

Wharfemeadows Action Group
c/o 24 Bridge Avenue
Otley
LS21 2AA

Peter Marrington
Head of Scrutiny & Members Development
1st Floor West
Leeds City Council
Civic Hall
Leeds
LS1 1UR

Dear Peter,

8th March 2007

We write to formally request Leeds City Council to scrutinise the plan to install a fence in Wharfemeadows Park, Otley. Our key areas of concern are as follows:

- 1/ The Executive Board's decision to install this fence taken on 9/02/07 has overwhelming opposition from residents, local businesses, town and city councillors and the MP for Leeds NW.
- 2/ The decision was made as a result of a tragic accident in Roundhay Park in 2005. However, the coroner's report at this inquest advised LCC to improve signage and information on such signs only, as submitted to Executive Board 9/02/07 by Denise Preston under Item 13 2.1. It would appear there was a subsequent decision taken to appoint RoSPA to examine the potential risks at Wharfemeadows Park although there has been no fatal accident at this location for over 80 years.
- 3/ The RoSPA report which was written as a result of this compares this rural park to locations such as Thames Embankment, Millennium Bridge and Portsmouth Harbour, comparisons not shared by local people.
- 4/ More worryingly RoSPA is seeking to apply a legal ruling which was overturned in the House of Lords. This House of Lords ruling was available to RoSPA when it was commissioned by LCC to complete its report but was either ignored or not known.
- 5/ The first time people in Otley were informed of LCC's decision was at the Environment and Economic Committee of Otley Town Council on Monday 19th February. Those who attended this meeting as observers learnt that this fence was going to be installed at a cost of £165,000.
- 6/ For over 10 years various voluntary groups have worked closely with different officers of LCC with a key aim of opening up access to the Riverside, groups such as Otley Chamber of Trade, Otley Town Partnership, Otley in Bloom and Otley Conservation Task Force. A little over two years ago over £65,000 of **Market Town's Initiative** funding was allocated to wide-reaching consultations which culminated in the reports '**A Vision for Otley Riverside**' and '**Otley Town Enhancement Study**'. The fencing proposal completely ignores these important consultations.
- 7/ The river is part of the life-blood for sustaining the health of Otley as a business and tourist centre so to make this decision in isolation from the people in Otley has seriously diminished our confidence in LCC's decision-making processes.

We hope this is sufficient information for your scrutiny board to investigate this matter. We look forward to receiving further guidance at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Tony Hartigan, Linda Lukats, Sylvia Reid

Wharfemeadows Action Group

cc: Cllr Eveleigh, Leader Otley Town Council; LCC Cllrs Campbell, Downes & Kirkland