# Northfield Terrace residents suffer earthquake-like damage and disruption from Wavensmere Homes development



Residents of Northfield Terrace in Cheltenham have expressed deep concern over the impact of a nearby construction project, which they liken to an "earthquake." The ongoing development of 147 homes by Wavensmere Homes has caused significant distress among locals, many of whom report cracks in their walls and frequent disturbances from noise and vibrations linked to the construction activities.

Since the building work commenced, these residents have alleged that their homes have been compromised, with numerous fissures appearing in walls attributed to the vibrations from groundworks. Emma Chetwynd Stapylton, a marketing consultant and long-time resident, highlighted that the noise and disruptions have severely affected their quality of life. She remarked on the palpable tremors that have left her feeling distressed and desperate to escape her home during daylight hours. “Every day we find new cracks. I wander around the house thinking ‘what is going to be next?’” she lamented.

Others in the area, such as Mike Harris, have reported that cracks have emerged within various rooms, growing larger as the works progress. He expressed frustration over the situation, stating that such disturbances have turned what should be a comforting home environment into a place of anxiety and insecurity. The families with young children are particularly affected, with noise and vibrations disrupting their everyday life significantly.

The response from both Wavensmere Homes and Cheltenham Borough Council has done little to quell these concerns. Emma revealed that both the developers and the council have suggested that residents claim insurance for the damages. However, the potential financial implications of rising premiums have left many feeling trapped. “They have unequivocally told me they will monitor noise and vibration, but any damage to the house is my responsibility,” she noted, voicing the injustice felt by many affected homeowners.

Concerns extend beyond just structural issues. Residents have complained about the dust generated by construction activities, which has led to dirty vehicles and concerns about health implications. Terry Stevens, an elderly resident, likened the dust conditions to being “in the Sahara desert in a sandstorm,” and has taken precautions by removing decorative items from walls to prevent damage.

In reaction to local grievances while acknowledging the disturbances, Craig Gee from Wavensmere Homes asserted that the construction works are compliant with regulations and stress that measures are in place to mitigate noise and dust. Despite these assurances, many residents remain sceptical. They have pointed out that the conditions under which construction operates, such as permitted working hours, are frequently ignored based on previous experiences of noise pollution in the area.

The frustrations of local residents echo broader issues surrounding construction regulation in Cheltenham. Council guidelines stipulate specific working hours and the need for builders to manage noise and dust effectively, yet there have been documented failures to adhere to these regulations in other cases, leading to successful prosecutions for noise pollution in the past. Despite this, the current predicament of residents suggests ongoing struggles to enforce these rules effectively.

As construction progresses, there are looming fears amongst residents about the additional impacts on neighbouring structures, particularly the Grade II listed buildings on St Margaret's Terrace. Many in the area feel the initial assessment and monitoring might not adequately reflect the potential damage and disturbance to historically significant properties.

The cumulative frustrations of Northfield Terrace residents illustrate the challenges of balancing necessary development with community welfare. As the project continues, it remains to be seen whether further action will be taken to ensure that local voices are heard, and appropriate measures are enacted to mitigate the overwhelming disruptions they face.

**Reference Map:**

1. Paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 7, 8
2. Paragraph 6
3. Paragraph 4
4. -

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/locals-say-theyre-living-earthquake-31679838> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2947/successful_prosecution_for_noise_pollution> - In October 2024, Cheltenham Borough Council successfully prosecuted Soldi Investments Ltd for failing to control noise during the construction of a supermarket on Cirencester Road. The company was fined £6,000, ordered to pay £2,000 in compensation, and £4,835 in costs, totaling £12,835. Residents had complained about noise disturbances outside the agreed working hours, leading to the prosecution. ([cheltenham.gov.uk](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2947/successful_prosecution_for_noise_pollution?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/910/construction_and_building_sites/1> - Cheltenham Borough Council provides guidelines for construction and building sites, including permitted working hours: Monday to Friday from 7:30 am to 6 pm, and Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm. Construction companies are required to control noise and dust to minimize disruption to residents. ([cheltenham.gov.uk](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/910/construction_and_building_sites/1?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://cheltcivicsoc.org/objection-to-black-and-white-site-plans/> - The Cheltenham Civic Society objected to Wavensmere Homes' plans for the Black & White site on St Margaret’s Road, expressing concerns about the development's design and its impact on the local area. They called for the council to reject the scheme and for the developer to present a plan that reflects the site's strategic importance. ([cheltcivicsoc.org](https://cheltcivicsoc.org/objection-to-black-and-white-site-plans/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/noise-nuisance/> - South Gloucestershire Council outlines procedures for reporting noise nuisances, including those from building sites. They advise residents to first attempt to resolve issues directly with the responsible party before contacting the council. The council investigates complaints about noise that substantially interferes with the use or enjoyment of a home or is likely to injure health. ([beta.southglos.gov.uk](https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/noise-nuisance/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/895/noise_nuisance/2> - Cheltenham Borough Council addresses noise nuisances, including those from noisy neighbors and construction sites. They emphasize that noise from neighbors is a common source of nuisance and can originate from various activities. The council has powers to deal with noise under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and failure to comply with an abatement notice can lead to fines. ([cheltenham.gov.uk](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/895/noise_nuisance/2?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2988/wavensmere_homes_starts_work_at_50m_arkle_court_scheme_in_cheltenham> - Wavensmere Homes and Montane Partners commenced work on the £50 million Arkle Court development in Cheltenham, which includes 147 houses and apartments. The project aims to enhance the street scene, including the Grade II\* listed St Margaret’s Terrace. Groundworks began in March 2025, with the development expected to take two and a half years to complete. ([cheltenham.gov.uk](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2988/wavensmere_homes_starts_work_at_50m_arkle_court_scheme_in_cheltenham?utm_source=openai))