

21st May 2013-05-23

C Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Durham

Dear Ms Longbottom,

269.90 sq m of land adjacent The Todner, Front Street, Dipton. Which forms part of an open space.

I am writing to object strongly regarding acquisition of this land by Mr R Ord as I believe that this land has already been taken illegally by him and have already objected at the time when he fenced off the land last year.

The way in which he acquired the land should be questioned as I am sure this leads the Council open to more people just going onto open land, fencing it off, then applying for planning permission after the deed is done.

I questioned and reported this to the Council when I saw what was happening. The land next to his property was blocked by a stone wall which had been granted permission for two houses to be built on. On the day a JCB came and knocked down part of the stone wall for the builders to gain access within hours Mr Ord together with two workmen who work for his brother Trevor entered this land with fencing posts and began erecting fence on the open space behind his property. As I knew this land did not belong to him I actually rang the Land Registry Office to query who did own this plot of land and was told it was owned by Durham County Council and was advised to ring immediately to inform them of what was happening.

I did this and spoke to a Mr Andrew Savage in Assessments Management and spoke to him and told him what was happening. He confirmed that the land did belong to the council and that Mr Ord should not be erecting a fence on the land and he would contact him with a visit. By the afternoon of that day the JCB driver had been employed to clear all the land of gorse bushes etc and level the land off. A lorry came to take all the rubbish away. I rang Mr Savage about this.

He did visit the property and I believe he saw Mr R Ord senior (Councillor R Ord) and Mr Trevor Ord and he reported back to me that he had told them they could not continue any more fencing and he said that they were putting in for planning permission for the land, seems strange that you take the land then put in for planning permission, surely you should request to purchase land prior to getting planning permission. Mr Savage agreed that it is true the the council MUST advertise that the land is being disposed of before any action can be taken.

Within a few days of the visit when they were told no more fencing they actually went and erected more fencing to completely cut off the ground altogether.

I don't suppose a lot of people in the village would not be so angry about this if this had been done correctly. Perhaps the owners of Derwent Court might have liked this piece of land to make a garden for their residents, I do know the old people living there are upset that they now have to look out onto a fence rather than a bit of 'green land' I understand though from Mr Savage that no-one else will be given the chance to purchase this land only Mr Ord.

I believe that however many objections you receive to this we are totally wasting our time as this fence has been erected over a year and I notice he now clearing land further down the street too !!

I do find it rather funny though, someone is wanting to build houses beside Ex Cllr Ord's own home and he and his family have large boards up asking people to unite to stop any building on green land in the village but its ok for him to give green land to his son.