

Dear Kate,

Following the unanimous refusal of planning application P/OUT/2025/06076 by Dorset Council's Northern Area Planning Committee, I am writing on behalf of the Manston Road Residents' Association to request that Sturminster Newton Town Council considers taking proactive steps to secure the long-term protection of the eastern ridge along Manston Road.

This land has now been the subject of three dismissed appeals or refusals spanning almost fifty years. Most recently, the Planning Committee unanimously concluded that development would 'harm the character of the landscape' and represent 'unacceptable encroachment beyond the settlement boundary'.

Both the recent committee decision and the previous Planning Inspector's decision recognise the importance of this landscape in defining the eastern edge of Sturminster Newton and its relationship with the surrounding countryside.

Residents are concerned that, unless additional protection is considered, similar applications are likely to continue to be submitted every few years. This creates uncertainty for residents and repeated costs for both the community and the planning authority.

We would therefore ask the Town Council to consider whether it should work with Dorset Council to identify the most appropriate planning mechanism to secure the long-term protection of this landscape. This might include, for example, reviewing the potential for additional landscape designation, strengthened Neighbourhood Plan policies, protected views, settlement edge policies or any other planning mechanism that officers consider appropriate.

We are not seeking to prevent the town from growing. Sturminster Newton has accepted significant new housing through both recent permissions and planned allocations. Rather, we believe the repeated planning decisions on this particular site demonstrate that the eastern ridge performs an exceptional role in defining the town's landscape setting and deserves long-term consideration.

I would be grateful if this request could be placed on the agenda of the next appropriate Town Council meeting so that Members may consider it formally.

Should councillors find it helpful, I would be pleased to attend the meeting to explain the request and answer any questions.

Kind regards,

*Laura Hitchcock*