

Statutory declaration

I, Claire Diana Hogg, [REDACTED] do solemnly and sincerely declare:

[REDACTED] with my husband for 14 years, having chosen the house for its peaceful location within the beautiful Somerset countryside.

For the last couple of years the landowner started to turn the site into a small industrial estate – shipping containers were delivered and used as storage for different companies, old cars arrived for storage and there has been a constant arrival of vans / skip lorries with waste to be subsequently transferred to the woods. Trial bike riders would come to the yard on “driving days”, get started and revved before driving off into the woods. The large barn that was retrospectively approved by the council, started to get used for firewood production in clear breach of the caveats imposed with the retrospective planning permission.

Due to our close proximity to the Site of the Old Colliery (just opposite a single country lane), the enjoyment of our amenities has been severely affected by the activities in the yard (noise, exhaust fumes from old trucks/vans/lorries), but especially the firewood business.

During a 2024 Parish Council meeting in Chelwood, the landowner publicly stated it would be “stupid only to store logs in the barn and not to convert them to firewood, as they would only rot away”. Clearly it was never his intention to comply with the caveats of the retrospective planning permission.

The firewood business in particular has affected our amenities immeasurably. My husband was severely ill for some time and died a couple of weeks ago, but we were not able to sit outside and enjoy our garden due to the unbearable chain sawing noise, especially on weekends from early morning to evening. The noise is so loud it can even be heard in the house and has affected our mental health greatly.

The statement of case document states under Firewood production (b) and (c): “...There is no suggestion that raw materials are being brought to the site for processing” and again in the AGM Justification statement on grounds A of Appeal 3.2.2. “There are no external imports of timber: all wood processed originates within the holding”.

On the contrary...since September 2023 the firewood activities have not only been restricted to the conversion of logs from Frys Bottom Wood, I have observed the arrival of an articulated lorry with a trailer stacked high with a large number of felled trees for conversion to firewood on at least 4 occasions when I was at home (27th September 2023, 5th October 2024, 19th and 20th October 2024). Each time the articulated lorry drove into the property using the main entrance, arriving from the opposite direction to the normal woods entrance, which is used for transporting logs/ from the woods. The council is in possession of photographic evidence to that effect.

The same AGM statement cites case law 2.3.1 and describes that Firewood production, where the timber originates from the same woodland, is widely regarded as part of the forestry process. This is not the case here and furthermore, the appeal documents don't consider the severely detrimental effect of the firewood business on our amenities and mental health.

It saddens me that the woods have also become a tipping ground for unsorted waste. In 2023 I discovered on the Environmental Agency Public Register that the owner of site of the Old Colliery had previously registered a U1 Waste Exemption permit in 2020, using his name at **our address** to dump waste on his own land. This was done without our consent and used for nearly 3 years, before he then registered a new licence under the correct address in 2023.

I sincerely hope that the planning inspector will turn down the various appeals and in particular that he won't grant planning permission for the production of firewood. For all other points of the appeal I refer to our neighbourhood group statement through Rachel Tadman, but living right opposite the site, I felt it was important to describe the extremely detrimental effect the firewood processing business in particular has had on our lives.

I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Declared at 16 HIGH STREET KEYNSHAM

Signed

Claire Diana Hogg

This 16 of June 2025

Before me

RUTH KATHARINE COLES
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