

It is with great concern that I am writing about how the issue of the Claimed Rights of Way across Clayton Fields, Edgerton, is being addressed, or rather, ignored and neglected, by council planners and committee members. I was at the most recent planning meeting on August 31st in the Town Hall, where the Committee was being urged to stop the Claimed Rights of Way applications, as requested by the developer. It is not only extremely worrying that these claimed routes were bunched together and not considered on their individual merits, but also that they did not seem to be looked at in their positions on the site and with relation to the planned development by council officials before decisions were contemplated.

These routes could and indeed should be individually dealt with so that the incorporation of one or some of them might be included in the building plans, an action that may serve to enhance the future development and to satisfy the public's wishes. They are all of immense importance to many local people who have had essentially free-use of the Fields for time immemorial. Some of these applications carry more weight than others, however, as has been proven by the sheer and unprecedented volume of statements of use completed. Some of these routes could be quite easily included as features of the new housing estate. The most significant and popular Claimed Right of Way is the well-worn footpath running along the Clayton dike side of the Fields and it seems incredulous that council planners are brushing this route in particular and the public voices speaking up for it, aside.

The local people are being offered the absolute minimum from this proposed development and their feelings and needs are not being considered or met in any way. The Council Planners seem driven purely by the need to make money and in this case, to provide an insignificant number of homes and not even affordable ones at that. The moral issue of what local people desire and the fact that they are losing an important and historic green space seems to be being completely disregarded. Local residents surely deserve to be listened to and granted some part, at least, of what they are requesting. To provide the woodland-side Claimed Rights of Way, for instance, would involve the developer making minor adjustments to their plans, moving the layout back a few feet, in most cases. To make this route an official Right of Way would appease the local people and may even improve the whole development by adding an attractive, natural and useful aspect to the place.

The developer would have to do very little to compromise for one or even more of these Claimed Rights of Ways to be incorporated into their plans and this would relieve antagonism and frustration amongst local people, who currently use, enjoy and rely on Clayton Fields. These people accept the prospect of a housing estate being built on this site, but would like their wishes to be



considered and processed along with the developer's. The local council should be treating both sides, the powerful developer and the general, dependent public with equal fairness. Unless the needs of local people are considered or processed before the Committee come to a decision on the Claimed Rights of Way, an injustice will have been done to the townspeople of Huddersfield.