

## **Appendix B – Objections to the Proposal**

Hello

I am responding to proposal made by a resident of Austin Place for the siting of a Community Garden. The meeting was held 20/2/24 by Environment & Amenities Committee and I have read The Minutes.

I am retired and live with my husband next to the proposed area which is used for dog walking, and is a frequent walkway/ cycle way for access to Farm Road on route to school/work etc. The grassland is well maintained by grass cutting and not neglected!

There is also access to the Abingdon Learning Trust property which has recently had planning permission granted.

I am strongly opposing the suggestion made as it will cause Loss of Privacy, by frequent activity and Noise & Disturbance by congregations, Spoil appearance & layout of the area and basically look like an allotment.

There will already be further noise and disturbances made once the Learning Trust move in. Could also attract vermin as rats are present on the land of some of the residents (including that of the resident who is proposing this) Any seating could attract vandalism/smokers/drug use and a place to sleep!

I disagree that this could benefit your Green Ambitions as this area is pleasant, calm and quiet with natural vegetation. Unlike the areas all along Dunmore Road and towards Peachcroft where flora and fauna has been destroyed to allow building of houses. Further beautiful open land behind Aldi is going to be used for house building too!

The land is also some distance from those proposing to use it, so would need vehicles or means of transportation for gardening implements, water, compost etc. The grass would not be easy to access by the council grass cutters either and possibly not be hygienic for walking/playing on due to it being a dog walking area.

There is an area further up Austin Place which has a huge tree, with fallen/cut branches and attracts children on it which would be ideal. Could this area not be considered for use?

I strongly oppose the Land on Austin Place area be made Change of Use as do most of my neighbours backing onto this site. Please take these views into consideration at your next meeting.

Thank you

Hello.

Sorry that I have felt it necessary to contact you.

It is not something that I often need to do but I write in hope that you can help.

My Name is \_\_\_ and I live in Farm Rd.  
My family and I have lived here for the last 30 years.  
My Garden overlooks the green space by what was once Dunmore Nursery School.

It has very recently come to my attention that a group of residents from Austin Place are planning to use a significant portion of the green space in front of the old Dunmore Nursery for what they call a 'Community Garden.'

Sadly, those Austin Place residents have not bothered to consider or engage in any proper discussion with the actual people who live immediately around the site.  
Only two of the properties in Austin place actually overlook the proposed Garden (the rest are in Farm Road) and both of them do not want this garden in any form.

It is clear to Anyone that has lived here for any period of time that this area is normally a quiet, peaceful space, but has, in the past had its share of Anti-Social behaviour, vandalism, drug taking and general late night reverie.

However, The Town Council have done a great job of keeping this area maintained, so all of us who have to live with the prospect of more trouble again are not in favour of any focal point that will encourage more gatherings or groups loitering whether that be day or night.

It is my understanding that The Abingdon learning trust have now taken over the Pre-School site with a view to schooling Children and young Adults with behavioural difficulties and special needs right there on site and an application for this has been passed despite a raft of residents opposition.

Fair enough. I understand that this hub is needed.  
However, I am not in favour of any garden being erected here as we are still not fully aware of what situations and problems will arise from this Centre being located here.

Clearly, this area is going to be exposed to more footfall, some of it unwelcome.

Belatedly, I have heard from this group that they have grand expansion plans for social gatherings, the planting of trees, raised beds, Seating, vegetable plots and much more. With that, there must come provision for water, tools, lighting, rubbish, composting facilities....The list goes on and on.  
They clearly want an allotment here, Yet, of all the 10 properties that directly overlook the area, only one is in favour of it.

The upkeep of any garden is a commitment that this group have summarily failed to grasp and must be called into serious question as it seems that nobody is prepared to shoulder the overall responsibility for it.

I fear that it's disrepair, litter and a season or two of good old English weather will rapidly turn this lovely spot into an eyesore.

I also feel that this application has been fancifully put together and sat on for a whole 6 months by a barbecue club of people with next to no thought of anyone other than themselves and it is clear that they are not of a mind for any discussion with the people who actually live here.

I oppose this application wholeheartedly.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely

---

To whom it may concern,

We have just found out that the green area outside What was Dunmore Preschool. is being considered to be a community garden. This area is directly behind my home and I really have concerns regarding this. There has been issues before regarding young people gathering and taking drugs in that area. Luckily we have not had any issues now for sometime. When the Preschool was there we had parents and teachers parking across our driveways and having no respect for those of us living in the area. I feel if this area is used as a community area. It's going to affect the area a great deal. Compost bins would encourage more rats. And would become a dumping ground and get neglected, there are a number of elderly people in this area and having spoken to a few of the neighbours they feel vulnerable and frightened of people hanging around. The people whom this affects the most, are the ones backing onto the green, We all feel Not one of us has had our feelings considered about this, or been asked how we would feel about the proposal.

Kind regards

---

Dear Members of the Town Council,

We are writing regarding the proposed changes to the green space between Farm Road and Austin Place in Abingdon, referred to as the Dunmore Estate Community Garden (hereafter "the project"). As residents of Farm Road, whose property is adjacent to this space, we would like to express our opposition to the current plans, while also outlining our reasons and proposing constructive steps forward.

Initially, we were excited to hear about the project, particularly with the potential for increasing biodiversity through the planting of more trees. However, shortly after the first notification, we began to feel a growing sense of unease. It seemed that rather than being included in the planning process, we were simply being informed of decisions that had already been made - decisions that could significantly impact our lives. This sense of exclusion was only reinforced by late invitations to meetings, which were often received too close to the start time to allow for attendance.

As the project evolved to include solar installations, public compost bins, and rerouted pathways, we were left with the impression that the scope of the changes was growing rapidly, yet we were only just being informed. It was also unsettling to hear that the group leading the project claimed full approval from the Town Council - a claim that has since been contested by the Council, yet repeated by the group several weeks later. These instances have eroded our trust in the group's ability to manage such a complex initiative.

### **Distrust in the Project's Management**

While it's important to note that our concerns are not meant as a personal attack on the members of the group, we do feel that there are several key issues that have led to this distrust:

1. Lack of a clear, detailed plan: Despite raising this concern, no comprehensive plan has been presented to the community that outlines the specifics of the project.
2. Constant changes to the project scope: Statements made by the group about the project's goals are often followed by sudden changes in scope, which seem to be aimed at attracting more support rather than addressing core community needs.
3. Dismissal of legitimate concerns: We witnessed reasonable concerns raised by fellow residents during a meeting with the group, but these were dismissed or diminished without meaningful discussion.
4. Inaccurate statements: As mentioned, the group has twice claimed full approval from the Town Council, which we now know was incorrect. This repetition of inaccurate information is troubling.

### **Concerns Regarding Council Oversight**

In addition to these issues, we are concerned about the Town Council's handling of the situation. Even though the Council was made aware of the group's inaccurate claim of approval, no public correction seems to have been issued, which may have contributed to the group continuing to spread this misinformation. Furthermore, a close relationship between Cllr \_\_\_ and members of the group is mentioned on social media, yet this has not been noted in any declarations of interest. Cllr \_\_\_ role as a decision-maker in the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting on February 20th, without acknowledgement of this relationship, raises further concerns about the transparency of the process.

### **Proposals for Moving Forward**

While we recognize that this letter outlines several problems, we do believe there is an opportunity to rebuild trust and ensure a positive outcome for all parties involved. We propose the following steps:

1. Community definition: Establish a clear and fair process for defining who the "community" includes in relation to this project. This will ensure that all affected parties are fairly represented.
2. Transparent planning: A detailed plan, including the project's specific proposals (nature, scope, dimensions, timescales, etc.), should be communicated openly and equally to all community members. Adequate time should be provided for feedback, and concerns should be meaningfully addressed in the refinement of the plan.

3. No further changes without consultation: If an agreed-upon plan is reached, any future changes should require the consent of the community before implementation.
4. Clarification from Cllr \_\_\_\_: Cllr \_\_\_\_ should openly declare their relationship with all parties involved in the project and reconsider their role in decision-making to avoid any conflicts of interest.

We hope that these proposals can foster a more transparent, inclusive, and fair process for all residents. Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, we are unlikely to attend the meeting on the 17th of September, but we look forward to hearing about the outcomes and remain open to further discussion.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,  
Residents of Farm Road