

Mary Ann Rogers

West Woodburn, Hexham NE48 2SE

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Re Planning application 20:00698:_FUL

I am a founder member of Keep the Wannies Wild.

I am an artist, and own a gallery in West Woodburn. I have lived here for 34 years and I wish to object to the proposal.

I am extremely familiar with the location. I drive across the Wannies several times a week, and walk in the network of paths and rights of way. The area provides inspiration for my work, and is a place of solace, solitude and spiritual refreshment for me. The wide open countryside with dramatic sweeping views is exceptional, and this proposal attempts to ruin this special area for eternity.

I have little to add to the many heartfelt objections already lodged, nor to the objection I made to the application in 2019, where I stated that it is inappropriate in size, style and material for the location, and furthermore, that if it received permission to go ahead, it would be loathed by the local population, and the decision makers would become a laughing stock.

This new application is an act of desperation, and includes projected visitor numbers, proposed economic benefit and a consultation which has highly questionable methodology, and pointedly excludes the local population, despite a concerted campaign to gain the support from local farmers and landowners.

We at KTWV have carefully looked at the letters of support, and can split them up between: staff and tenants of the applicant; friends and acquaintances of the applicant; friends and acquaintances of the artist and finally, a small group of hapless supporters gained randomly as a result of an expensive county wide PR campaign which included full page advertisements; published interviews with the artist and a concerted social media campaign.

- **Consultation.** It is worth looking at the facts. Children at West Woodburn First school were shown three small artist's models, and asked to make a choice. The number of children at the time were less than 20, and they were aged between 4 and 9 years. Parents related subsequently that the children did not actually 'like' any of the models, and felt hoodwinked. One boy was upset to think that Tit Hill would no longer have sheep on it.

I would ask why on earth would the applicant not consult with the local businesses, including my own gallery, with over 35 years of experience within the art world in this area, exhibiting and selling my own work, and the work of other artists and sculptors.

I would also ask why, in the initial consultation, were the exhibitions not publicised locally, and were placed in such remote, out of the way places as Corsenside Church, a remote, ancient church located in the middle of a field, about three miles from the nearest village?

- **Tourism.** The area known as The Wannies, which includes the site of the proposed development, attracts substantial numbers of visitors from far and wide already, for activities including: walking, climbing, cycling, birdwatching and nature watching. KTWV is not able to quantify the numbers, but the volume and variety of objectors, which include representations from groups as well as individuals illustrates this point. By erecting a man-

made, entirely artificial 'tourist attraction', with contrived appendages like interpretation boards, pathways etc and encouraging individuals and groups to travel out to this quiet remote spot to visit it, we believe it will drive away the existing visitors to the area who value it for its wild, peaceful and tranquil atmosphere. This is a case of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs surely?

- Economic Benefit. Unsubstantiated Claims are made about an economic benefit to the area, but there is not one single letter of support from a local business, attraction or accommodation provider for this proposal, because those of us who make much of our living from visitors to the area know full well why they come here. This is because we have spent time listening to them, reading their comments in our visitor's books and tripadvisor reviews, and understand that it is the unique landscape, nature and tranquility that they love.

I was delighted with the decision made by the councillors to turn down this application in 2019, and I would beg them to disregard the additional material added to what is essentially the exact same proposal, and refuse permission for this proposal.

It is an unwanted, unnecessary piece of environmental vandalism which is entirely wrong for this area.