

# Opening Statement - Thomas Griffiths, Steward of The Rushcliffe Golf Club

I wanted to talk today about both the historical value and local financial value of the area at risk by this development.

I am the Steward of The 120 year old Rushcliffe Golf Club, a venue that sits alongside the proposed site and benefits greatly from the hundreds of people using the accompanying footpaths each day. I am concerned this development will cause a drastic reduction in the number of people visiting our clubhouse when the surrounding countryside is lost, an area many drive miles to visit. The financial impact this will have on my club will be harsh, on average, 72% of our daily income in food sales comes from people visiting the area to walk the fields and the Midshires Way, see the wildlife, enjoy being in a vast open space. Unfortunately, I cannot see that visitors will continue to flock to the area to view a solar zone and security fencing. Other businesses in the area approached me when they found out I would be speaking today, it surprised me just how many types of people this development concerns. Those who earn a living from equine day trips and riding schools, accommodation and holiday travel, cafes and pubs in the surrounding areas who rely on footfall from the paths to bring in business. I appreciate the footpaths and bridle ways will remain if this development begins but it is important to understand that it isn't the route that people hold dear, it is the overall landscape that counts, the green, leafy pastures offering respite to all of us and our customers in an ever increasing fast paced world.

As Steward, The Rushcliffe Golf Club is my home, my fiancé and I would be incredibly saddened to lose our green spaces. This morning, as I do most mornings, I walked the route which will be affected by the proposed development with our dog and felt a great sadness knowing I may no longer be able to feel the enjoyment i've felt for twenty six years walking through the vast open fields.

I also want to discuss the historical value of the area. It is deeply upsetting to myself and others in the area that the ancient burial lands surround the cuckoo bush will be disturbed in this development. It is odd to me that no mention of the world famous Gotham Tales appears in the proposed development, little mention either of the Roman Road under Stocking and Wood Lane, nor any mention of what will happen to the monuments in the woodlands. Instead the many documents in the proposal would cause one to assume area is non-descript and inconsequential to the daily lives of those in the area, I think all living here can agree this is not the case. While studying for my Masters Degree I spent two years examining the history of the Cuckoo Bush site and its impact on twelfth century folklore. The research I conducted highlighted how much history lies in this ground, land that inspired writers such as Washington Irving, land that through its "Merry Tales of Gotham" continues to be told in blockbuster Batman films today. The village of Gotham holds it's connection to these stories dearly and benefits greatly from tourism to the area, the eponymous pub below the site is due for an impressive update in the coming months, I hope visitors to the pub will continue to be able to take the trip up the hill and see where it's namesake arises.

To conclude, I am in favour of renewable energy but never when it is at the cost of the environment.

Thank you for your time,  
Thomas Griffiths  
Steward of The Rushcliffe Golf Club