

4th September 2018

Dear Councillor

What's the fuss about - Newbury doesn't need a football ground – does it?

In order to ensure that the people of Newbury get the chance to fully understand the details of the recently submitted planning application for a state of the art 3G pitch and new clubhouse facilities at Faraday Road and to provide a forum where people can openly ask questions, we have arranged a public consultation event on Thursday 13th September 2018 in a meeting room at the Document House 7-9 Wharf St, Newbury RG14 5AN. Two sessions have been arranged, one that starts at 6.00pm and the second one at 7.00pm.

Rightly or wrongly we feel that the Councillors of West Berkshire Council and Newbury Town Council are not fully aware of why a significant number of the local electorate and their young families, think that it is really important to preserve and enhance a community football ground in Newbury. As such we would like the opportunity to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the key points and to share with you with the evidence that makes this such a crucial and important local issue. You are of course welcome to join either of the public consultation slots mentioned above but if there is sufficient interest from you (and your fellow councillors) we would like to invite you to a "Councillors pre -public consultation discussion" at the Document House 7-9 Wharf St, Newbury RG14 5AN at **5.00pm.**

We sense that the Council's current position is entrenched in as much as a "vision" floated a number of years ago could mean that the town's only football ground will be sacrificed to build 80 or so more flats near the town centre. Some of the questions we are being asked are:

"Why does it have to be either flats or the football ground – why can't we have both like every other town that I can think of?"

"How's this going to help with the health and wellbeing of the town. If the population of Newbury keeps expanding don't we need more and better facilities not less?"

"It's totally unthinkable that Newbury will no longer have a senior team playing in the town – how come smaller towns like Hungerford and Thatcham can achieve this and we can't – what's going on here?"

"Newbury community needs a football ground. Sport is an important part of life"

"Newbury is a large town with few enough sporting facilities, this is desperately needed"

"The ground is looking a bit tired; can't the Council invest in it to bring it up to date?"

"I was unaware that the Council had plans to demolish the ground – have they undertaken a public consultation and asked the people of Newbury what they think?"

"You're wasting your time - the problem is that this Council never listens to what the public wants?"

"Not even more flats! – Newbury's fast becoming just a dormitory town"

Newbury Community Football Group (NCFG)

“Doesn't its Asset of Community Status (ACV) status protect it from being concreted over?”

“If the Council is hellbent on building on it are they not obliged to replace it before any new development takes place?”

“What do the FA and Sport England think of this – will they allow the Council to build on a designated sports pitch?”

“Who are NCFG and what do they stand for?”

“Why have the Council closed the ground now? – it's such a shame to see it empty and unloved”

“I saw the Council's press release suggesting that they will re-open it as an unmanaged turn up and play multi use 5 a side facility – whose idea was this? who is going to use it, can it still be used for organised matches?”

“I've never voted in a local election before, but in May next year, I will make sure that I understand where my councillor stands on this specific matter”

This is really important for local democracy and we genuinely hope that you can take time out to come along to “Councillors pre -public consultation discussion” at the Document House 7-9 Wharf St, Newbury RG14 5AN on **Thursday 13th September 2018 at 5.00pm.**

Please be kind enough to reply to this email with a simple YES, I would like to meet with you next Thursday 13th September at 5.00pm or NO, sorry but I am unable to attend.

Yours sincerely

Paul Morgan
On behalf of Newbury Community Football Group (NCFG)