

Save Burbage Common is an action group formed in response to this proposal. It was established in 2018 by local people who are extremely concerned about the impact of this large industrial development immediately adjacent to Burbage Common and Woods. We have had regular meetings, attended the consultations and Burbage Common Open Day, collected over 2000 signatures on a petition and have 2.1K followers on Facebook.

1. Burbage Common and Woods (the Common) comprises Burbage Common, Sheepy and Burbage Woods, Elmesthorpe Plantation and Smenell Field. Located immediately adjacent to the site is the Aston Firs SSSI, this SSSI is comprised of ancient and semi-natural woodland and is also classed as priority habitat inventory deciduous woodland. Adjoining this area is Freeholt Wood (more details below)
2. It is the district's prime countryside site and is located on the western side of the proposed development. The site is public access land and is a rich mix of semi-natural woodland and unspoilt grassland covering over 80 hectares and together with the site location itself provide a wildlife corridor and habitat. Burbage Wood and Aston Firs is a 126 acre biological Site of Special Scientific Interest. Freeholt Wood is located immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the Proposed Development and is comprised of ancient and semi-nature woodland and classified as priority habitat inventory deciduous woodland. The woodlands are some of the only remaining fragments of Hinckley Forest, which dates back to mediaeval times and they are still managed by traditional methods.
3. There is currently a rich variety of flora and fauna at the common and surrounding fields including:
 - 20 species of butterflies and rare moths
 - 15 species of damselflies and dragonflies
 - 300 species of flowering plants
 - 250 species of fungi
 - 30 species of mammals and
 - 100 species of birds including Red listed lapwings, skylarks and hedge sparrows, red kites, buzzards, sparrow-hawks, nuthatches, jays and great spotted and green woodpeckers.
 - a. There are great crested newts using ponds, historical or possibly current evidence of an otter/ otters in the watercourses, brown hares and a badger sett on the edge of the site.
 - b. There are a large number of vitally important hedgerows affected by the development, the total loss of which amounts to 13.44km of hedgerow. This is inclusive of species rich hedgerows along Burbage Common Road which will be partially lost. In addition to this a species rich Ancient Oak Tree is planned to be removed as part of the proposals
4. The area is used heavily by local and wider populations for several recreational activities including walking, specific Walking for Health groups, horse riding, orienteering, wildlife

study, environmental activities and education. It is a highly valued local and regional public asset. Hundreds of people visit the Common every day and thousands attend the annual open days there. Due to the nature of the proposal, it is considered unlikely that recreational activity on the Common and in the woods will be increased as a result of the development and it is likely that there will be a displacement of walkers and dog walkers put off by the presence and proximity of the development.

5. The site, which is part of the Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland and Elmesthorpe Floodplain landscape, will impose significantly on the setting of Burbage Common, Elmesthorpe and the Fosse villages. A recent appeal case locally in Hinckley and Bosworth regarding the development of warehouses and houses on agricultural land in Burbage was rejected on the grounds that 'The appeal site lies within the countryside and found that the proposed development would result in substantial harm to its intrinsic value and open character'.
6. Noise and light pollution will be considerable from a site operating 24 hours a day. Given the nature of noise emitted by freight trains and engines whilst travelling, the nature of the noise generated by shunting etc, the geography of the area and the railway being largely on an embankment, train noise travels long distances, and even further under some common meteorological conditions. Constant 24 hour illumination and noise has been shown to disrupt the circadian rhythms of many species and have a detrimental effect on their survival by interfering with foraging patterns, reproduction and communication (Stone, E..L., 2009, p,1123-1127. and Da Silva, A. 2015, Royal Society Publication). A recent publication by the House of Lords 'The neglected pollutants: the effects of artificial light and noise on human health (July 2023) also provides further evidence of harm and contains many references to studies on the impact of these on all living organisms.
7. During construction and operational phases public access to the Common will be restricted by the closure of Burbage Common Road, disruption on the Leicester and Sapcote Roads and the permanent loss of footpaths/bridleways for pedestrian and equestrian access with replacements taking time to be operational and being unsuitably situated - running along either the railway or M69 motorway.