



Residents of Owlthorpe want answers. As reported in Sheffield Star, by Lucy Ashton 30th March 2022, Sheffield MP calls for answers about new housing estate being built on top of coal. The Sheffield South East MP was contacted by concerned residents and has raised the issue with [Sheffield Council](#), the Coal Authority, developer [Avant Homes](#) and the NHBC which assesses new homes. More than 12 months on and the foundations of new homes are still being built on top of surface coal.

When the mines were in operation in Owlthorpe water had to be pumped out to stop miners from drowning. The Environment Agency states: "Abandoned mines can be a significant source of pollution. Prolonged wet weather can cause rising mine water underground to dramatically 'blowout', discharging to the surface and bringing with it years of accumulated ochre that turn watercourses orange." The attached video:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> taken at the time of the 2019 floods shows Ochre flooding out of the old Mineworking's in Owlthorpe. At the same time, I looked up stream from the culvert on Moor Valley, down to where both spurs of the Ochre Dyke meet. The water was crystal clear; this was not surface runoff water. When the waters receded, deposits of Ochre were found downstream in Beighton, Rotherham and Fishlake.

I have been concerned about the safety of building over flooded mines in Owlthorpe, under the freedom of information Act, I have asked a number of questions of the Coal Board. My exchanges can be seen hear: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/letters.htm> Although the mining report commissioned in 2019 by Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) states: "Underground coal mining Past The property is in the likely zone of influence from workings in 2 seams of coal at 60m to 180m depth" There is no mention that the mines are in a constant state of flooding.

In the Reports from Lithos Consulting; Probe hole Log 18 Strata Wet between 14.2m and 18m, heavy water inflow below 14.8m depth. **Probe Hole Log 21** Strata wet between 17.5m and 18.2m depth. **Probe Hole Log 22** Strata wet between 16.8m and 17.4m depth. **Probe Hole 24** Heavy water inflow from 20.5m depth. The reports from Lithos Probe hole Logs show heavy water much nearer the surface than 60m. Many of the Probe Hole Log's show surface coal is present at most locations.

The steep terrain of Owlthorpe could be the reason Heavy Water is showing at a lesser level. As we see on the <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/directionsmaps.htm> The Header waters of the Ochre Dyke in Birley Woods are 650 Ft above sea level. Site E is 312 ft a difference of 338 ft. And site C and D are 258 ft a difference of 392 ft.

Because of my concerns, I have asked many questions of the Coal Board: With regard to flooding, what effect does flooding have on the timber props that hold the roofs up in old min workings? Coal Boards Answer; we do not hold information on timber props used in old mine workings or the effect that flooding may have on them.

The Coal Mining report states "Opencast coal mining Past The property is not within the boundary of an opencast site from which coal has been removed by opencast methods." But in a reply to one of my questions: "The reference to coal at or near the surface is a direct result of a coal outcrop of the Flockton (also named Chavery) seam running west to east through the middle of the reporting area. The seam dips in a northerly direction beneath the site. As with most coal outcrops there is a high likelihood that it may have been worked at some point in the past due to the easy accessibility of the coal. This is further endorsed by the fact of former Brook Lane opencast immediately to the north-west of the area of interest was worked over this outcrop."

"Comments on Coal Authority information:

In view of the mining circumstances a prudent developer would seek appropriate technical advice before any works are undertaken. Therefore, if development proposals are being considered, technical advice relating to both the investigation of coal and former coal mines and their treatment should be obtained before beginning work on site. All proposals should apply good engineering practice developed for mining areas. **No development should be undertaken that intersects, disturbs or interferes with any coal or mines of coal without the permission of the Coal Authority."**

Facts Matter: In the site visit Wednesday 20th January 2021, I showed the planning Inspector O S Woodward, Howard Baxter Sheffield (LPA) and representatives from Avant Homes the water retention on site E by placing a ruler in the tracks left by the off-road bikers. Local residents of Owlthorpe understand that how in wet months millions of gallons of water are stored in the hills of Owlthorpe and gently released into the Ochre Dyke. It seems to me that none of the officials understood the significance of standing water and the effect it has on downstream flooding in bad weather conditions. This is better demonstrated on our website: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Water.mp4> Please view.

After the deforestation of site E, and on several occasions whilst the development of site E has been taking place runoff water has poured off the site polluting the Ochre Dyke. Also, whilst under construction of the SUDS system. Rain water filled up the site and life boats had to be placed around the perimeter in case workers fell in.

I believe Inspector O S Woodward was negligent in granting permission to build in Owlthorpe. The land is too steep building more houses in Owlthorpe will increase the flood risk downstream.

I have made formal complaints to the Planning inspectorate and taken our case to the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Further complaints will follow. Hopefully we may find some justice.

Thank you for listening

Kind Regards

Michael Meredith

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org>

THE COAL AUTHORITY 200 LICHFIELD LANE MANSFIELD NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NG18 4RG

Coal Authority report dated: 02 January 2014.

CD2.27 - App submission 23.8.19 - Coal Mining Report - Mining Report 8718.pdf

<http://www.dlpplanningappeals.co.uk/Docs/CD2.27%20-%20App%20submission%2023.8.19%20-%20Coal%20Mining%20Report%20-%20Mining%20Report%208718.pdf>

“Underground coal mining Past The property is in the likely zone of influence from workings in 2 seams of coal at 60m to 180m depth”

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