

Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group

Denby Dale Ward fights Kirklees development plans.

200 people, including Denby Dale Councillor Jim Dodds, Parish Councillors Eddie Shaw and Kevin Waites, plus the Conservative Prospective Candidate for Dewsbury Constituency, Simon Reevell, packed a public meeting at St Augustine's Church, Scissett, on Wednesday the 6th May to discuss the implications and impact of the Kirklees building (LDF 4) options for the Denby Dale Ward.

The meeting was called by four local community groups, Save Our Scissett (SOS), Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group (SCAG), Denby Parish Community Action Group (DPCAG) and Keep Our Rural Spaces (KORS), to raise awareness of the impact the current proposals could have on local communities.

The meeting, chaired by Christopher Ward, was supported by panel of members drawn from each of the community groups who made the following presentations:

- The basis of Purported Demand and Public Consultation Exercise
- The options put forward for housing
- The options put forward for Industrial/ Business development
- The loss of Green Land if these options are adopted.

This was followed by followed by a lively debate, which highlighted a number of issues:

- The impact on the villages in terms of commuting traffic, which if option 3 was adopted could see increases in daily traffic volumes of 25,000 vehicles.
- That any options should include local employment based within the area, and that again with option three 7,000 Jobs would need to be created
- The lack of public transport and especially that of proper train services to commuting centres such as Leeds and Sheffield.
- The lack of consideration given by planners to the state of the infrastructure within their planned options.
- The added risk of further development to local flooding.
- The lack of thought and planning within the options on Health, Education and other services. For example, the local Health Centre, though needing additional resources to cope with the current population, was unable to accommodate further medical staff due to restrictions on the existing building. Denby Dale First School was stated to be up to full capacity.

- The question was raised as to the position of LDF if this time next year we had a different Central Government. Simon Reeve commented that a Conservative administration would immediately abolish LDF and instigate a system of asking each local authority to calculate exactly what they required in terms of affordable, social, and traditional housing, plus what industrial development could be sustained.
- The loss of green belt and open green space would be a major blow to all the local communities and to Kirklees as a whole. The countryside as it currently exists is not only an amenity to be enjoyed by local residents who live in the Denby Dale Ward, but also benefits the local economy through tourism, and provides the opportunity for KMC to earn carbon credits, acting as a 'green lung' for the whole of Kirklees.

Following the debate a vote took place on the following motions:

1. That we should reject all 4 LDF options currently proposed by Kirklees.
2. A new Option 5 should be developed based on local needs which should be identified by an independent survey carried out by a specialist research company.
3. There should be an immediate moratorium on further large-scale housing and industrial building throughout the Denby Dale Ward.

All three motions were carried by a large majority of the votes cast.

Results

Motion 1. for 105 against 11

Motion 2. for 110 against 6

Motion 3. for 95 against 11

Christopher Ward in summarising the meeting stated 'The strength of feeling demonstrated tonight should leave nobody in any doubt as to the residents position in regard to the LDF proposals. They have been totally rejected by the people attending this meeting, who represent a cross section of all the communities making up the Denby Dale ward.

He concluded that the combined action groups would progress the village survey, and use the results to produce a Denby Dale Parish Housing and Development Plan, which would be presented, in its draft form, at a forum in each village for further discussion.

Once the presentations and any agreed changes had been made a final document would be presented to Kirklees MC at the first available full council meeting, but prior to the publication by KMC of their preferred option.

