



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**25 January 2021**

### **East of Otley plan will devastate local wildlife**

The East of Otley plan for a new road and 550 houses will devastate local wildlife, unless more wildlife friendly measures are built into the plans from the beginning, according to a local wildlife group.

Wildlife Friendly Otley, which campaigns for Otley to be a 'wildlife friendly' town, expressed grave disappointment at the plans as shown in a recently published consultation document and says the first stage consultation period, which expires on January 29, is being rushed and should be extended.

It urges Otley residents to use the short survey form on the [Otleyeast.co.uk](http://Otleyeast.co.uk) website to voice their concerns that the development will permanently damage local wildlife unless more is done to lessen its impact.

"We urge people to make their voice heard on behalf of our wildlife which is one of Otley's main assets and attractions." said Andrew McKeon, chair of Wildlife Friendly Otley. "The consultation leaflet and information on the [Otleyeast.co.uk](http://Otleyeast.co.uk) website ignores the environmental protections for future developments that were agreed and voted for by Otley residents last year in the Otley Neighbourhood Plan.

"Vital wildlife habitats such as hedgerows, trees, copses and streams which are essential for hedgehogs, badgers, birds, small mammals, butterflies and pollinating insects will be lost or irreparably damaged by the new road and the huge amount of housing," added Mr McKeon.

"There are practical things we can do to address the environmental impact of this development. First is to complete the survey. Second - write to Otley's local councillors for Leeds and our local MP, Alex Sobel. Third is to use social media to give a voice to nature. Fourth - join one of the local wildlife or environmental groups."

“We support provision of affordable housing in Otley and believe this can be delivered with minimal impact on wildlife if the development is carefully planned and delivered. What’s good for wildlife is good for people.”

Wildlife Friendly Otley regards the new road as a major issue as it will destroy existing wildlife routes, form a barrier and cut off all wildlife such as hedgehogs to the east side of Otley unless the measures such as underpasses for wildlife and people are incorporated into plans at the outset when it will be cheaper. This would allow people and wildlife to move freely between Otley and the countryside.

“This is an opportunity for the planners and developers to make the East of Otley scheme an excellent example of an environmentally friendly development which will enhance the quality of life for both residents and wildlife. But this opportunity will be lost along with the wildlife if we don’t fight for it.”

The consultation survey is at [www.otleyeast.co.uk](http://www.otleyeast.co.uk) and closes on Friday January 29. More information is available at [www.wildfriendlyotley.org.uk](http://www.wildfriendlyotley.org.uk)

**End**

**PHOTOS. The old railway line is a rich wildlife habitat which is threatened.**

**The Group says removal of mature trees is unnecessary.**

**The area know as Irish Fields is a haven for wildlife which will disappear.**

**PRESS ENQUIRIES:**

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**Notes:**

**Wildlife Friendly Otley** was launched in 2019 and aims to celebrate and raise awareness of Otley’s rich natural environment and encourages individuals, families, schools and organisations in Otley to become more wildlife friendly. The campaign wants to support existing wildlife groups by increasing community involvement and finding innovative ways to protect and enhance local wildlife.

**[www.wildfriendlyotley.org.uk](http://www.wildfriendlyotley.org.uk)**