



Protesters campaign to save the trees in Worthing town centre

Protest to save the trees from retail development

Jamie Crow
jamie.crow@press.co.uk
01903 282353

A protest was held in Worthing town centre last weekend by campaigners hoping to save three sycamore trees from being torn down to make way for a development.

The protest, organised by the Worthing Society, follows a planning application submitted to Worthing Borough Council in December for a large glass kiosk to be built at

the Montague Centre, near Liverpool Road.

The kiosk is intended to be turned into a restaurant, but the society feels the removal of the trees would be detrimental to the environment.

Susan Belton, acting chairman, said: "I don't think people were aware that the planning application had been submitted.

"We have had an amazing response so far and it is great to see that people are so interested. We don't want

to mothball the town but we feel we must protect our conservation areas."

The group also has an online petition with more than 1,500 signatures.

The kiosk is part of a larger development being proposed by NewRiver Retail to create a number of units for the town centre. The report submitted to the council lists the trees as grade 'B', meaning the trees have a 'moderate' life span greater than 20 years, and are also noted for their value to the landscape.

But the report also draws attention to comments from two retailers, who claim the trees collect honeydew and create natural debris outside shops.

Speaking about the development, town centre manager Sharon Clarke said: "It could be a positive for the town and help the night-time economy but it is down to the planners to decide whether it is right for the town. They should be determining it. It does need to be in front of the committee for that

discussion to be had."

A spokesman for Worthing Borough Council said: "The council has received a number of objections to the loss of three preserved trees on the site. A report is being prepared in connection with this application and this will deal with all the issues raised during the consultation period.

"A key issue will be whether the loss of these preserved trees can be justified by other wider benefits of the scheme to the town centre."