

As a resident of Westbourne who uses the footpath in question regularly, I wish to object to the housing development off Westwood Close, Emsworth.

We lived in Westbourne 30 years ago, and used the path then. Last year we returned to live in the village and were pleased to find it more-or-less unchanged.

This path together with the Mill Lane path on the east side of the Ems provide a much-loved and well-used circular walk to Emsworth and provides the only 'green link' between Westbourne and Emsworth.

I feel that the area selected to build new homes on is totally inappropriate and would result in unnecessary destruction of wildlife habitat. Other areas of land would be more appropriate for this number of houses.

The importance of 'green corridors' cannot be underestimated particularly in areas as heavily built up as this already is. With the proposed development at Southleigh Farm Park they are going to be even more necessary. The area between Westbourne and Emsworth links the Millponds and Harbour, with Brook Meadow Nature Reserve, and up to Hampshire Farm Meadows (public open space), and ultimately to Hollybank Woods and Southleigh Forest.

Whilst this area of predominantly grazing land may not be of exceptional wildlife interest it is still vital habitat for a wide range of birds, small mammals, insects, stream life and plants. And of course mature trees and hedgerows which provide wildlife with homes too.

The wet and boggy conditions prevailing on the meadow for several months of the year also suggest the unsuitability of the site for housing. And moreover, residents of the existing properties backing onto the meadow will lose the views from their gardens, which in most cases were probably a significant reason for purchasing those particular homes.

At any time of year there is always something to see, hear and appreciate on the meadow. It would be a very sad outcome if we were to lose a significant part of this special area.

Therefore I am asking that Policy H10 is removed, and this area to be added to Policy E4 as a new Local Green Space.

