

Aylestone Meadows: A retreat

Leicester City Council has a management plan for Aylestone Meadows published in 2015. Two key aims of this plan would be undermined by a road on the northern boundary of the Meadows:

- To ensure the Meadows are a safe, clean and pleasant place to visit
- To maintain an open green space within which people can have positive benefits and health and well being

Instead, if a road were built:

- It would be less safe - especially for cyclists, children, horse riders and dogs who approach the nature reserve from the Great Central Way or walk from the Heyworth Rd / Evesham Rd junction.
- The appalling amount of litter on either side of Soar Valley Way would be replicated alongside the new road, significantly spoiling the area for people and wildlife alike.
- The noise from Soar Valley Way at the southern edge of the nature reserve would be replicated at its northern boundary, rendering the whole area much less pleasant and restful.
- Increased levels of air pollution from a busy road in an area which is currently substantially less polluted than the surrounding streets, would remove the opportunity for people to breath cleaner air when they need a break.
- Many families without the resources to use swimming pools, or visit the coast, currently bring their children to the river and Pebble Beach to socialise and play. The noise, air pollution and litter caused by the road would significantly impoverish this experience.
- Loss of wildlife – which is what many of us love about the meadows.
- More and more research shows that quiet green spaces and a chance to connect to nature improve our mental health, and for many of us, the Aylestone Meadows are what help us to keep our balance living in a city. A new road would be devastating for many people who rely on the meadows for this.

Aylestone Meadows provides an essential escape for people in Leicester, as well as an important green lung. Building a road across it would deprive us of these benefits and impoverish local communities that depend on it for rest and relaxation.

There are solutions: car use can be managed instead of catered for. Public and active transport can be prioritised resulting in a happier, healthier and cleaner Leicester.

Why do people visit Aylestone Meadows?

- “Enjoy the beauty of the surroundings”
46%
- “To see birds and wildlife”
48%
- “Get some fresh air”
53%
- “Go for a walk”
51%

Taken from results of a Council survey of Meadows use (2014).

“Aylestone Meadows has a magic about it which I haven't found anywhere else in Leicester. The sound of birds and the wind in the trees, the blue streak of a kingfisher, the dipping flight of a woodpecker – these are among the few things which have made me happy in the last few years. The idea of losing this hurts deeply.”

-Local resident

Wildlife identified in Aylestone Meadows include:

- Otters, badgers, hedgehogs, foxes, black rabbits, muntjack deer, roe deer
- Protected species of bats
- Many birds, including reed buntings, a variety of woodpeckers, finches, tits, owls and warblers, little egrets, snipe, swifts, swallows, martins, kestrels, buzzards, sparrowhawks, kingfishers, goosanders, heron,
- cormorant, little grebes
- Common frogs, toads, smooth newts, grass snakes.