

Corsenside Parish Council Public Enquiry Comments

For Proposed Monument on Cold Law

My name is Carl Hamilton and I am the Chair of Corsenside Parish Council on whose behalf I now speak.

Can I begin with a thank you for the opportunity for our comments to be heard and for your work in considering them.

All councillors live within the parish and have regular contact with other members of our community in their everyday lives. In their deliberations, councillors always strive to represent the feelings of parishioners to the best of their ability and to seek outcomes for our parish which benefit all.

Councillors have discussed, at length, the proposed application and feel that they need to strongly object based on a number of issues.

Councillors are aware of substantial local objection to this proposal and were very concerned at an apparent lack of adequate consultation with the local populace. Indeed, some locals, who would be living within a couple of miles of the proposed structure, were completely unaware of its proposal and others thought that it was in Kirkwhelpington, some 8.5 miles away, as Kirkwhelpington is stated on the planning application. A map showing parish boundaries confirms that Cold Law, the location for the proposed feature, lies entirely within the parish of Corsenside and the villages of Ridsdale, East Woodburn and West Woodburn lie within a 2.5-mile radius with Ridsdale being a mere 1.4 miles away.

Parish councilors felt that the proposed monument was very much out of keeping with the local area and the local vernacular. Councillors feel the natural landscape, whilst not designated, is one of outstanding natural beauty and the proposed building material, steel, which will be left to rust, does not fit in to this landscape at all and will appear as particularly alien to its rural surroundings.

Its size is also of great concern being an exceptionally large overbearing industrial metal feature which would tower above the local landscape and completely dominate a now rural area and the impressive natural features within it. Indeed, this area is well known for its peace and tranquility and is recorded in folklore and spoken of by many as 'The Wilds of Wanney', with Great Wanney crag only a mile from the proposed site. The proposed monument is very close, only 2.9 miles, to Northumberland National Park, from many points of which, this would be visible, as it would be presumably from sections of Hadrian's Wall, a World Heritage Site approximately 9 miles away. The proposed monument would impose itself upon people rather than be a structure that can be sought out by choice.

Councillors also felt that the existing road infrastructure was particularly problematic and entirely insufficient to cope with the extra traffic which visitors to this structure could generate. The road leading to the proposed monument is unclassified and is narrow and twisting with blind summits and tight bends, is of poor condition and has a very narrow, single-track, bridge at its eastern end and dangerous junctions at either end where it joins with the A696 but particularly at the junction

with the A68 where there are very poor sight lines for emerging traffic or for northbound traffic turning into the junction from the A68. There are additional hazards and safety concerns associated with large and slow-moving agricultural traffic on the approach road, occasional escapee livestock and also livestock movements between fields blocking the road entirely. Councillors also noted that coach parking space had been allocated in the proposed car park and felt that such vehicles would be entirely unsuitable for the approach road for the reasons previously stated. They would present a significant additional risk to other road users on such a narrow and twisting road with soft verges or no verges at all to allow opposing traffic to pass such wide vehicles and could well lead to accidents occurring.

Furthermore, Councillors were concerned at the lack of local amenities to support any increase in visitor numbers, there being only one very small village shop and one public house in West Woodburn and one public house in Ridsdale. Corsenside Parish is a small rural location with no car parks in the villages or facilities such as public toilets, to accommodate larger numbers of visitors. Councillors were concerned that this could lead to visitors having no choice but to toilet in public places with all the associated unpleasantness and potential health risks from human waste left in the environment. The potential for litter to be left and subsequently blown far and wide from what is a very exposed and windswept location was also of great concern. This would further detract from the natural beauty of the area and could result in environmental damage and health risks to local livestock and wildlife from such windblown debris.

There was also great concern that the proposed structure would entail the removal of a significant wedge of material from Cold Law and the use of many tons of concrete to support the 'spike' which would cause significant, permanent and irrevocable damage to what is a beautiful natural landscape. This is unlike the existing wind turbines which perform a useful function, producing renewable energy, and have a 25 year lifespan after which they will to be removed.

Councillors also noted that the MOD have outlined a requirement for a red light on the highest possible point of the feature, presumably for the benefit of the significant number of low flying aircraft in these parts. There was great concern that such a light would further accentuate the intrusiveness of the proposed monument, rendering it visible at all times of the day and night and having a significant and very unwelcome impact upon our dark skies' environment, being, as we are, on the edge of an International Dark Skies Park, only the third such Dark Skies Park in the world to be designated, which we are proud, as a parish, to support.

Many local residents have said that they have specifically chosen to live in Corsenside as they want and value the peace, quiet and undisturbed natural beauty which living in this rural landscape currently offers.

Corsenside Parish Council urge you to uphold the democratic decision of Northumberland County Council and REJECT this proposal.

Thank you.