



Scottish Borders Council
Forward Planning
CHQ, Newton St Boswells
TD6 0SA

21st Jan 2021

Dear

Local Plan: Site References SGALA005, SGALA016, GSGALA009

HOLLYBUSH VALLEY & GALA POLICIES

I read with concern the outline of possible developments in this area, with particular reference to the conservation and management of the existing woodland in the Gala Policies.

The document indicates the need for a transport and roads appraisal designed to service new housing in the Hollybush area. That might include a *“new road through the Policies on Balmoral Avenue side”* and *“subsidiary access through Balmoral Avenue”*.

The Gala Policies is a well-established mixed woodland. Parts of it are ancient woodland. It is home to a wide diversity of trees (mainly deciduous) , plants, birds and invertebrates. In Galashiels we are very fortunate to have such a biodiverse habitat in our urban midst. It is also a wood which is easily accessible to all, whether for recreational use, for education (especially for schoolchildren & teachers from adjacent schools) or for biological recording. There are only a few other fragments of such habitat in and close to the town, but nothing on the scale of the Policies.

In present times we need to be increasingly aware of the importance of conserving such habitat.

The construction of a new road through the Policies would lead to very considerable loss of biodiversity. Offset planting of new trees would not compensate for this. Old and ancient woodland cannot be replaced.

I urge those responsible for formulating a Masterplan for this area to regard the conservation of the Gala Policies as a priority concern.

I would be grateful to receive acknowledgement of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Lindsay

Local Resident
Scottish Wildlife Trust Central Borders Group Secretary

National Moth Recording Scheme Recorder for Selkirkshire & Roxburghshire