

Denefields Information Panels Lib Dems help enhance conservation area



Two new information panels are being erected in the Denefields conservation area at Matlock Green, to provide information about the flora and fauna of the area. Many people walk through Denefields regularly and enjoy the rural experience of this semi-wild area, so the panels should help to inform them further. The panels have been partly funded by Lib Dem County and District Councillors' local project funds.

Anyone interested in joining the volunteer group, supported by Matlock Town Council, who work hard to manage the site, should contact **Cllr Helen Legood** on 01629 57358. They meet most Thursdays

Matlock Green public footpath resurfaced

After several requests by **County Cllr Sue Burfoot** the well used public footpath between St Giles Walk / Denefields Court and Matlock Green has now been resurfaced by the County Council. Improvements to this uneven and potentially dangerous path were long overdue.



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I would like to join the Lib Dems - let me know how or visit libdems.org.uk/join

Cut out and return to: Cllr Martin Burfoot, 12 Megdale, Matlock, DE4 3JW or email martin.burfoot@derbyshiredaleslibdems.org.uk

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Liberal Democrats - keeping you in touch with local issues

The Tansley Traveller Site - have the Tories shot themselves in the foot?



The site on Knabhall Lane is unsuitable for use as a traveller site. It is far from any amenities and does not have water, gas, electricity or sewers. It has been used as a village rubbish tip.

The Council does not know how much it will cost to develop the site or whether the traveller family will even use it.

Work will also be required to clear it of toxic material, resurface the site, widen the entrance, and install services. Even widening of the narrow lane, often snow or ice bound in winter, may be needed for it to satisfy Government guidelines for traveller sites.

The Council cannot even say when the travellers can move in – they do not have a plan!

This unsuitable site is opposite where a farm building conversion was refused last year because it would be “harmful to the character and appearance of the open countryside and in an unsustainable rural location away from jobs, services and facilities”.

All six Lib Dem councillors present spoke in the debate. They were concerned about the suitability of the site, the lack of consultation with Tansley residents and that a decision was to be made without any idea of the cost or whether the travellers would use it.

A **private** meeting of Conservative councillors voted to support a new traveller and gypsy site above Tansley on Knabhall Lane, rejecting three sites in Ashbourne, Wirksworth and Rowsley. They did this **before** the District Council met in early September to decide where the new site was to be and **before** they had heard any of the evidence presented at the Council meeting.

At that meeting, Tory councillors voted in unison to use the site as both a temporary and a permanent traveller site.

That **they decided how to vote before the Council meeting** suggests that they could be in breach of statutory requirements enshrined in law to make decisions on merit after hearing all the evidence.

Cllr Martin Burfoot said the decision was farcical, given all the problems with the site and access to it. He pointed out that temporary use of the site would be impossible during construction of the permanent scheme and would be unfair to the traveller family. Council officers now accept that another temporary site will be needed, as well as a further site in a few years' time to satisfy their own Local Plan.

Cllr David Hughes said that all councillors had to abide by a statutory principle that decisions must be made on merit, taking all relevant information into account. David proposed a working party to thoroughly evaluate all the shortlisted sites, but this was rejected by the controlling Tory group.

Cllr Paul Cruise added “The basis for this decision is seriously flawed. Such a rushed decision will continue to be challenged, since the traveller community need a sustainable site, not Knabhall Lane in winter”.

