Dear supporter,

As you know, SDAG has been successful in gaining leave for Judicial Review of OMBC’s application to build a new school in Diggle. We are sorry that you have not heard much from us in recent weeks but all our efforts have been devoted to preparing for the further legal battle in January. We are doing everything we can to ensure that we present the best possible legal case, we have an exceptionally experienced and skilled legal team whose success – on our behalf – was demonstrated in September when their legal arguments succeeded against those presented by the leading barrister employed by OMBC.

The outcome of Judicial Review proceedings is by no means certain but we feel we have to make every last effort to prevent the destruction of our landscape, heritage and community. This will be our last stand, the final chance to prevent the Diggle valley from being bull-dozed and levelled and the prospect of a car park, weld-mesh fences, astro-turf and floodlights on our greenbelt. This is also the only way we can stop the unworkable and dangerous highways plans for Diggle that have been proposed without any thought for their consequences on the village and surrounding areas like Dobcross.

Your fantastic response to our request for financial assistance to fund this legal action has been truly amazing. Without support from residents throughout Saddleworth we could not have got this far. However, if you have pledged money but have yet to make a payment, please do so as soon as possible.

If you have already made a contribution, please, if you can, dig deep and make a further payment since to continue the fight we have to pay legal costs on an ongoing basis. It’s the only way of preventing the destruction and chaos OMBC plan to impose on us.

See our photo-montage (below) for an idea of how disastrous this scheme will be if we don’t stop it.
BEFORE: The current view of the clock tower

AFTER: The clock tower overshadowed by ugly inappropriate buildings
BEFORE: the Diggle Valley as we know and love it

AFTER: the urban landscape we will have to endure – car park and turnaround on the left near Huddersfield road, sports pitches, fences, engineered surfaces and tarmac **all in the greenbelt.**

Stephen Irvine (OMBC Head of Planning) says: ‘the development of the school and associated sports facilities **would not significantly affect** openness of the Green Belt’ (Officer’s Report to the Planning Committee April 2016)
BEFORE: the canal-side walk familiar to Diggle residents and visitors.

AFTER: what you will see if OMBC get their way – floodlights, fencing and (at the top of the image) car parks – all on our greenbelt. Stephen Irvine, Oldham’s Head of Planning thinks: ‘the impact the on the landscape and visual amenity will not be significant’. (Officer’s Report to the Planning Committee, April 2016)
BEFORE: Huddersfield Rd and pasture land in the Greenbelt

AFTER: What you can expect if the school goes ahead: traffic congestion, either side of the turnaround, and the greenbelt turned into a car park. Stephen Irvine (Head of Planning at OMBC) comments: ‘the impact on landscape and visual amenity resulting from the highways works will not be significant or detrimental enough to sustain a reason for refusal’ (Officer’s Report to the Planning Committee, April 2015)
This image of the playing fields at Mossley Hollins school was taken from a distance of 850 yards (770 metres) from the nearest light. **Houses on Huddersfield Road will be just 100 yards (91 metres) from the proposed playing fields** and floodlighting if the school moves to Diggle.

None of this is necessary, a viable alternative site for the school is available in Uppermill, where most people want our school to stay.

*Remember THIS is what we face if we don’t stop them.*

You can make a payment to ‘Save Diggle Action Group’: Co-operative Bank Account number: 65799932 Sort code: 08-92-99. Contact us on: 07545 939724 or at: savediggleactiongroup@gmail.com.

Visit: www.savediggle.org.uk

... and keep the fight alive!