

## The Kendal-Oxenholme Green Gap (R120, ON1, M2M, RN133M)

I strongly object to the proposed significant reduction of the Green Gap now separating Kendal from Oxenholme, particularly the loss of over half of the Strawberry fields and much of its environs, for the reasons set out below.

### ON1 (R120) – The Strawberry field – a key attribute of the Green Gap between Kendal & Oxenholme

The picture below shows the uniquely attractive **rural** landscape character of this area. This is despite its proximity to the town – a consequence of it being surrounded and thus visually shielded on most sides by a horse-shoe of green slopes including the attractive drumlin:



The Strawberry field **supports nesting Lapwing & is an important component of the excellent view from Oxenholme Road and elsewhere.**

This area is designated as '**GREEN GAP**' and **should not be developed**, in accordance with the conclusions and evidence of the Government Inspector's Report from the Public Enquiry into the SLDC Local Plan Alteration Number 1 in 2002/2003. Since then, conditions have not changed sufficiently to warrant the development of this GREEN GAP and therefore the conclusions of the Inquiry are still valid. Unfortunately SLDC have found a way of ignoring or disregarding the Inspector's decisions/reports when faced with more recent vested/prestige urban interests – that appeal more to desires for aggrandisement than rural/scenic/wildlife interests.

Additionally, paragraph 2.1.10 of the 2003 report states that two previous inspectors also recommended against development due to the resulting loss of separation between Kendal and Oxenholme.

Numerous **visual landscape attributes** of the Green Gap are stated in the 2003 report, and regarding the **lapwings** it states:

Extract from Para 2.1.49: "I am especially concerned about the possible adverse impact that the development could have on the lapwing breeding ground at the adjacent strawberry fields. These birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.... there would seem to be significant, possible wildlife constraints upon its development."



Lapwing photographed on the Strawberry field in April 2011

Lapwings have been nesting in the strawberry field area for many years, and seeing and hearing them there has given delight to me and no doubt many other people. The uniqueness here is their proximity to the town-edge – and thus they can be seen and heard without the carbon-footprint and time-constraint of having to drive a car to see them. Thus they are a big asset to the quality of life here.

“**Gateway to the Lakes**” is a name often given to Kendal (e.g. Town Council website home-page) and for rail-tourists and rail-travellers the Strawberry field is a unique and attractive part of the **welcome arrival view** and **memorable departure view** when walking or driving to or from Oxenholme Station. Several visitors and tourists have remarked to me their appreciation of the uplifting view of the Strawberry Field in its setting – and have expressed dismay when I have told them its possible fate.

I am aware that the Rugby Club (/Morbaine) have planning permission to destroy over half of the Strawberry field if they re-locate here - despite huge local opposition. This planning decision is viewed by many as a big failure in the planning decision process due to the huge, strong and multi-aspect case against the development when set against the weak single-issue and minority support for it (although I accept that they need improved facilities – the case for not doing so in situ is the weakness). A deception has been made that the development fits into being describable as a Green Gap-compliant development – but about a third of its plan view is tarmac and a huge 2-storey building with night-club facilities – about as urban as you can get in character. Furthermore – when viewed from the road (if you can see it behind the proposed “green” screen) most of your view of it will be the urban car-park and building – not the “green” playing fields behind. Thus the proposed development is definitely **not** a Green Gap-compliant development whatever spin you might read or hear.

The Rugby Club development threatens the viability of the fruit-growing in the smaller-part of the strawberry field it leaves alone, and most certainly threatens loss of the breeding lapwings.

Kendal is now a **Transition Town**. The production of locally grown food is an important part of a Transition Town as part of providing long-term **resilience** to the inevitable future rises in fuel and food prices linked with the decline in *conventional* oil production (it past its peak c.2007) and climate change. When oil and thus food prices inevitably increase – the demand for locally grown (and pick-your-own) fruit and veg will increase. Thus the reduction and/or loss of local food-growing here in the Strawberry Field is very short-sighted in view of Kendal’s future resilience needs.



**It is thus important that the importance of the Strawberry Field and the Green Gap is brought out fully and truthfully in the Fact Files and other SLDC documents – and is not down-played for political reasons – such as the fact that the truth does not fit comfortably with the existing planning permission nor the current suggestions/proposals – such as re M2M .**

The Kendal – Oxenholme Green Gap (incl. ON1) from the opposite side of the Kent valley:



## **M2M**

I most strongly object to the proposed M2M development as it would seriously compromise the function of the Green Gap in which it occupies a significant part not just due to the large size and compromising location of M2M but also due to its role being in opposition to the present rural non-urban landscape character of the Green

Gap. M2M occupies the far slope of the horse-shoe of rising ground that currently shields the rural character of the strawberry field and adjacent fields from the nearby town-scape (as shown in photos below / next page).



Another reason for objecting to the M2M proposal is that it is naive to assume that the provision of higher-paid more skilled jobs by the proposal here will mostly go to local people, as such jobs tend to be advertised nationally

and can thus attract in more people from elsewhere in the UK who will then take the new houses from locals and result in population growth of Kendal beyond what is manageable by the fixed constraints of valley-topography and internal-road-infrastructure (etc!), meaning yet further loss in quality of life.

### **RN133M, R120**

The fields here are the lower slopes of an attractive drumlin and are bisected by a stream which I have read support the native crayfish (a threatened species). Ideally – from a scenic aspect – no further encroachment into the Green Gap should take place, as the Oaks estate and the hospital form a scenically fitting urban edge. However – if housing is built here it should *at the very most* extend to the thick brownish-grey line on the map (which bisects the red-hatched “Suggested site for housing”), as the thick red line allows the houses to extend too far (scenically) up the gentle slope (and then down to the other side of it near the path) – and thus (i) their added height would be too visually imposing/intrusive on the remaining green gap, (ii) would prevent the drumlin-sheep-



pasture field having any significant contact perimeter with the road-side path/cycle-track (this is scenically/visually important [see photos below]), and (iii) the view of the strawberry field and drumlin as shown in the photo to left would be lost and (iv) the strawberry field will be cramped and its lapwing colony threatened. Preferably the housing for RN133M should – if it is allowed at all – have an outer perimeter that falls short of the thick brownish-grey line i.e. before reaching the top of the gentle rise here (shown in photos below) - near the roadside path/cycle-track (reason: (i) again).

