# Chew Moor residents protest proposed car park on village green



Local residents of Chew Moor, Bolton, in Greater Manchester, are voicing their concerns over a proposed car park on what they consider to be their 'village green'. The area in question is located outside a mosque that was established in a former church building, following the closure of the Chew Moor Methodist Church on St John's Road in 2023 due to dwindling congregation numbers.

A public meeting recently convened at the Tempest United FC clubhouse, where residents gathered to express their alarm at the plans for a 19-space car park on the grassed area adjacent to the mosque. The green space had reportedly been 'torn up' last summer by construction vehicles, leading to the removal of trees and other vegetation, actions that one local, Councillor Cox, described as a "wanton act of vandalism." Speaking at the meeting, Cox stated, "When I saw what happened last summer to what acts as the village green, I can't put into words how angry and annoyed I was."

The conversion of the church into a mosque did not require planning permission as it was classified as no 'change of use' under local regulations. However, the council’s planning procedures were brought into question when plans for the car park were submitted and subsequently withdrawn due to the absence of a required environmental report. Councillor Galloway, a member of the Bolton Council planning committee, noted the importance of biodiversity assessments, stating, "If a garden is to be concreted over, the applicant has to state how they would mitigate the loss of nature." She further explained that without an ecology report, the planning application was deemed invalid and removed from the council’s portal, although there is speculation that revised plans may soon be resubmitted.

During the meeting, residents outlined a range of concerns pertaining to the proposed developments. Notably, they raised traffic issues, noise pollution, and ecological considerations as significant worries. One resident commented on the busy conditions, stating, "St John's Road is busy at rush hour, but it is also busy all through the day," while another observed that "virtually every learner driver in Bolton uses it, plus motorbikes." In response to these concerns, Councillor Galloway affirmed that all objections submitted would remain valid. She highlighted that until planning approval had been granted, the area could not be used for parking.

The current state of the land adjacent to the mosque has further stirred resident discontent, with benches removed from the area and only a small patch remaining for parking. Residents appear divided, with some recognising that additional parking might alleviate on-street congestion, yet the overall sentiment remains one of apprehension regarding the loss of local green space.

As the situation evolves, the local community continues to grapple with the implications of the proposed car park and the preservation of their cherished village green.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning> - This URL could support information about Bolton Council's planning procedures and regulations regarding environmental reports for developments like car parks. It could also provide details on why certain applications might be deemed invalid without such reports.
* <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/PFE> - This URL relates to the Greater Manchester Plan for Everyone, which addresses how development needs are met outside of green spaces, potentially supporting claims about the preservation of village greens and biodiversity.
* <https://muckrack.com/zach-harrison/articles> - This URL features articles by a local journalist, Zach Harrison, and could include reports on community reactions to development proposals, such as car parks near mosques in Bolton.
* <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/906/open-space-assessment-strategy-and-action-plan> - This document outlines Bolton Council's strategy for open spaces and could provide insight into how local councils prioritize green space preservation and manage community concerns over development proposals.
* <https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/> - This local news website could host articles detailing the community's response to proposed developments, traffic issues, and environmental concerns in areas like Chew Moor.
* <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning-committee> - This URL might offer information about Bolton Council's planning committee activities, including discussions and decisions regarding development proposals and their impact on local green spaces.