

John Newson, Balsall Heath Is Our Planet - Council Owned Land on Runcorn Road, Balsall Heath

I am John Newson, development officer at Balsall Heath Is Our Planet, which tries to encourage people to be involved in walking, gardening, and the use of green space in this part of the city.

There is a plot of land owned by BCC on Runcorn Road that was put up for sale as surplus by commercial services in 2019. Objections were made that it was part of Seven Streets Park which is the only green space in a densely inhabited area of terraced housing. A Friends of Seven Streets Park group has tried to garden and improve it.

The land did not sell at first, but was again put back on the market March 2020, sold and the new owner fenced it off. They then applied for planning permission for a line of garages. There were a number of objections, including BHIOIP and the ward councillor, and the planning officer ruled that not only these buildings but that no building should be approved on the site because it is an entrance to the park and shown as such in the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

I wonder if the buyer was misinformed by someone about possible uses for the land. They wasted money on buying it and on making the planning application.

“Land adjacent to, 56A Runcorn Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 8RQ” planning application - 2020/00796/PA refused on 15 May 2020.

As a result, the land is now covered with weeds and a van with flat tyres is kept there. Because it looks abandoned, this has encouraged people to disrespect the place and repeatedly dump rubbish and furniture etc, which the council has to keep on clearing away.

The best outcome for the land would be to fence it and include in the park and its management, but this has been made more difficult, since it would now have to involve buying back the land from its current owner.

John Newson, Development Officer, Balsall Heath Is Our Planet B12 9LX



Seven Streets Park is the open space for this densely populated inner area. Shown on the BH Neighbourhood Development Plan between Runcorn and Clifton Road



Land fronting Runcorn Road has been sold 2020 by Commercial Services and fenced off by new owner. Application to build garages on it was refused by Planning Dept on the grounds it is the entrance to a park and nothing should be built there.