

Hated mast is pulled down

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Anti mobile phone mast protesters have pulled down a massive communication tower near to a Huntington youth club, following widespread fury at its controversial siting.

The 12-metre Orange mast at the back of Littleton Youth Centre was ripped out of its foundations and dumped on its side by what is believed to be a number of protesters in the village.

It is believed they used bolt-cutters to fell the mast.

Feelings about the contentious tower have been running high in the village since its siting in 2002 - this is the second attack on the mast in a number of months.

Residents in Stafford Road, which runs along the bottom of the youth centre, told The Post they were not surprised by the incident.

"To be perfectly honest, I don't think you'll find anyone in the village who will be shocked by this," one resident, who did not want to be named, said.

"That thing is massive and nobody wanted it here at the time. It's right next to a youth centre and a playing field. How can that be safe?

"Everybody hears horror stories about these things and yet they stick it right next to where children play.

"I don't think you'll find anybody who will be upset about this. In fact we would probably buy them a round of drinks."

South Staffs District Council was inundated with protests when the mast was first erected. Residents' fears were also echoed by Huntington Parish Council who thought the tower was in the wrong place.

Anger over a glut of mobile phone applications in the Chase area has been growing over the last few months.

Many residents feel the area has become a 'dumping ground' for phone companies to erect their masts.

The concern comes at a time when Chase Council planning control committee councillor, Les Bullock, admitted the health guidelines the committee were given on mobile phone

masts contained 'no cast-iron guarantee' on their safety.

"Nobody can give us a definitive answer on the safety of these things," mother of two Patricia Fellows said.

"To be truthful I'm glad it has been ripped down."

South Staffs and Huntington Parish Councillor Ron Kenyon said he understood the concerns of residents, but could not condone the actions of protesters-This is the second time they've had a go at it (the mast)," he said.

"It was not made welcome by the residents who really didn't want it here at all.

"Everybody has had enough of these things, but I have to say this is a bit extreme.

"They've tried to undo the bolts at the base it before. People are getting fed up with them and you can understand their frustration. But, obviously, you can't condone this sort of thing at all."