

Appendix A

PETITION TO BRADFORD COUNCIL

For presentation on Tuesday 8 December 2020

This petition relates to the abuse and despoilation of the Village Open Space at Ellar Gardens, Menston, by rubbish dumping, driving over and in some cases confiscation of the VOS into their own gardens, by residents of Otley Road and Burley Road, whose properties back onto the VOS. Bradford Council has received complaints dating back to the Spring of 2019, has sent Officers to look at the situation, and has received a full description in a petition including some 58 signatures, dated August 2019. That petition is clear and succinct.

I would like to thank your Officer, Gill Bennison, who has initiated some limited action, as a consequence of which those residents of Burley Road who operate commercially from their residences have removed some of the material they were storing on the VOS, but those residents who have built their fences out into the VOS have not taken any action to set them back to their own boundaries. Some are still driving commercial vehicles and trailers across the VOS to access their own gardens through gates they have opened in their fences, and many are putting their bins out onto Ellar Gardens because they've built so many outbuildings they can't easily get out onto Burley Road. Some of those residents and their visitors have taken to parking on Ellar Gardens which is a street built on a curve which causes a sightline for drivers to be restricted and this is creating a daily traffic hazard. In addition, one resident of Burley Road has erected an accommodation unit in his garden and installed a double gate, which some residents fear may be used for lettings and the double gates as access over the VOS.

This is a valued area, designed for recreation, not for the improper use or appropriation by residents. It is simply not right for these people to be cutting down the trees, shrubs and wildlife habitats and treating this area as if they own it. Ellar Gardens Residents' Association has for many years aided the activities of the Council's Landscaping function by planting spring bulbs, clearing the gutters of leaves, keeping verges neat, looking after benches and generally keeping this area tidy. Some residents of Ellar Gardens, accustomed to taking their children up to the VOS to play or to walk or to exercise with their dogs, have been threatened for looking at what's been happening.

I myself was threatened with physical violence by a resident of Burley Road on 14 June 2019 for looking at the fence he'd built and the earth he'd pushed out of his garden. I had not spoken to him nor challenged him. Some residents are now intimidated and avoid the VOS, so it has become an area of anxiety and not an area of leisure and recreation.

Parish & Ward Councillors have looked at this, Officers from Planning and Enforcement have looked at it, but we still await concerted action and the return of this area to its former state of nature and tranquillity. We look to Bradford Council (the owner of this land) to make these people reinstate the damage, remove illegal fences and return this area to its original function. Thank you for hearing this petition.

Alan D Elsegood, Lead Petitioner