

East Lothian villagers win fight against footpath

Residents in an East Lothian village have won their battle to stop developers putting a path through their quiet cul de sac.

Home owners in Waterloo Place, Elphinstone, say their gardens are waterlogged every time it rains since new housing was built on agricultural land at the edge of their village.

And they reacted with anger when developers Bellway applied to build even more homes and create a footpath through woodland and into their street for new residents.

Earlier this week Bellway was granted permission to go ahead with the additional housing behind Waterloo Place, however local councillors unanimously refused to allow the footpath saying there were other alternatives to consider.

Ward Councillor Colin McGinn, who called in the application for the path, and has been working with residents on a range of issues relating to the new housing, refused to back the plan despite council officers recommending it for approval,

Councillor McGinn told fellow members of the planning committee he did not believe it was the right option for the village and colleagues back his view rejecting the application.

Last November residents in Waterloo Place told the Local Democracy Reporting Service they had been plagued by problems since Bellway built the first phase of its new estate, adding

90 homes to the village.

They said their gardens were constantly water logged and objected to Bellway's proposals for more than 100 more homes.

And they said the footpath, which would see trees removed and the loss of a grass play area created for the street, would only add to the issues.

Cul de sac resident Rob Moore said suds ponds created at the bottom of the field where the new homes were planned did not stop water pouring into gardens with no solution coming forward.

And residents felt the footpath added insult to injury.

Rob said: "This is a prime example of what happens if you build on agricultural land, taking away the natural protection. Our gardens are waterlogged and nothing is being done to fix it.

"Now Bellway want to push ahead and create a footpath which will remove more woodlands and cross amenity land which belongs to our homes."

The planning committee heard 23 objections to the footpath were lodged by locals concerned it would add to the waterlogging problems in the gardens and create noise and disturbance.

Tranent and Elphinstone Community Council also objected pointing to a lack of consultation with residents.

It also told planners it was "losing faith in the council's ability to control large developers and their bullying and manipulative behaviour".

The footpath application was unanimously rejected.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter