

Jill Hubbard

My late husband and I moved here in the 60's to take up teaching posts at local schools and I have lived here on Mill Hill ever since. Over 50 years in fact!

During those years I have seen many changes to the village and to the countryside around it. Not all of which enhanced the village. None of these changes however have concerned me as much as the recent proposals by Scottish Power which I fear will do irreparable damage .

The proposals indicate that for an extended period of time the road B1122 will be cut in two, for trenching, at what is known as the "pinch point" by Fitches Lane.

Fitches Lane and the surrounding woodland has always been an important area for all of us. The woods contain numerous footpaths which are not only enjoyed by ramblers, teenagers, dog walkers and as part of a route chosen by those taking the Duke of Edinburgh's Award but by residents to travel from one part of the village to the next and as a route to Coldfair Green where there is a village shop.

I am sure that the tranquility and peace of a quiet walk through the woods is beneficial to everyone's physical and mental well being.

It is an important route too for the village children to walk to school. Years ago in the late 70s a pathway was built along the Knodishall Road for children to

walk to the then new Coldfair Green Primary School but as the volume of traffic increased more parents began to use the woodland paths. Fitches Lane runs behind the school and a pathway leads to its entrance. Parents have found this to be a much safer and enjoyable option. In the morning the trees are full of birdsong and there is the possibility of spotting muntjac or rabbits on the path. An idyllic place for children and adults alike and a wonderful start to anyone's day.

But of course this will all change if Scottish Powers plans are accepted. The route to school will have to follow a long diversion, be accompanied not by birdsong but the sound of heavy machinery and dust clouds. The children will see trees, bushes and plants, habitats for hundreds of creatures, ripped out of the ground. This is hardly an example of the conservation of nature that they are very much aware of at the present time.

At the beginning of Fitches Lane between Aldringham Court and the lane itself there are trees which have a preservation order. There is also an ancient hedgerow between Suffolk Lodge and Coldfair part of which will have to be ripped up.

Raidsend, renamed Aldringham Court including the trees themselves is a Heritage Asset. It was designed by Cecil Lay and the woodland beside the building down to Fitches Lane was part of his landscape design for the house.

Aldringham Court is now a residential home for the elderly. These elderly people as well as many residents in the village itself will be devastated to see so many trees felled.

It is interesting to note that lichen is growing on many of these trees, the growth of which is an indication of an area of low pollution. This will change when these trees are destroyed.

As I understand it the trench for the two sets of cables will be “reduced” here from the 64metres everywhere else along the cable route to 27 metres in width. This means that the noise and dust will be very close to the house. These elderly residents' final years will be far from the peace and tranquility they anticipated when they moved there.

The residents of Aldringham Court are not the only older people who will suffer. There are some who have bought properties here for their peaceful retirements.

There are also residents living in Fitches Lane and along the Aldeburgh road. All their lives will be affected by these drastic changes but those living in Gypsy Lane are in possibly the worst position of all because their houses back onto the fields where cables are to be laid almost into their back gardens! The noise and dust, particularly bad when the wind blows across the light soil of the Sandlings, will be unbearable for many months if not longer. And the noise from the pile drivers from both Friston and Thorpeness will have a detrimental effect on all our lives.

Another lane that is in constant use is the one which runs past the old Aldringham School to St Andrews Church. A route used by villagers for centuries. This path will also be disrupted by laying cables and haul roads. Thus another area of the countryside will be spoilt for future generations.

I like most of my neighbours totally believe in renewable energy. It is the particular route that has been chosen that we find questionable. This route Scottish Power have chosen through the centre of our lovely village will cause great and long lasting damage to the whole community.