



THORNABY **TOWN COUNCIL**

Green and Open Spaces Policy Statement

Thornaby Town Council is committed to safeguard our town's built and natural environment for present and future generations. It is the council's opinion that adherence to Local Agenda 21's principle advocating 'Think Globally Act Locally' should be consistently adhered to. It is Thornaby Town Council's contention that proposed development of green-field, woodland and wildlife habitat merely for profit and with scant regard for community well-being and the natural environment should be opposed without reservation. It is also the council's position that back-land development should not be allowed and parks never considered for development as such land forms the green lungs of our town providing significant elements of a natural resource that has been massively eroded to the point where we must draw a line. Such a state of affairs cannot continue and Thornaby Town Council will resolutely oppose any future indiscriminate and wildly irresponsible planning mind-set that appears to consider Thornaby on Tees expendable.

Background

The town of Thornaby on Tees was established by the amalgamation of the ancient village of Thornaby and expanding South Stockton following a decision made by the local board to reject overtures from Stockton and for Thornaby on Tees to become a municipal borough in its own right. It is beyond dispute that Thornaby on Tees is both spiritually and geographically situated on the south bank of the River Tees in the County of Yorkshire! And that remains so to this day - though that is often ignored by our larger neighbours. Our traditional boundaries stretch from The River Tees to the Old River at Teesside Retail Park and south beyond our sprawling offspring at Ingleby Barwick.

Since 1968, when autonomy was wrested from the town, Thornaby on Tees was subjected to so much change - much of which proved less than beneficial. Decisions made from outside of the town's traditional boundaries by successive councils only served to rip out the very heart of the town, eroded precious green-field and woodland, and relegated Thornaby into a heavily polluted regional doormat and thoroughfare. A steady spiral of decline and decay followed the loss of self determination - much of which can be blamed on less than robust representation which allowed schemes such as the destructive A66 (misnamed bypass) to carve a ruinous path which effectively cut our town in half. Consequently, much of North Thornaby fell into terminal decline and our iconic Town Hall left isolated and rotting.

But that spiral of decline has - to a large extent - been arrested in recent years and those who routinely dismiss Thornaby on Tees are now robustly challenged by community champions who demand quality development and explanations of what is perceived as un-written policy which in no way considers or respects all that is sacred to Thornaby people. The impact of bold representation has not only revived the town's fortunes, but has also awoken Thornaby's pride which has been laid dormant through indifference and apathy for far too long. The ignominy of imposed limbo is now being erased and shoddy proposals rejected for superior schemes which not only compliment our resurgent town, but also acknowledge the value of our built and natural environment.

Thornaby on Tees is not a periphery nor an estate, but one of four constituent towns which form the major part of the Borough of Stockton on Tees! Thornaby on Tees has its own town council and so by definition is a town. But Thornaby is exceptional amongst those other towns insofar as it is the only town in the administrative area of Stockton by virtue of Royal Charter (1892). That unique accolade can never be denied nor taken from us. Nor can our proud identity and indestructible spirit. But we must never be complacent. History has taught us that we must be strong and constantly on guard to threats that would jeopardise Thornaby's new found status as a forward thinking and environmentally friendly town.

One such threat which has emerged comes in the form of the relaxation of planning rules which tend to encourage developers once restricted to regeneration of brown-field (previously developed) sites to now look avariciously at newly accessible green-field which is far more profitable. If allowed unopposed, such applications if approved will have a grave effect on our green infrastructure and in fact on everything that has been achieved in Thornaby in recent years. Successful regeneration has wiped away an undeserved stigma and reversed an exodus from Thornaby on Tees leading to inward investment and an influx of businesses and people wishing to settle in the town. To maintain the sustainability of that new found fortune, it is essential to recognise that quality build is only attractive if accompanied by a healthy natural environment. In that respect, Thornaby on Tees now leads the way and will continue to do so.

Approved by members on: 21.5.2012

Date of review: May 2013

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