



# DRONFIELD CIVIC SOCIETY



## PRESS RELEASE

### Residents up in arms over 'scorched earth' tree felling

Rail operators have been accused of reducing part of a historic North East Derbyshire town to a wasteland by felling hundreds of trees along the rail line which runs through the centre of Dronfield.

Local residents and the town's Civic Society are up in arms after Network Rail contractors stripped all vegetation for yards on either side of the main Sheffield to London line, which lies in a Conservation area. They have accused the company of operating a 'scorched earth' policy, destroying vegetation and wildlife habitat and exposing residents to noise and pollution and changing the whole landscape of the town.

Though Network Rail are entitled to fell trees on safety grounds, residents believe they decided to destroy every tree on their land to save money - so that they do not have to revisit the site for many years. Now they are calling on North East District Council and their local MP to step in and prevent similar destruction in future.

One resident, Ralph Tatt, whose house overlooks the line, said: "The aggressive and destructive work carried out by Network Rail is staggering. It has had a dramatic impact on noise and wildlife and is extremely damaging to the town's character. Many townspeople are very angry over this."

And the chair of Dronfield Civic Society, John Harvey, said: We believe Network Rail's approach to this work has been totally inconsiderate to their so-called "railway neighbours". "Although they notified the local North East Derbyshire District Council conservation officer and some residents that some work was to take place, they by no means defined the extent of the work, nor considered the impact it would have on the town and its residents". He added "by using the phrase 'operational reasons' in their notification, no one has the right to challenge the work, nor do they define what the reasons for such widespread destruction are, and how it affects their operations, other than citing 'safety'.

Network Rail are due to return to the area around Dronfield station to carry out further work next weekend, and the Civic Society say they will be monitoring the work although the damage has been done.

**For further information, or to arrange broadcast interviews, contact :John Harvey on 01246 412313**

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