

8 June 2024

Planning Policy Team,
Cambridge City Council,
PO Box 700,
Cambridge CB1 0JH.

RE: South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan//Access & Parking at Grantchester Meadows

To Whom it May Concern

We are local residents who live in the vicinity of Grantchester Meadows, some of us in the last few houses before the entrance to the Meadows. We have read the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans> with interest and are grateful to the residents who have worked on it. Nonetheless we are writing to express our concerns regarding access to and parking near Grantchester Meadows.

We have two specific issues with the plan. Firstly, we feel access for those outside Newnham to the community and wildlife of South Newnham is an essential characteristic of the area. Secondly: important existing provisions such as parking and other access by those outside of the area are at risk in the proposed plan - specifically parking that grants access to Grantchester Meadows.

We note that the neighbourhood plan refers to the area currently used by cars to access the meadows, as ““Skaters’ Meadow footpath”” - F1 in some figures. We also note that the area immediately adjacent to the Pembroke and St Catherine’s playing fields, where significant numbers of cars park, is also designated as a “Local Green Space” in the plan (LGS2). The plan refers to this area in a way that doesn’t reflect its current use; it has been used as a car park for at least 40 years. The plan also attaches an aspiration for LGS2 to be a Local Green Space, and by implication ‘car free’. This is a much bigger change than the plan is supposed to present.

While we appreciate the environmental and landscaping motivations for this move, we feel that such a change would be unwise.

The benefits of “greening” this small strip of land are outweighed by the social and community costs of excluding Cambridge families or tourists with access needs (due to having small children, disability or because of old age) from accessing the Meadows freely. This access to the wider community is an essential characteristic of South Newnham. Far more in keeping would be, for example, a small and well regulated car park (e.g. 10 spaces, predominantly disabled bays) with space for cycle parking and with built in speed control measures to ensure safe access for pedestrians, cycles, and other vehicles.

The existence of residents’ parking in the local area and limited public transport mean that the parking area is in constant use. As local residents we see this, and are directly affected by it - but we believe the inconvenience to us is a small price to pay for ensuring equitable access to the

Meadows. In the context of a "Cost of Living Crisis", and after everything the Coronavirus taught us, limiting people's access to green spaces is unacceptable. We urge you to reconsider this aspect of the neighbourhood plan.

Access to the nature of Cambridge and Newnham must be a key part of any plan. Cambridge is a notoriously unequal city. Newnham is one of its most expensive neighbourhoods in real estate terms. Creating a leafy idyll that presents a barrier to accessing spaces of enormous cultural significance will only underscore the inequalities of our city and is against the place South Newnham traditionally has held in the wider community. We do not agree with the need to have "Car free routes" as relevant or needed for the plan's goal for Connectivity or zero emissions - cars can be green and are an essential access tool for many. We would welcome any change to this plan that included access for the wider community. For example the issue of private gardens encroaching on public footpaths for example has not been properly explored; nor has the question of providing safe crossings for school children. These moves would be of greater value to the local community, and access to it, without negatively impacting the visitors who come from greater Cambridge and the whole world to enjoy this beautiful neighbourhood.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Nasheed Qamar Faruqi, [REDACTED]

Professor Hugo Bronstein, [REDACTED]

Professor Mary Margaret McCabe [REDACTED]

Mr Matthew Cleevely, [REDACTED]

Dr Veronika Dobler, [REDACTED]

Adam Cleevely, [REDACTED]

Emily Cleevely, [REDACTED]

Dr. Holly Porter, [REDACTED]

Shannon D. Shafer, [REDACTED]