



**CITY OF DURHAM
PARISH COUNCIL**

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23 September 2020

Dear Ms Morina,

Planning Application DM/20/02524/FPA | Construction of 1.8m wide access path. | Low Burnhall Woodland Darlington Road Durham DH1 3ST

The above planning application was considered by the Parish Planning Committee at its Zoom meeting on 18 September, and it was resolved to support this application and to offer a further reason why this application should be approved.

On 30 July 2020 the County Council issued a Decision Notice confirming that the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum. The Government has issued updated guidance (Paragraph: 107 Reference ID: 41-107-20200513) that “Where the local planning authority has issued a decision statement (as set out under Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) detailing its intention to send a neighbourhood plan to referendum, that plan can be given significant weight in decision-making, so far as the plan is material to the application.”

The City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan Policy G3 is relevant to this application. As amended by the Examiner and accepted by both the County Council and the Parish Council, in full it reads:

Policy G3: Creation of the Emerald Network

An Emerald Network is identified, as shown on Proposals Map 3, which comprises sites of wildlife interest within Our Neighbourhood linked by public rights of way or pavements. These sites are:

1. Observatory Hill; and
2. Flass Vale; and
3. Wharton Park; and
4. Aykley Heads; and
5. Hoppers Wood; and
6. The Sands riverbanks; and,
7. St Margaret's cemetery and allotments; and
8. Peninsular Woodlands; and
9. The Racecourse riverbanks; and

10. Pelaw Wood (the part that lies in Our Neighbourhood); and
11. Houghall; and
12. Maiden Castle; and
13. Hollinside Wood, Great High Wood, Little High Wood, Blaid's Wood, dene connecting to Low Burnhall Wood; and
14. Durham University Botanic Gardens; and
15. Low Burnhall Wood; and
16. Farewellhall Wood (the part that lies in Our Neighbourhood); and
17. Baxter Wood (the part that lies in Our Neighbourhood).

Proposals for the purpose of improving the biodiversity of sites in the Emerald Network will be supported.

Proposals for the purpose of improving the amenity of sites in the Emerald Network, or for improving existing footpaths within or between these sites, or providing additional footpaths within or between these sites, particularly for improving accessibility for people with a disability, will be supported as long as they cause no significant harm to the biodiversity of these sites.

You will note that site number 15 is the application site, Low Burnhall Wood.

This proposal is supported because it is improving existing footpaths within the site, with the intention being to "provide a high quality surface that can better accommodate a broader range of accessibility from families with a pram, the elderly and some wheelchair users." An ecological survey has been conducted and it is clear that there will be no significant harm to the biodiversity of the site.

Although the applicant appears to be unaware of the Neighbourhood Plan, this application meets all of the criteria in Policy G3 and the Parish Council is pleased to support it.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council