel among young children. We are on the cusp of irreversible climate change, and reducing dependence on travel by car, especially for frequent short journeys, is an essential component of reducing Scotland's carbon emissions. This change in behaviour can be encouraged by placing the needs of active travel at the heart of new development.

Cycling by Design (2010, amended 2011) states that children and parents will be motivated to cycle if it is perceived as safe and enjoyable, and that direct segregated cycle routes are the preferred option. These routes should prioritise journey time and convenience, by being extended outwith the school perimeter to connect with the surrounding housing developments. These should be designed to be wide enough to cater for a significant use by specialised equipment such as a double cycle trailer, which requires wider turning circles and the avoidance of pinch points. The Handbook for Cycle Friendly design (2014) indicates that these segregated cycle lanes should be a minimum of 2.5m wide.

This development in its current form does not meet with the aims of the Scottish Government Active Travel Framework, by failing to provide high quality walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure, well connected to a local network routes.

Little information is given on the drawings regarding the provision of cycle parking, but this should be secure and covered, and provision should be increased from the stated 30 cycle spaces. It is noted that there is no provision for cycling or cycle parking made at the entrance to the nursery. Here it is important that cycle access should be designed with a parent accompanying a child on a balance bike in mind (entirely segregated from traffic, and sufficiently wide to accommodate riding side by side), and segregated from pedestrian access.

**Comment submitted date: Tue 21 Jan 2020**

I am writing to object to the felling of a number of veteran trees, and associated loss of irreplaceable habitat, within the grounds of the school. There is no evidence (eg, biodiversity net gain assessment) that the loss of this habitat is compensated for in the proposed landscaping plans. By altering the proposed layout of the sports areas and landscaping around the school it would be possible to preserve the irreplaceable habitat associate with the veteran trees within the school grounds.

The submitted PEA is not complete and PEA's (as per CIEEM Guidelines (2017)) are not considered as appropriate level of detail to support a planning application.

Under Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity. The documents submitted with this application do not support that duty.

The recommendations in the Tree Survey, particularly in relation to T5328, T980 and T981 are not being followed.

Section 3.5 of the Sustainability Plan is inadequate. There is no evidence (eg, baseline assessment of the biodiversity present on the site, and the changes caused by the development) that biodiversity will be enhanced and the development fails to meet the principles of the Biodiversity Net Gain guidelines (2019).

The planting strategy is inadequate. There is no information on the management of the proposed newly created habitats to maintain biodiversity, or monitoring to ensure the biodiversity enhancements are achieved. The species chosen for the planting are not appropriate (eg inclusion of Red hot Poker in the shrub mix which is native to Africa, Beech is considered outside it's native range in the Highlands, cultivars of trees and shrubs rather than native species).

There is no specific bat roost survey information provided, though the Tree Report identifies a number of potential bat roost sites.

**Mr Howard Ogden**

**Comment submitted date: Tue 21 Jan 2020**

I'm writing to object to the proposed primary school development, in particular to the felling of important trees. Whilst I wholeheartedly support the building of a primary school, one only has to view the tree report for a moment to see the lack of respect being afforded to high category trees by this developer. Dozens of trees with more than 40 years of life, many category B and some category A, will be lost forever..

It seems odd to me to read concerns about flooding and drainage, when trees are to be removed for car parks and sports fields. If they were integrated into the design they would help protect these areas from flooding. Their large canopy of leaves slow and disperse the rain and their roots help soak it away, thus easing pressure on drainage. Removing hundreds of square meters of canopy will have an immediate effect on the potential for flooding and surface water issues.

Here in Bristol we develop buildings around trees, keeping important trees on the edge of development sites, and using screw pile foundations buildings can be erected mere meters from the tree, yet still observing the RPA in an urban environment. If we can do that, surely, The Highland Council can apply similar standards to protect the visual amenity of the regions famed natural heritage?

I do not see many public comments on this planning application, I really do hope the

local community has been engaged and informed of this proposed development appropriately.

This is not a local issue, nor a regional issue, this is a global issue. Trees are life.

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One only has to view the tree report for a moment to see the lack of respect being afforded to high category trees by this developer. Here in Bristol we develop buildings around trees, keeping important trees on the edge of development sites provides visual amenity, and with screw pile foundations buildings can be erected mere meters from the tree, yet still observing the RPA.

Car parks and sports fields will be protected from flooding by integrating the existing trees into the design. The leaves slow the rain and roots help soak away the rain, easing pressure on the sewer system.

I do not see many public comments on this planning application, I really do hope the local community has been engaged and informed of this proposed development appropriately.

This is not a local issue, this is a global issue. Trees are life.

### **Dr Bridie Barnett**

**Comment submitted date: Mon 20 Jan 2020**

I would like to support what Kay Kelly has said, and also add the following objection to the planning proposal:

- We are in a climate emergency, which Highland Council has acknowledged by declaring a climate emergency last year. Now it is time to act, and put your money (and actions) where your mouth is.
- Trees form an important part of our environment for preserving biodiversity and ecology. The Tree survey report includes this, mentioning that some are suitable sites for bat roosting (protected species), and also important for insect species.
- Trees are also vital to flood prevention measures, which we have seen overlooked by Highland Council in other areas, such as the Ness Islands, to the detriment of the paths and banks.
- Trees also have important aesthetic value - all outside spaces are visually improved by having trees.
- Trees are an essential part of tackling climate change as they sequester carbon dioxide. A climate that we need to preserve for the sake of future generations, for whom this school is being built.
- Time and time again Highland council ignores expert opinion in favour of development. It is time to prioritise ecological and environmental considerations when considering planning permission. Taking shortcuts and ignoring expert recommendations is to the detriment of our urban and rural areas, our future safety, health and wellbeing.

**PLEASE RECONSIDER THE FELLING OF THESE VETERAN TREES**

It is also important that the public have a say in this, and it is a requirement that any developments should be advertised to local residents. I heard of this via word of mouth, and would otherwise have been oblivious.

### **Mrs Justine Bell**

**Comment submitted date: Mon 20 Jan 2020**

I am in favour of any improvements to the primary school which will benefit the children however I strongly object to the destruction of the TPO trees on the site.

It is needless when it could be avoided by repositioning the pitch. Their destruction seems to be at odds with the councils own policies. I would urge a rethink on this plan.

## **Mrs Alison Wright**

**Comment submitted date: Mon 20 Jan 2020**

I would like to object to the proposal to fell important mature trees to make way for the all-weather pitch and the multi-use games area at this new primary and nursery school to the north of Torbrek. These trees once followed the line of the formal avenue or drive from the West Lodge towards Ness Castle and as such were planted to be part of a designed landscape. The age and importance of these trees is highlighted in the report as "fine landscape feature trees" and "well suited to retention within a development". Having looked at the plans for the layout of the outdoor space at the new school, it would appear that by re positioning the all-weather pitch, by turning it through 90 degrees, will preserve many of the trees currently earmarked for felling. The benefit of trees and the natural environment to young children and the wider community cannot be underestimated - especially as we are currently entering a period of environmental crisis. The Highland Council actively campaigns for schools to become Eco-schools with No. 1 on the list of objectives being: "Improve the school's environment" - how great it would be for a new school to start with an interesting and mature environment to complement and enhance, what I presume will be, a modern and energy efficient school building? With more schools taking an active part to develop their Eco credentials and nurture their pupils as responsible citizens, this needless destruction of the natural environment would appear to contradict what The Highland Council claims to promote.

## **Dr Clare Hughes**

**Comment submitted date: Sun 19 Jan 2020**

I object strongly to the destruction of the TPO trees on the site. Climate change and the destruction of natural habitats is now firmly embedded in council policies and you must be in direct contravention of your own policies if these trees are removed. It will be an unnecessary and wanton destruction of an important natural asset.

## **Ms Cath Archer**

**Comment submitted date: Sun 19 Jan 2020**

I wish to object to the planned felling of trees at this site, particularly the mature trees which have been mentioned in the tree report. I understand that some 90 trees are under threat, with the report giving special mention to two mature scots pines and one very old, mature oak. In particular these trees have been described as "a fine landscape feature tree" - scots pine T980-A1, "well suited to retention within a development" - scots pine T981-B1 and "a tree with enormous potential. Not presenting a current hazard" - mature sessile oak, T5328-A1. In the current climate of increasing pollution, loss of wildlife habitat and loss of tree-canopy, I urge you please to keep all the trees possible on this site, and think again about destroying these trees unnecessarily.

Regards,  
Cath Archer

## **Dr Kay Kelly**

**Comment submitted date: Sun 19 Jan 2020**

The expert who surveyed the site at your request has clearly stated that veteran trees, including the beautiful sessile oak, are important, and that their value to invertebrate creatures, birds and mammals should never be underestimated.

However, the design of the school has overlooked the advice given. I do not know how this came about, but it obviously needs to be rectified and expert advice respected.

Having such a beautiful and valuable tree within the school grounds will, as I am sure you know, enhance quality of life for the children, contribute to a restorative

environment, and will provide valuable educational opportunities as well [1,2,3]. Other research shows the benefit of trees in particular and natural green spaces in general for improving attention [4,5] reducing stress [6,7], reducing aggression [8], enhancing self-regulation [9] and improving physical and mental health [10,11,12] in children and adults. The correlation between tree cover surrounding schools and academic performance has been noted [13]

It is short-sighted to deny this to the children, especially when the evidence regarding the benefits of trees, specifically veteran trees, is so clear and so widely understood.

It is also particularly ironic that we stand to lose the tree's ecological benefits, in the context of the site for a school, which will be attended by exactly those who would suffer the brunt of this loss! They will suffer the effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity, loosing insects, mammals and birds.

You will of course be aware that the people of Inverness have already suffered the loss of too many mature trees in the construction of the bypass.

The idea of destroying the trees, especially the Sessile Oak and the Scots Pine, is nonsensical if we are aiming to benefit children.

I heard of the plight of this oak via word of mouth and when I went to see the tree, I saw no notices or anything to let people know that it was under threat. Passers-by, even those who enjoy the veteran tree every day, and were generally already aware that this is the intended site for the school, have been kept in the dark, and were horrified to hear that the council intended to destroy the tree.

If you are building a school, you must take into account the children's well-being, their education, and their future.

#### References:

1 Trees as affordances for connectedness to place- a framework to facilitate children's relationship with nature Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Volume 28, December 2017, Pages 150-159 Taina Laaksoharju, Erja Rappe

2 Journal of Environmental Psychology Volume 59, October 2018, Pages 9-15

Responding to nature: Natural environments improve parent-child communication Thea Cameron-Faulkner Joanna Melville Merideth Gattisc

3 Journal of Environmental Psychology Volume 67, February 2020, 101381

Psychological benefits of a biodiversity-focussed outdoor learning program for primary school children. Deborah J. Harvey Louise N. Montgomery Hannah Harvey Felix Hall

4 Journal of Environmental Psychology Volume 15, Issue 1, March 1995, Pages 77-85

Views to nature: Effects on attention Carolyn M. Tennesen Bernadine Cimprich

5 Psychology 2011 DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2214.2010.01172.x A comparison of children with ADHD in a natural and built setting van den Agnes Berg, Celia Van den Berg

6 The psycho-physiological stress reduction theory is focused on the effect of nature on overall physiological and emotional health (Clatworthy, Hinds, & Camic, 2013).

7 Landscape planning and stress Patrik Grahn and Ulrika A Stigsdotter Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,

8 When nature heals: Nature exposure moderates the relationship between ostracism and aggression Journal of Environmental Psychology, Volume 48, December 2016, Pages 159-168 Kai-Tak Poon, Fei Teng, et al

9 A dose of nature: Two three-level meta-analyses of the beneficial effects of exposure to nature on children's self-regulation Journal of Environmental Psychology, Volume 65, October 2019, Article 101326 Joyce Weeland, Martine A. Moens, et al

10 The therapeutic benefits of nature include significant increases in physical and psychological well-being Soga, Gaston, & Yamaura, 2017, reduced levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms (Beyer et al., 2014), physiological relaxation (Lee et al., 2013), and improved mood state (Wichrowski, Whiteson, et al, 2005).

11 (article) <https://e360.yale.edu/features/ecopsychology-how-immersion-in-nature-benefits-your-health?fbclid=IwAR12H8QoVVztajbytoOFNvMtlzqT9Z8-IliTln8P7IBCoDohl3FBtoG1Uv0>

12 Landscapes for play: Effects of an intervention to promote nature-based risky play in early childhood centres Journal of Environmental Psychology, Volume 54, December 2017, Pages 139-150 Mariana Brussoni, Takuro Ishikawa

13 Beyond the school grounds: Links between density of tree cover in school surroundings and high school academic performance Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Volume 38, February 2019, Pages 42-53 Dongying Li, Yen-Cheng Chian

## **Mrs Soph Edwards**

**Comment submitted date: Fri 17 Jan 2020**

I would like to strongly object to fell important mature trees in the area. Particularly the trees on drawing 111602, the very old sessile oak T5328-A1 stated in the tree report to be "an important tree" & "a tree with enormous potential not presenting a current hazard" & 2 mature Scots Pines, T980-A1 & T981-B1 described in the report as "A fine landscape feature tree" & "well suited to retention within a development" the first is not even in the footprint of the proposed site for the school so no wonder the report also states these trees: "can provide an irreplaceable contribution for many generations, if managed appropriately"

Please will planning committee instruct changes to the plans so that at least these 3 trees, if not more out of the 90 trees marked for felling are saved, with so many schools developing their eco credentials and teaching our school aged children about the need to protect our environment and move forward in sustainable ways if they are not to end up in the environmental crisis we are all warned we are nearing, how can the committee agree to felling so many trees?

## **Miss Catherine MacInnes**

**Comment submitted date: Thu 16 Jan 2020**

It is commendable that provision is now being made for a school at Ness Castle after the already considerable increase in housing, however I object strongly to the planned tree felling which ironically is detailed as Tree Protection Plan.

Already Inverness has lost many ancient trees at Ness Castle and Torvean. I believe alternative plans can be compiled to ensure the new school sits in its' environment and this would enhance the school area, learning opportunities and environment for the children.

Local Authorities have a duty to protect our natural landscapes but this is not the case with this planning application.

At a time when we should all be more environmentally aware and climate conscious, I would ask that these Tree Protection Plans are revisited with urgency.

Catherine MacInnes  
Torbreck