

NORTHCLIFFE SAYS NO CAMPAIGN – AGAINST THE PROPOSED CREMATORIUM

Information about Northcliffe Park

- The area is just under 90 acres in total, comprising Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, parkland, allotments, playing fields and play areas.
- The park is well used by a wide variety of people, and is home to Bradford Model Engineering Society's miniature railway, Northcliffe Environmental Enterprises Team (NEET), a charity for Adults with Learning Disabilities, and Shipley Bowling Club.
- Northcliffe Wood and Old Spring Wood are classed as ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), places that have been continually wooded since at least 1600. Both have recently been designated as non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) by the West Yorkshire Local Sites Partnership (WYJS 2011) and are considered to be of between District and County nature conservation value.
- The meadow area of the park has been allowed to grow as a wildflower meadow since 2010. This has helped increase the population of Ghost Moths, featured on BBC's "The One Show" in 2015. This meadow is now eligible for selection as a Local Wildlife Site in that it is over 0.25 ha in size and 13 indicator grassland plant species have been recorded that are listed in the West Yorkshire Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria, which is well over the threshold (8) for selection (WYJS 2011). This meadow is therefore of at least District importance for nature conservation.
- Northcliffe as a conservation area is unique in the Shipley area because it is large enough, established enough, cared about and diverse enough to contain a variety of habitats which are managed, developed and monitored by local conservation volunteers and by conservation experts. These habitats are: species-rich meadow, ancient semi-natural woodland, dense and scattered scrub, hedgerows, wetland, running and still water communities and food growing areas. Current evidence indicates that this management has increased biodiversity i.e. the wildlife within these habitats.
- Of the 43 bird species recorded at Northcliffe so far into 2018, four, namely the house sparrow, common starling, song thrush and mistle thrush, are categorised as Red List birds of high conservation priority and their national status is under threat. A further seven bird species (stock dove, swift, house martin, dunnock, bullfinch, kestrel and tawny owl), are categorised as Amber List birds of moderate conservation priority.
- Several species of bats have been recorded within the woods at Northcliffe and it is highly likely that some of the small crevices, hollows and ivy-clad trunks of mature trees both within and on the edge of the woodlands at Northcliffe will be used for breeding or sheltering purposes by bats.

Ownership and Management

- Sir Norman Rae officially transferred the land into the trust of Shipley Urban District Council (SUDC) in April 1921.
- Part of the conveyance states that the land shall be used "solely and entirely as an open space for the benefit and recreation of the public, and for no other purpose whatever".

- When SUDC was absorbed into Bradford Council in 1974, BMDC took on responsibility for the care and maintenance of the park.
- The land is held as a charitable trust (charity no. 515034) by BMDC, with the Council as sole trustee, and the day-to-day management of the trust effectively delegated to Council Officers.
- When decisions are needed from the Trustee, this is done with delegated authority through the Councils Regulatory and Appeal Committee, sitting as Trustees.

Background to the “Northcliffe Says No” Campaign

- Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) need to build a new crematorium in North Bradford and Northcliffe is one of three sites being considered.
- A crematorium would have a massive impact on the top area of Northcliffe Park. It would take up a lot of space with the buildings, car parks, access roads and a garden of remembrance. They are looking for around 15 acres of land, possibly more depending on how the site could be developed, so a sixth of all the land in Northcliffe, and much more than the 5% the council are suggesting.
- It would cause huge environmental damage to Northcliffe – damaging the woods as well as the wildflower meadow, and effectively cutting the park in two.
- The road entrance would be next to the golf club on High Bank Lane, bringing more traffic and more air pollution.
- Due to these impacts, a campaign group has been set up, sponsored by Friends of Northcliffe and comprising members of the community interested in active involvement. The public meeting to set up the group attracted almost 100 people who were interested in being actively involved in campaigning.
- A petition has been signed by nearly 3000 people who want to protect Northcliffe for future generations – not just from Shipley but from around the world. The petition is being presented to BMDC at the full Council Meeting on 16th October.
- The whole area within a mile or so of Northcliffe has been leafleted.
- A rally was held on September 29th and attracted around 500 people and gained good media coverage.

Behind the scenes work

Since we heard the news about the possibility of a crematorium on Northcliffe FON and the campaign groups have been

- Looking in more detail at the way the council run lands left in trust to them and how this meets the criteria set out by the Charity Commission
- Exploring Charity Commission rulings in other cases
- Seeking advice from national campaigning bodies who may be able to help
- Seeking legal advice on the conveyance between Norman Rae and Shipley Council as its quite complex
- Meeting with council officers to check out facts
- Talking to local councillors to understand how best to influence the councillors who will make the final decisions.
- Setting up a social media group, a leafletting group, an organising events group, and raising funds for the campaign.
- We are looking at buying air monitoring tubes to show the difference in pollution between the main road and the top of the park and the importance of Northcliffe Park as a green lung for local people.

Where we are now

- The Council are about to appoint a consultancy firm who will undertake the feasibility study on all 5 sites, 3 in the north and 2 in the south and make recommendations about the best site for the crematorium in the south and the one in the north of Bradford.
- The consultants are expected to make contact with FON to ensure that the ecological impact and the social impact is considered as part of this study.
- We are currently putting together an ecological and social and health impact of the proposed development.
- We are putting together a briefing for all councillors prior to the Council meeting on 16th October where our petition will be heard and we have 5 minutes to present our case.
- We are planning another highish profile activity in November to keep the pressure up – probably on the theme of Humans of Northcliffe, to follow the earlier dogs or Northcliffe events.
- We expect the consultants to report to the executive in January/ February time and are getting prepared for whatever is recommended about Northcliffe; if Northcliffe is recommended as the preferred site then we will be involving the Charity Commissioners.
- The campaign group will meet again in November and we will post updates after then.