

**WINGERWORTH LIDO**

**COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE**

**CORRESPONDENCE WITH NEDDC**

# **Letter from Countryside Alliance – dated 28 August 2025**



Councillor Nigel Barker  
Leader  
North East Derbyshire District Council  
District Council Offices  
2013 Mill Lane  
Wingerworth  
Chesterfield  
S42 6NG

28 August 2025

Dear Councillor Barker

I am writing to you to urge North East Derbyshire District Council to strongly reconsider the decision to implement an angling ban at Wingerworth Lido to create 'biodiversity hub'. The Countryside Alliance is a charity that campaigns for the rural way of life, and we have a number of members in the council area who are deeply concerned by this decision.

It is baffling that the council have portrayed angling and biodiversity as two mutually exclusive things. Angling naturally creates "biodiversity hubs" and wildlife thrives thanks to the dedicated efforts of the angling community. Anglers play a vital role in the protection and conservation of aquatic environments. They are often the first to notice and report pollution incidents or other environmental issues, such as non-native invasive species and are on the front line in reporting illegal poaching.

Not only does the ban work completely contrary to the council's aims to enhance local wildlife and protect the environment, it also goes directly against several of the council's other aims set out in the 2023-2027 plan.

The plan states that the council aims to "maximise opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to participate in physical and social activity" and will "provide and facilitate good quality outdoor spaces for activity and socialising". In implementing an angling ban at Wingerworth Lido, you are not maximising such opportunities; you are actively reducing them.

Similarly, the council's pledge to "promote green social prescribing for mental health and wellbeing" makes the angling ban seem hypocritical. Angling has been proven to have therapeutic benefits, so much so that the NHS have actually prescribed it as a form of therapy. Banning angling at this popular site will have a negative impact on the mental health of some residents, and is a limitation on green social prescribing for mental health and wellbeing.

If the adverse affects of the angling ban and it being directly opposed to many of North East Derbyshire District Council's aims were not enough, the huge outcry that has arisen among the local public is something that we urge the council, as a democratically elected body, to listen to. In just a few days, a petition calling on the council to reverse its decision, set up by local angler James Duffy, has reached over 3,900 signatures. I sincerely hope the council listen to such a

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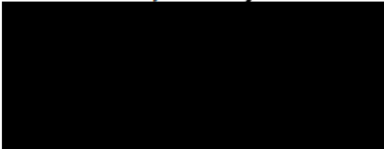
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deep-rooted sentiment among locals. I am certain local anglers would be more than happy to meet with you to outline their concerns in person.

The benefits of angling to mental health, local communities, and biodiversity and the environment are proven and well-attested. If the council is serious about its 2023-2027 plan, and cares about the opinion of local communities, it should reverse the decision to ban angling at Wingerworth Lido.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Mo Metcalf-Fisher.

Mo Metcalf-Fisher  
Director of External Affairs  
Countryside Alliance

# **Letter from Countryside Alliance – dated 17 September 2025**



Councillor Nigel Barker  
Leader  
North East Derbyshire District Council  
District Council Offices  
2013 Mill Lane  
Wingerworth  
Chesterfield  
S42 6NG

17 September 2025

Dear Councillor Barker,

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my letter about the devastating decision to ban angling at the Wingerworth Lido. While I was pleased to see that the council fully recognises the value of angling to humans and nature, I am troubled by several points you have raised.

Firstly, you maintain that there were concerns ‘raised by local residents’ about the local angling club’s activities. However, responses to Freedom of Information requests covering the period January 2023 to August 2025 have revealed that the council received just three ‘formal complaints’ and seven ‘concerns’, which appear to be general observations not deemed serious enough to constitute a ‘formal complaint’. Curiously, over this period of 2.5 years, the three ‘formal complaints’ were recorded within just a few days in July 2024. Little substance has been provided in relation to these ‘formal complaints’ and from what I could ascertain, no further action was taken against the club by an external agency. Additionally, NEDDC admits that it did not raise these matters with the club or issue any formal warnings in response to these complaints. Apparently, they lacked sufficient evidence or substance to warrant any follow-up or sanction.

While all complaints should be taken seriously, ‘concerns raised by local residents’ clearly cannot justify implementing a ban, given that the tiny number of complaints that were received were deemed insufficient enough to even raise with the club, let alone result in any formal action being taken against it.

Secondly, while you state that there was a period of engagement with a very narrow range of stakeholders, I can find little to no evidence of the wider council or public being made aware of any discussion about the future of angling at the lido before the extraordinary decision was announced. The subsequent, growing outrage and hurt within the local community underlines the need for full transparency and genuine community engagement in the future of a cherished

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asset. That failure in this case sets a worrying precedent for future discussions about other community assets.

You acknowledge that 'it is regrettable that a campaign has only emerged after the conclusion of the agreement'. Had the public been given the opportunity to participate in discussions, that situation would not have arisen and the council would almost certainly not have taken this unpopular decision.

On 22 September 2025 at full council, a motion submitted by Councillor D. Hancock calls on the council to review the decision and 'undertake a public consultation with residents and local stakeholders on the future use and management of the Lido, including the question of fishing, so that community voices are central to shaping its future.' I implore you, as Leader of the Council, to support this motion, which is unarguably a pragmatic and fair solution. I believe that by doing so, NEDDC can reestablish confidence and trust with the local community in relation to the lido and other community assets whose usage may be subject to review in future.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write to me.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Mo Metcalf-Fisher.

Mo Metcalf-Fisher  
Director of External Affairs  
Countryside Alliance

# **Letter from Countryside Alliance – dated 25 September 2025**



Councillor Nigel Barker  
Leader  
North East Derbyshire District Council  
District Council Offices  
2013 Mill Lane  
Wingerworth  
Chesterfield  
S42 6NG

25 September 2025

Dear Councillor Barker,

Following my letter dated 17 September 2025, I am writing in relation to the Council's unjustified decision to ban angling at the Wingerworth Lido.

I have been made aware of email communications that show North East Derbyshire District Council has been, as recently as the morning of Monday 22 September 2025 pushing for the removal of fish from the Wingerworth Lido. The significance of that day won't escape you, but for the benefit of doubt, it was the same day the issue of angling at the Wingerworth Lido was to be debated.

That meeting resulted in the Council agreeing to review the decision to ban angling at the Wingerworth Lido, with the Environment Scrutiny Committee seeking the views of stakeholders before a final decision is to be taken by the Council's Asset Management Board.

While I am pleased the Council has taken the decision to review the angling ban which, as you are aware, has caused considerable upset and anger locally, we have a number of important questions about the review process.

It is in the public interest that these questions are answered in full:

1. Will members of the public fishing at the lido still face a fine? Given the decision to ban angling is now under review, can you please clarify what legal basis the Council has to issue any fine?
2. Can you confirm whether the council has any plans to remove fish from the Wingerworth Lido before any final decision has been taken?
3. Please outline the timeframe for the review process. When will the Environment Scrutiny Committee meet and seek stakeholder input? Please confirm how the Council will be publicly promoting this process.

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4. The Council says that views collected by the Environment Scrutiny Committee will be sent to the Asset Management Board for consideration and a final decision. How, in the interest of public transparency, can members of the public and councillors scrutinise this process? In addition, can you confirm who sits on this Board and whether members of the public will be able to attend any meetings? Can you also confirm whether any employees of the council's housing development partner, Rykneld Homes, are members of the Asset Management Board?

You will understand the importance of these questions and the need for answers if the Council is to be fully transparent about how the final decision is to be reached.

Given the timescale, I would appreciate a swift response.

Yours sincerely,



Mo Metcalf-Fisher  
Director of External Affairs  
Countryside Alliance

# **Response Letter from Leader, Cllr Nigel Barker to Countryside Alliance – dated 3 September 2025**



**North East  
Derbyshire  
District Council**

Mo Metcalf-Fisher  
Director of External Affairs  
Countryside Alliance  
China Works  
Black Prince Road  
London SE1 7SJ

Our Ref: NB/AH  
Contact: Councillor Barker  
Tel: 01246 231111  
E-mail: [Nigel.barker@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:Nigel.barker@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk)  
Date: 3 September 2025

Dear Mr Metcalf-Fisher

## **Wingerworth Lido – Countryside Alliance**

Thank you for your letter regarding the Council's decision to bring angling activities at Wingerworth Lido to a close.

We fully recognise the value that angling brings to many individuals and communities, including its contributions to wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion. We continue to support angling at other Council owned sites across the district, where clubs remain actively involved in their management. The Council's decision was not taken lightly and followed a period of engagement with local elected members, including those from opposition political parties, as well as direct discussions with Clay Cross Angling Club.

We are aware that concerns about the club's activities have been raised by local residents and understand that both the Environment Agency and the police have received similar complaints.

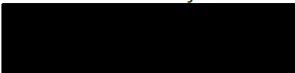
The Council acted in accordance with the terms of the existing agreement, providing six months' notice to allow the club time to explore alternative arrangements. We note that opportunities for engagement during this period were not fully taken up by the club, and it is regrettable that a campaign has only emerged after the conclusion of the agreement.

We understand that this decision has been disappointing for some members of the angling community. However, as a local authority, our responsibility is to act in the best interests of all residents of North East Derbyshire district. In this case, we believe the decision taken reflects that duty, balancing environmental priorities, community feedback, and the long-term future of the Lido. We are currently working with a number of local groups to establish a 'Friends of Wingerworth Lido' group, which will help shape the site's future in a way that reflects the community's aspirations.

We are certainly not opposed to angling as an activity and remain open to exploring opportunities at other suitable locations across the district. We are also aware of a wide range of alternative angling venues in our district in areas such as Barlow, Ashover, Killamarsh, Eckington, Hollymoorside, Clay Cross, Ogston Reservoir, and along the Chesterfield Canal. While the details and operators of these sites may change over time, we would be happy to provide further information on request.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

  
Councillor Nigel Barker  
Leader

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