

When Sam and I bought Town Living six years ago the orchard was an Important Open Space. This was fine with us, we bought the house knowing this. But three years ago the government brought in new planning regulations. This meant that Important Open Spaces would cease to exist. Land could now be designated Local Green Space but with strict new criteria the bar was set very high. There were also two big stipulations about LGS; Firstly The Local Green Space designation would not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. Secondly, that LGS could not be used as a backdoor way to prevent development. It could only be used to protect land that was Demonstrably Special to the community and of local significance due to its history, wildlife, beauty or amenity value. And this is where the problems began.

In their wisdom the Neighbourhood Planning committee decided to nominate all of our land and many more sites as well. They manufactured this by nominating the majority of the sites themselves. Infact 45% of all the nominations were made by one member of the committee and his or her partner. We have asked for the exact numbers of how many committee members did nominate sites and twice the committee has refused us this information. I can only think this is because they have something to hide. These sites were then put forward at the consultation day but they were represented purely as a way to stop development. One of the stipulations that LGS should not be used for. And this where the problems escalated.

The whole NP process was also meant to be consultative. It took the committee two years not to ask the landowners how they felt about their land being nominated. It was down to me approaching the committee that many of the other landowners found out their land was actually nominated. And this is where the problems became nasty.

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The owners of the nominated sites then started going to the NP meetings. We have tried to argue our point of view, we have brought evidence to reject the committee's own, the committee has received advice from their own specialist that the sites they have put forward are not worth pursuing but they still insist on going forward with many of the sites. So much for a consultative process. And this is where the problems became untenable.

After the last NP meeting one of the members of the committee described the landowners as 'whingers, nit-pickers, whiners and time wasters. And this is what it has come to. A process that should have involved the landowners even before the nominations were made. A process that has now taken over three years. A process that is unfit for purpose. A process that see's committee members advancing their own agendas. A process that has put an enormous amount of strain and pressure on the landowners. A process that should never have been started. A process that should have

been legitimately stopped months ago. I am sorry that our and others land does not meet the criteria for LGS. But that is not our fault. We are not the enemy. We just want the chance to live in peace and enjoy our land. We are neither Whingers, Nit-Pickers or Time wasters. We have legitimate concerns that are being ignored and now ridiculed. This must stop.

^{NOW}
I feel the only way for my voice to be heard is to join the NP group. So I am using this opportunity to join the group and I believe there are other members of the public who would also like to join.