

The Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens

The Therfield Regulation Trust
c/o Royston Golf Club, Baldock Rd, Royston, SG8 5BG
Registered Charity No. 277881
Chair: Clive Hall



THERFIELD
HEATH
& GREENS

Date Friday, 8 May 2026
Sent by email only to planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk
For the attention of Case Officer, Tabitha Kaye

Dear Tabitha Kaye

Ref: Planning Application **26/00739/FP**
Location: McDonald's, Baldock Road, Royston, SG8
FORMAL OBJECTION – Impact on Public Health, Amenity, and Protected Common Land

I am writing on behalf of the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens and the Trustees of the Therfield Regulation Trust (the landowner). As the statutory body responsible for the management and protection of Therfield Heath, we wish to lodge a formal objection to the aforementioned planning application.

Our objection is based on the significant negative impact the proposed intensification of use will have on public health, the local amenity, and the ecological integrity of the Heath.

1. Intensification of Use vs. Infrastructure Deficit

The proposal seeks to increase internal seating to 91 covers while simultaneously reducing on-site parking to just 43 spaces. This represents a fundamental mismatch between the facility's capacity and its infrastructure.

It is a documented reality—not a theoretical concern—that a significant number of customers utilize the "drive-to-eat" model, opting to park in our Therfield Road Car Park on the Heath. By increasing throughput while decreasing on-site parking, the applicant is effectively displacing their commercial activity onto protected Common Land. If approved, our car park will be forced to function as an "unmanaged McDonald's dining area," for which the applicant provides no oversight or maintenance.

2. Documented Public Health Risks and Vermin Infestation

Under planning law, public health is a material consideration. In early 2021 our car park suffered a severe rat infestation directly linked to the volume of discarded food waste and McDonald's branded packaging.

This issue became so acute, that on the 10 March 2021 North Herts District Council (NHDC) wrote to the Conservators, to demand a resolution. At our own significant expense, we were forced to remove waste bins to discourage the accumulation of refuse and encourage a "take it home" policy and employ a professional vermin control contractor to eradicate the rats.

While partially successful, the current proposal threatens to reverse this progress. The proven failure of standard "bin solutions" in this location demonstrates that the applicant's current waste management is insufficient for the volume of trade they generate.

3. Impact on Protected Common Land and SSSI

Therfield Heath is a sensitive ecological site and a vital recreational asset. The increased volume of litter and "drive-to-eat" traffic originating from the McDonalds site degrades the character of the Common Land and harms its biodiversity. The Conservators cannot be expected to continue subsidizing the environmental impact of a private commercial enterprise.

4. Required Mitigations and Section 106 Requirements

Should the Council be minded to approve this application, despite our objections, we insist on the following legally binding conditions:

- Litter Management Plan (LMP):

A condition, similar to other Planning Authorities, such as Hillingdon's approval of application 77867/APP/2023/1683. In this application McDonalds submitted a 5 Step Litter Patrol Plan, which set out :-

1. Patrol Area
2. The Scope (staff to pick all litter not just McDonalds branded Litter)
3. The Frequency (three times a day)
4. Documentation (maps of the litter pick route) and
5. Training (Shift Managers, scheduling specific team members and routes, to ensure the patrols happen)

and was included within the decision notice. We believe that similar requirements are also insisted on by Cambridge Shared Planning Authority.

We suggest a condition in the approval notice, with similar words to the following:-

'The litter management plan approved under [application number] shall be implemented upon the commencement of the use and shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the life time of the development'

- Section 106 Contribution:

A financial contribution to the Conservators of Therfield Heath to cover the ongoing costs of monitoring, waste removal, and land maintenance necessitated by the applicant's commercial activity.

Conclusion

The Public Health of our visitors and the protection of the SSSI are our primary concerns, and we understand that NPPF 193 Impact on a SSSIs, should be adhered to in the determination of this application, including consultation with Natural England.

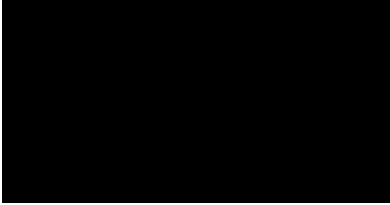
We believe that McDonald customers should be made aware of the adjacent SSSI with appropriate signage, which was a requirement under Condition 5, of the original approval in 2012, for the restaurant being built on this site. We believe that this condition should continue under this application

As a statutory body, we provide this submission to highlight that this is not a standard neighbour's 'not in my back yard' objection, but a significant concern regarding the stewardship of public land.

We urge the Planning Officer to address how the applicant intends to mitigate these proven impacts.

We remain open to discussing these concerns further to protect the health and amenity of the Heath's users.

Yours sincerely



Ben Harrop

Deputy Chair and Trustee

On behalf of the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens and the Trustees of the Therfield Regulation Trust