Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to object to the proposed zipwire development at Thirlmere which could impact greatly on the landscape character and tranquillity of this part of the Lake District.

**Planning Reference**: 7/2017/2298

**Proposal**: Thirlmere Activity Hub: Development of a zipwire attraction, a series of improvements to the round Thirlmere cycleway, improvements to car parks, access paths and the extension and development of an existing toilet block to provide reception, changing area and toilet facility.

**Location**: Land at Thirlmere, St John's Castlerigg and Wythburn

My objections to the development are outlined below:

**1.** **Inconsistent with National Park statutory purposes**

I believe that when considering planning applications, the National Park Authority (NPA) must be mindful of the two National Park statutory purposes and it is currently difficult to see how the proposed zip wire will contribute to these. Whilst I do not object to the proposed cycle route, which is already largely in place, I feel that the zip wires will not enhance the visitors understanding of the Park’s special qualities, rather it may instil the participant with the idea that National Parks are outdoor theme parks.

 **2.** **Impact on road traffic**

I believe that the proposed development will result in unacceptable levels of traffic on the local highway network and would like to see the Traffic Statement be re-assessed so that it looks at the ‘worst case’ scenario as well as (as currently presented) the ‘best case scenario’.

**3.** **Impacts upon the landscape character and tranquility of Thirlmere particularly on the Western shore**

Despite the area around Thirlmere being predominantly ‘manmade’ in character, this is celebrated by the fact that the area gained World Heritage Site status in 2017 due to its Cultural (i.e. manmade) Landscape.

The many valleys of the Lake District also have their own distinctive features and Thirlmere has its own character. The valley is central to the Lake District and one is able to access and ascend Helvellyn on the east of the reservoir via the A591 with ease. On the west side of the reservoir there is a tranquillity, which many are surprised to find in such a central location of the Lake District; here walks up onto the Central Fells can be enjoyed.

The launch point from Swirls Car Park is also on the edge of open access land which has been mapped as such for its landscape characteristics. The above proposals threaten to change the whole character of the area.

**4.** **The issue of precedent**

If this development was approved it would open up the whole of the Lake District National Park and other National Parks to such types of development. While there are already zip wires in the Lake District (Brockhole and Go-Ape), these are relatively small, well hidden and are not on the same scale envisaged at Thirlmere.

**5.** **Impact on World Heritage Site Outstanding Universal Value**

The issue of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) was fundamental in the Lake District obtaining its World Heritage Site status as a result of its ‘Cultural Landscape’. A zip wire constructed through this landscape fundamentally undermines and threatens this status.

**6.** **Introducing commercial development to an area of tranquillity**

Despite its central location, the valley is in a quiet location with minimal commercial activities and those that do exist are only small scale. The development of a zip wire, with its attendant buildings would change all of that with the potential for hundreds of thousands of visitors.

**7.** **Sandford Principle**

My objection requests that the planning application by Tree Tops be turned down on the basis of all the above evidence but also on the basis of the 'Sandford Principle' which is clearly laid down in statute i.e.; "Where irreconcilable conflicts exist between conservation and public enjoyment, then conservation interest should take priority".

**8.** **Concern at impeding flight paths of aircraft**

Permission will also need to be sought from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and it may be necessary to highlight the presence of the zip wire by markers across the reservoir, which could be illuminated at night. This would seem totally incompatible within the landscape and in the middle of a National Park.

In summary, I believe the proposal for eight zipwires at Thirlmere is inappropriate in this part of the Lake District and I hope you will give the objections outlined above full consideration.

Yours faithfully,

A BMC member