

To: Church Fenton Parish Council.

c/o Church Fenton Post Office.

As requested in the Focus magazine the following is a list of places that we feel should be helped and protected in your Neighbourhood plan:

1. The ancient trees on Rose Lane. The Oak trees that stand lining Rose Lane are majestic and support a vast unbelievable amount of wildlife. They have and do bring joy to people. It is impossible to state how much benefit these trees give to all. They are valued every day of the year as the seasons slowly change and pass by. They are host to countless birds, insects and all types of wildlife.

It is believed that they are the only remaining Oak trees in Church Fenton and the surrounding area. Many others lost to farming and house building. The numbers of trees lost in the village is sad. They never seem to be replaced. It has changed the rural look of the village. Trees are vital to the well being of people and the biodiversity of the environment. If a tree surgeon condemns a tree it should be presented in writing to the council with another second opinion because all trees can be saved given expertise. Many trees in the village are cut down with questions asked later, too late. A way round this destruction would be to enshrine in law that where a tree is cut down a tree must be planted to replace it as close as possible to where the original tree stood. That way a tree could not be cut down in preparation for a planning application.

2. The fields either side of Rose Lane should be protected. They are old pasture and have always been grass, supporting many wildflowers and animals. They enhance the rural aspect of Rose Lane and are admired daily through the changing seasons. They are beautiful open spaces unfortunately not accessible to all but admired by all ages. They also act as a flood plain when water levels rise in the area. There are many photographs of this happening in the past and there is a wealth of verbal evidence from residents who have loved this area for generations.

3. HS2 will spoil Sandwath Lane and Common Lane forever. The government seems determined not to respect the views of those of us who can see the harm that this railway will cause. So at all costs the area must be protected from further development. HS2 is inappropriate in this fenland landscape with the plan for huge viaducts. We must maintain as much open space and open aspect as possible to preserve what we can. HS2 will cause major destruction so we must protect everything else. Open spaces, hedgerows, trees, meadows. There are many fields that have never been cropped but had animals on them. For example the fields on Rose Lane and also the fields around the bowling green especially on the North side of the Common. Also the fields along Sandwath Lane north of the brick pond. They have sheep grazing at present. The fields on Rose Lane have very special unusual cows, sheep and horses. They are a joy to see and generations of children have grown up learning so much about these animals by observing them every day. All this land must be protected as open space including all the field boundaries and the beautiful hedgerows and trees.

4. Special regard should always be given to the drainage of the area. Building in one place and raising land levels for house development of any kind causes changes in the water level in other places. Drainage experts advice is not always right. It is only when developments are built that problems are seen and then it is too late to rectify as the builders are often long gone and their poor work remains forever. The ditches in this area were once regularly maintained by the Council. It was common to see men pulling debris from ditches and cleaning the silt from the base of the ditches. This does not seem to happen now so rising water level in the ditches is noticeable and ground water levels in this area in 2012 were at frightening levels. The Council did some clearing of ditches to alleviate the rising levels then but there has been no evidence of any cleaning since then.

Attention to the risk of rising water levels should always be a priority in this area. It is no good basing planning decisions on computer statistics because they do not give a full enough picture. If one aspect of the care of this Fenland environment is neglected then conditions change and rising water will occur without it being obvious on a computer or to someone who does not know the area.

HS2 building will certainly cause changes in the topography of this landscape and therefore alter the ground water levels. The disruption to soil and the general infrastructure of this landscape will be vast so at all costs we must try through planning decisions now to limit further destruction. The openness we have now must be retained and any planning decisions need to consider flooding and water level rises in the ditches as a priority.

The railway do not clear their ditches any more. It was a regular weekly activity and kept all the waterways alongside the railway running freely. They are very overgrown and litter filled. The engineers use the ditches as places to deposit their rubbish when working on the tracks. Network Rail will come and clear this but rely on the public to inform them. There is no regular maintenance.

The fields and verges in the area of Rose Lane, Common Lane and Sandwath Lane provide such a rich habitat of plants that it has always attracted a vast array of insects and birds feeding on this land. If you stand anywhere along these lanes you will always see flocks of swallows and swifts in the spring and summer. Barn owls and birds of prey such as red kites, hobbies, buzzards and kestrels hover along the verges and hedgerows. In autumn fieldfares and mistlethrushes feed on the abundance of berries in the trees and bushes. You will not fail to notice yellow hammers and all manner of finches, tits and warblers especially walking along Sandwath Lane along the footpath to the tank houses and beyond to Scarthingwell.

Rose Lane is unique. It is spoilt by over parking of cars in recent times but it cannot detract from the serenity and calmness felt as you walk beneath the mighty oak tree half way down and see the majestic view of the huge oak tree standing proudly at the end of Rose Lane. To watch these trees everyday change through the seasons is wonderful. The acorns drop and cover the ground and they quickly disappear as squirrels, jays and all manner of creatures collect them and store them away. There are also two huge oak trees in the same field at the base of the railway road bridge. There must be some history to these ancient trees. Why were they planted along Rose Lane and around the field? It has a look of old estate land. They must be more than 200 years old. They were there before the railways were built in 1839 and 1869. Looking at old maps it looks like they were probably part of the vicarage land before the railway lines were built. We are so fortunate that the landowners have treasured these trees and this landscape and allowed them to grow. Please help to treasure this landscape for future generations to enjoy.