

ELLESMERE PARK RESIDENTS

PRESS RELEASE

SALFORD NATURE RESERVE UNDER THREAT FROM UNITED UTILITIES

Plans are being finalised by United Utilities to ruin a significant part of a Local Nature Reserve in Salford with the construction of a 9m storm tank, temporary car park and storage facilities destroying over 17 mature trees and disrupting local wildlife.

Residents, councillors and the local MP, Rebecca Long Bailey, are pulling together to bring United Utilities to task on their mission to start work imminently on the Three Sisters Nature Reserve off Rutland Road, Ellesmere Park, a leafy tree lined area of Salford. The United Utilities works, which are due to start next month, will take well over ten months.

The sewer improvements are much needed for a small number of Ellesmere Park homes whose cellars are prone to occasional sewer flooding.

Local resident and chair of the Ellesmere Park Residents Association (EPRA) Clare Ward said, "We are not against the need to mitigate the sewer flooding, it is the location of both the storm tank and the construction of a temporary car park and storage area that concerns us particularly when there are other alternative locations. To destroy mature trees for the sake of short term gain seems completely unreasonable. The Three Sisters is an official defined Site of Biological Interest (SBI) in Eccles with a Roman road running through the site."

Following extensive research by some members of the local community errors have been found in United Utilities habitat survey and biodiversity work that vastly underestimates the nature value of the site. Residents believe amongst the local wildlife Great Crested Newts reside on the site.

United Utilities planning application comprised the construction of a vent tower and control gear and maintenance access above the ground clearing 2,000m², around 5% of the nature reserve, of 17 mature trees including old oak trees. As compensation, United Utilities plan to replace the mature trees with a few young trees, tiny saplings and a flat, grassy area. However United Utilities

proposed replacement will not deliver anything like the existing biodiversity and maturity of the nature reserve for over fifty years.

Landowners Salford City Council appear unable to force United Utilities to present alternative solutions preventing the clearing of woodland on their land - even though this type of storm tank is usually placed under the road as has been done many times before in Ellesmere Park.

Residents and councillors who have discussed the plans with United Utilities and endeavoured to agree an alternative location for both the storm tank and the temporary works, but to no avail, believe United Utilities are choosing the easiest and cheapest option without any explanation or justification. These types of tanks are frequently located under the highway, without any temporary compound with a "just in time" approach for materials. An example of this was when a very large storm tank was installed recently under the road in Victoria Crescent, Ellesmere Park, without the need for a car park or storage compound.

A local resident, whose cellar has been flooded in the past, has objected to the current planning application and has commented, "There are proven viable alternative solutions other than locating the storm tank on a Local Nature Reserve, solutions United Utilities have chosen to completely ignore. Over the last 40 years residents of Salford have fought hard to protect and enhanced this unique area for the benefit of the wider community. When there are alternative solutions, that United Utilities have used previously in this area to stop flooding, I am not prepared to see any part of our Local Nature Reserve destroyed."

The next planning meeting will take place on 12th October when a decision is expected to be made.

ENDS

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