

## **NEWBOLD COMYN MASTER PLAN**

The Town Council considered the draft Master Plan at a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020. The Council had initially considered the principle of re-purposing elements of Newbold Comyn at a meeting in November 2019 and had supported options to protect and enhance the use of the site as a place to appreciate biodiversity, wildlife and other activities associated with a unique natural environment.

It is noted that Newbold Comyn is a unique resource that principally attracts use by residents of the Town and the wider District. The site represents an area where activities such as walking and the appreciation of a natural environment are facilitated but where scope exists for other leisure activities; this is particularly the case since the closure of the Golf Course.

The Council acknowledges that the proposals contained within the District Council Master-Plan provide for the introduction of new uses that will potentially change fundamentally the nature of the Comyn and result in it becoming a sub-regional attraction. Whilst this affords income generating opportunities, it is evident that this will require significant changes to the site to accommodate the increase in numbers of visitors envisaged. There is concern that the introduction of additional car parking is contrary to reducing vehicular activity necessary to contribute to wider climate change objectives and that introducing new commercial activities will have a detrimental impact on other competing service providers elsewhere in the immediate vicinity of the Comyn and within the neighbouring Town Centre. It should be noted too that policies within the emerging Leamington Spa Neighbourhood Plan seek to improve air quality and community health by enabling a modal shift to walking and cycling through less reliance on vehicle use. The Master-Plan proposal to create a 197 space parking area appears to contradict that objective.

The diverse nature of the site and its connectivity to other parts of the Town is strongly supported. The Town Council recognises that some residential parts of the Town such as Sydenham and Lillington, though geographically proximate to the site, do not benefit from clearly identified pedestrian access. The options for improving access from these locations and ensuring that they were adequately signposted is advocated. It is noted that some traditional footpath opportunities across the site are very poorly sign posted and in some cases of questionable accessibility. These opportunities can be better exploited.

The connectivity of the Comyn to the national cycle network should also be recognised in the proposals for widening access to the site, together with options for a direct cycle route into the Town from Newbold Comyn.

The proposals in the Master-Plan include proposals for an outdoor activity centre to provide a range of activities for non-traditional forms of physical activity. Whilst this would be attractive to young people and families, this needs to be carefully planned and integrated within the existing natural features of the site.

In summary, the Council welcomes the Master-Plan as an addition to the discussion of repurposing Newbold Comyn. However, it is essential that proposals are avoided which focus on the development of facilities that may lead to the commercialisation and over exploitation of the site. Newbold Comyn should predominantly be maintained as an area of environmental importance, appreciated for its biodiversity and wildlife and widely accessible to walkers, cyclists and those of limited mobility.

Royal Leamington Spa Town Council – Observations to Warwick District Council’s consultation on Newbold Comyn Master-Plan

**Town Clerk  
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**10<sup>th</sup> June 2020**