

**Evidence item 21**

**Appendix XVII**

This section includes;-

- a) During the consultation period regarding the Council Briefing Note dated 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010, issued for consultation at the beginning of June 2010, and prior to the Stoke Bishop Neighbourhood Partnership Open Forum meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010 the community forwarded over 250 letters of objection to the City Council.  
This section collates extracts from many of the letters.

Along with many other people, it has played, and still does play, a large part in my family's life: we walk the dog there, we run round it, use it as a pleasant short cut to run in Blaise, we've flown kites there, made snowmen, had picnics, taught children to ride bikes there and so on. We'd like the opportunity to continue benefiting from it, and I know many other people feel the same.

If such a development goes ahead, the character and management of the green space would also no doubt change with deleterious effects that go beyond amenity aspects; to wildlife, grassland, trees and so on.

### Clive Shepherd

We believe it should remain open access to the general public and various sports/community/Brownies etc activities as it has been for many years.

As someone with an interest in Health issues in a period of serious concerns about obesity any closure of local playing areas would seem to me rather foolish to say the least.

### Prof C. Paraskeva

1 Economics: Realistic estimates of capital cost, running costs, income generated;

2 Environment: Importance for wildlife (Nature Watch), Disruption to water table, Landscape value of trees and hedges, setting of grade II listed Stoke Lodge, Intrusion of floodlighting;

3 Social value to the wider neighbourhood.

### H. Alpass

I had dealings with the University when at BGS where I was Manager of the Sports Centre. They wanted to take the main hall over, losing our business and face, but luckily I managed to persuade the board that from June to October the place would be empty and it was rejected. They have taken over the squash courts there as they knocked their squash courts down in Woodland Road.

### Gay Huggins

Why does not Cotham school, and others, use the playing field at Coombe Dingle (back of houses in Abbey Road and Stoke Grove) where it is fenced off and that would solve their "problems".

### Gay Huggins

I live in Ebenezer Lane, which backs on to this area, and, as well as being a lovely space, to look at, I can attest to how many people use this space and what a community resource it is. There is almost always someone out there walking and every weekend there is football or cricket.

### Sue Geary

*"The Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861".*

This Act has proven that, if (the Council and) the Society of Merchant Ventures wouldn't have shown the altruism and farsightedness they substantiated already in 1861, Bristol would simply never know the Downs we all enjoy, today, and for years to come; a landmark for Bristol, for everybody, in all its glory.

In other words, anybody behind the current plans for Stoke Lodge today, apart from showing a total disrespect for the future of Bristol, and its local population, is simply nearly 150 years behind!

### W.P. Blancke

We would draw your attention to clause 2.42

2.42. The Stoke Lodge Playing Fields project proposes a major refurbishment of the field including the development of community facilities to the edge of the pitch, changing room improvements and pitch improvements. The scheme includes fencing to the perimeter of the site. It is will be funded from a section 77 consent for an investment of £1m (from the proposed disposal of a portion of land at the former Romney Infant/Junior Schools) that has DCSF approval. Additionally, a £600k Sport England Grant has been awarded for the scheme.

Which, unsurprisingly, aligns absolutely with the alleged 'out of date' plan?

### Susan & David Mayer

Our son's football team have used this land for many years, a non profit organisation, which meets on Saturday mornings and brings together over 20 boys from across the area, all from different walks of life who have become firm friends and see this communal land as their home.

Our daughter is a budding runner and has enjoyed many hours teaching herself the tricks of track running.

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Our daughter is a budding runner and has enjoyed many hours teaching herself the tricks of track running.

### Anne Allin



my family have enjoyed access and use of the facility for over 30 years on both an individual basis and through collective use by organisations such as the scouts, brownies, schools and sport organisations. any attempt to limit public access would be a retrograde step and should be robustly resisted.

#### Michael and Orynthia Sheehan-

My objections are: 1. They, have been used by the community for the past 50 years. 2. There is nowhere safe for people, especially women and children on their own, to walk for fitness or with a dog in the area. 3. It is used by everybody, young and old. This week I witnessed a family teaching their children to run – Ladies power walking-children walking dogs. 4. It is next to an estate specifically designed for the elderly who use it for recreation. 5. Not everyone is fit enough to drive to the Downs or walk in the Dingle. 6. I thought it was a policy that the schools in the area had to open their facilities to local community. 7. I rarely see dog mess on the field and fencing off would not stop it being used by people who leave beer bottles etc. 8. The Brownies, football clubs etc and ad hoc team games are being played every day. 9. Because it is treasured, I and many other people have stopped vandalism and picked up litter.

#### Christine Chadwick

This area, as mentioned in the leaflet, is used extensively by various clubs as well as providing a welcome open space for local residents, many of whom are no longer young, and the opportunity to walk around the park is one of the pleasures of the area. When we came to live in Bristol, 14 years ago, the open space and parkland was one of the main attractions of the area.

If this proposal was successful, what would happen during the school holiday periods? Would the park still be fenced off?

#### Mrs Jean Wortelhock

I lived for many years next door to the fields and now live only a few hundred yards away – the open space is a valued attraction for the area and is now the only open space in the area since Parry's Grove and RTZ's sports grounds have been developed. The idea of fencing off the area would be aesthetically disastrous especially as the view of one of the city's most beautiful trees – the cedar – would be spoilt. It does seem unfair to restrict the use of the playing fields to one school alone when so many schools and clubs have had the benefit of the facility in the past. – And not only schools – many of us have taught our sons and/or daughters to play cricket etc. informally over the years. If the problem has arisen that dogs are fouling the area – I know it was always a problem – could the council not see their way to provide "dog bins" as they do on Sea Mills Lane and other areas?

#### Rosemary Haigh

I understand that technically the public are not permitted access to Stoke Lodge fields, but de facto it has been a public space for many years.

We ourselves have been walking our dogs there periodically for 30 years, and taught our son rugger and cricket there too. We would be very sorry if we could now not do this for our grandson.

The case reported from the Council briefing note for spending this very large sum is absurdly weak.

From what I see on the fields, the alleged problem with dog faeces is minimal as almost all the dog-owners are responsible people and remove their deposits. It could be alleviated further with a couple of "poop bins" to encourage any defaulters (some people are coy about walking home clutching plastic bags.) I have never seen broken bottles there; a few crushed cans and other litter appear, but always after matches, not dropped by locals. Any cost saving in ground staff having to check the fields before they are used by Cotham School will be tiny compared with the £1m capital expenditure proposed. The playing fields are a valuable local resource; for most of the time there are no sports being played there and it would be a major waste to deny access to the public. We are, after all, all paying for them through our rates, and to deprive the public of access would seem unjust as well as unnecessary.

#### Tom Levinson

There is already adequate walling and fencing around the playing field. Additional fencing would be likely to spoil the beauty of the site and deny access to local residents.

#### Mary & Stephen Laity



The ground around Stoke Lodge is the only remaining open green space in Stoke Bishop. Whilst I understand that it is not officially a village green, in substance it has been used as such for many years. To fence off the ground for the exclusive use of a school (not even a local school!) would deprive Stoke Bishop residents of a much-loved local amenity and, I would go so far as to say, diminish our quality of life.

The different groups and individuals who use Stoke Lodge on a weekly basis are many e.g. youth football teams, brownies, families with children, joggers, teenagers using the grounds to play impromptu football, cricket or rugby games (incidentally, as a mother with a six-month old baby who walks around Stoke Lodge daily, I have never felt intimidated by any groups of young people who use the grounds for recreation).

### **Mrs Nerys (Llewellyn) Rowsell**

Stoke Lodge is an important part of our local community as it provides a local recreational area for local children and sports clubs. Our children use the space for their Guide activities, football and general space to meet up with friends. If you remove this space from the local children this will mean they have nowhere to play and young people need a space they can safely play without traffic. There is no where else in Stoke Bishop for them.

Stoke Lodge is also important for families with young children who can play and picnic on the parkland.

Stoke Lodge is also home to a beautiful range of trees and wildlife which could be destroyed by the land use change and extra traffic of school buses.

### **Kathryn & Stephen Toole**

There is no other open space in the area where children can play. My boys have used the playing field over the years. They have now grown up but I still use the field for jogging and I think that you will find that there are a large number of people in the area who use the fields regularly. I do not see why the fact that a school uses the area during school time conflicts with the use of the field by locals particularly children at other times. The land does not belong to the schools.

It is the selling of playing fields and the exclusion of children from open spaces which makes them more likely to cause trouble because there is nothing for them to do.

### **Mrs. N. F. Cooper**

It is quite unreasonable to deny this green space to other users, particularly when Cotham Grammar School will not be availing themselves of the amenity other than at certain times of the day and presumably only in term time.

### **Reg. S. Hunt**

I would like to register my disgust that such a ridiculous proposal should ever be considered -this is Stoke Bishop, NOT Cotham, and I see no reason why we should be made to suffer for years of successive governments / councils decision to sell of school playing fields. If the land was to be used for say a local school, which this area is short of, I could understand, even if I didn't like it, but to reserve it's use for another area such as Cotham is quite wrong. To deprive locals of it's use is obviously equally appalling!

### **Ian Vaudin & Jean Reynolds**

There has been a lot of talk of people being annoyed to the fact that we have wanted a school round here and have never got one and now they are trying to give this land to an outside school.

That is not my issue, I don't want a school built on that land, I don't want anything built on that land. I grew up two minutes away from Stoke Lodge and it was a god send, not just to me but to many others. There was always activities going on, celebrations for Queen and country took place there, sports days and neighbourhood gatherings.

It is a place for a community to come together and all I have seen over the years is communities pushed out for the □'.

### **Peter Lewis**

I have used this field for over 40 years in total, and since my family have been around, we have also used it for the last 25 years. This is the only open space we have locally that old and young alike, can easily walk to for recreation, exercise, walking and the pleasure of being outside in the open for enjoyment. This field is safe for children and adults. I therefore wish to object in the strongest terms.

### **A. Besant**



This open space is vital to the local community and is very much used, including by myself, for walking and leisure, and I find it absolutely scandalous that it should be withdrawn from public use and given away to a school that is not even local. I feel sure they are plenty of other spaces they could make use of, and I urge you to reconsider this decision.

### Nathalie Beaufile

There are a number of important trees on Stoke Lodge, including a walnut and in the locked walled garden there is a medlar, which is quite rare.

### Gay Huggins

We often use the grounds of Stoke Lodge to walk through or kick a football with our children. My eldest son is a pupil at Stoke Bishop C of E School and we walk through Stoke Lodge to take and collect him - this allows us to walk in a fantastic setting whilst avoiding the heavy traffic along Parry's Lane and Shirehampton Road. It is one of the accessible beautiful features in the local area.

Children in Stoke Bishop do not have public space, there are no other parks and the Downs are too far away and less secure. Canford is our nearest alternative but is in Westbury on Trym.

As a user of Stoke Lodge I have noted that it is enjoyed by all ages and for many different reasons. People walk, run, ride bikes, play football, practise rugby and play hide and seek! It is a place for activity and an opportunity for tranquillity. It is very much needed and appreciated by local residents.

### Warwick Thresher

I am a nineteen year old student who has lived within walking distance of the fields all my life. Throughout my childhood I have benefitted massively from the space: I, like many other kids before and after me, used them on a regular basis for Brownies/Guides activities and events.

It has provided a safe, pleasant and convenient space for recreational use as my friends and I have grown up (the only one of its kind in the area). Parents and guardians in the local vicinity can allow their children to picnic, indulge in sporting activities and generally let off steam, safe in the knowledge that they are away from traffic and enclosed by an attentive neighbourhood. I would be most interested to learn where you would suggest as a substitute.

I continue to profit from the Lodge as I am a keen runner, like my parents, and we greatly enjoy incorporating it into our routes due to the respite from road running. What is more, on passing through the fields the other day I witnessed various football and cricket clubs in practice, at the same time I passed by an elderly couple walking their dog. One does not have to be a genius to see that this is a space that people of all generations rely upon. What if a football team cannot find a new training ground? Where can the elderly walk their dogs off- road if they are too frail to reach the downs? In following through with your thoughtless scheme you are reducing your beneficiaries from potentially thousands to a few hundred, from all generations to just one. It is a logistical joke.

All of the above reasons though, provide merely additional fuel to my main objection. Since well before I was born, the residents in this part of Bristol have campaigned ardently for a 'decent' secondary comprehensive school to be built in Stoke Lodge; a request which has repeatedly been denied under the ignorant pretence that everyone in the area can afford a private education anyway. When I came to apply to secondary schools back in 2000 my friends and I received highly coveted places at two comprehensives both of which have and do fail their ofsteds year after year. We applied to Cotham. We did not get in.

### Abbie Salter

Children in Stoke Bishop do not have public space, there are no other parks and the Downs are too far away and less secure. Canford is our nearest alternative but is in Westbury on Trym.

As a user of Stoke Lodge I have noted that it is enjoyed by all ages and for many different reasons. People walk, run, ride bikes, play football, practise rugby, hit golf balls, play hide and seek! It is a place for activity and an opportunity for tranquillity. It is very much needed and appreciated by local residents.

### Joanna Warburton

We live close to the playing fields and have two children, and as we have a small garden we use these playing fields regularly to have picnics, fly kites and for recreation purposes. It is a pleasant area that is easy for us to walk to, and provides a local place that everyone can use and benefit from, in fact it was one of the reasons we moved to our house so that we could benefit from using this local playing field like an extended garden, and that was easily accessible and safe for our children to use.

### Mr & Mrs Aristotelous



I wish to register my objection to the proposed fencing off , that was reported to be costing tax payers £ 1m.

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### James Dillon

As a resident in this area for over 20 years and having brought up 3 children here, I find this proposal astonishing.

When my first 2 sons were very young, we played ball games together and regularly walked around the grounds as a means of fresh air and exercise. At 11 years of age (1985 and 1987), neither were allowed to attend Cotham School as it was 'not in the catchment area'. However, we still enjoyed the open space.

My youngest son who at 11 in 2000 was again considered outside the catchment of Cotham School, but spent much of his childhood freetime on this ground. Not only did he play for the local football team which trained and played their games there, but also it was ideal for practising cicket skill - batting requires plenty of space. (He later played for Gloucestershire Cricket Club).

### Jenny Currell

There has been no consultation regarding this and it was not mentioned during the recent election.

This area is widely used by local schools, cricket clubs and is a safe area for children and adults to play and exercise. I would have no issue with this area being maintained and used more widely but it would be to the great detriment of the health and fitness of the population in this area if this area was no longer open for use by local residents on foot.

### Jeremy Bewley

I am a Stoke Bishop resident and have enjoyed the use of the

Stoke Bishop parkland for over 10 years. I have 4 children and they use the parkland every week for playing sports.

There is no other open space area available for my children in Stoke Bishop. I strongly disagree with the intention to fence the land off and prevent the locals from enjoying the beautiful grounds. I also am annoyed that this change in use appears to be orchestrated in a secretive fashion.

### Kathy & Mr E. McMahon

I have two children and we spend much of the time in the park. We brought the house this year and this was one of the main reasons why I brought the house as the park is the only about 100m away. The next park is the Downs which is over 600m away. This would limit my mother's (86 years old) to walk to the park. This would limit her as she doesn't have a car and won't be able to go to enjoy a park as I usually return very late.

### M. Kornazewska

The future use of the Adult Ed. current provision in the House seems to be called into question by creating new buildings alongside hemming in and obscuring that listed House, and redefining it as "A Conference Centre". Words matter, and their precise meaning.

This open letter is a personal reaction on seeing the plans. Clearly much more needs to be made public, the help of Councillors engaged and a period of honest and open discussion and consultation initiated urgently.

### Carla Contractor

currently live in Cote Park. This is a house which I moved to and payed a premium for in order to send my daughter to Elmlea. At that time my house was in the catchment area for that school and also promised to be in the catchment area for the new secondary school in Redland. Not only are there now no catchment areas so I am not guaranteed a place for my daughter at Elmlea, there is no possible chance for her to go to Redland in the future.

I love where I live but seem to have no option but to move to another county in order to send my children to a good school. My family's enire income goes on our mortgage so sending our children to private school is not an option.

### Victoria Noyce

Having lived in Stoke Bishop for over forty years and enjoyed the amenities of Stoke Lodge and the grounds, I would like to add my name to those protesting about this change of use. Stoke Bishop will be much impoverished by the loss of this delightful open space - the only one available to many community members, both young and old, in Stoke Bishop.

### Sally Holloway

I am thoroughly alarmed by the tone , assumptions and mistakes in the briefing Paper, and above all the extremely short period allowed to the public to respond to it - a bare week, extended as a response to protests, by a few days. I note that the plans for the field have not been made public , and were only discovered accidentally . However what appears to be designed is a closed access sports centre which destroys much of the beauty of the field and Stoke Lodge itself. If later plans or modifications exist - they need to be made public at once. Partial exposure and hidden agendas do not meet the stated intention of the Neighbourhood Partnership initiative, nor should they exist alongside the overt aims of the parks and open green spaces policy.

The narrow corridor for dog walkers would create a potentially dangerous trap, fenced off as it seems to be along its length on both sides .How ugly and expensive, such fencing works would be. I note the proposed earth works to the N. side of the field and realise that the whole surface would change there, a new hill would be formed and the whole



excavation might well be far more expensive than presently envisaged. Drainage would also be required since this part of Stoke Lodge is poorly drained.

Under these plans Ebinezer Lane, ( running the whole length of the field to its E.) would be effectively sealed off. It is one of Bristol's Rights of Way, and has always been open to the field. It would become, like the dog walking strip on the field, a fenced off dangerous lane.

The proposed MUGA area appears to have floodlights around it. Light pollution will be strongly resisted by the neighbourhood ( and possibly loudspeakers too?) for its effect on this presently calm and beautiful field and its surrounding neighbourhood.

Apparently a large proportion of the present field to its south might disappear under tarmac to provide a new parking area, and two new entrances cut into the wall facing on to Shirehampton Road. This constitutes destruction of a present green open space and will surely be opposed. The wall is a listed curtilage of the House.

The recently restored listed "look out" behind the house appears to be in the way of proposed developments. What is its planned fate?

Several specimen trees have been sacrificed over recent years on the field. Looking at the plans it would appear that more such trees would have to meet the same end. The present ecological value of the field (wildlife corridor/ historical landscape/ urban green space etc) has not clearly not been considered. It is a place of rare beauty.

Why are a running track, a large MUGA area, cricket nets, more pitches etc required in this area of NW Bristol? Such facilities may be found locally - and are moreover underused currently. A entire rethink of any need for such radical and destructive changes to this particular field is urgently required.

### Carla Contractor

As a resident of BS9 living close to this park, I and my family use the park frequently for exercise as there is little other open space available.

I wish to object to this and would like to know why you are planning to do this. Also please let me know what process are available to me to prevent this happening. Is the council legally allowed to do this?

### Tony Marwick

Many members of the Neighbourhood Partnership have expressed concern about the proposals to fence off and level the Stoke Lodge Parkland following the recent publication of the April Informal Cabinet Briefing.

### Derek & Cheryl Hawkins

'it is a government requirement that all playing fields have to be fenced off. I can see some logic where the playing field is attached to the school and forms part of the school site, but this is quite a different situation. On the rare occasions when used by the school, the pupils have direct teacher supervision'.

### Cllr. John Goulandris

Re; meeting with Clare Champion Smith - The briefing note recommendations have not been rejected and are still open for acceptance and action. No decision has been made, and will not be made by her until at least after the forthcoming Neighbourhood Forum Meeting. She was defensive of the Neighbourhood Partnership process and did not accept that it is invisible to the vast majority of the community, and not yet an effective vehicle for consultation, although we did agree that the recent community action should help to raise its profile. She recommended that the village green issue should not be pursued as it was potentially not in the interest of the community. She dismissed any suggestion that Coombe Dingle Sports centre had any involvement or interest in the decision making process. She did say that Dog Faeces bins would help, and I reminded her that these had been requested on many occasions but "Parks" decided against. She promised to look into this. she did make a statement along the lines "that they (education) would prefer to keep Stoke Lodge Parkland open, provided that no alternative compelling argument was presented"?

### David Mayer

As a mother of 2 children (who are not entitled to go to Cotham School because they do not fall into the catchment zone) who use Stoke Lodge playing fields to meet with their friends, I oppose the fencing of this vital and necessary community resource. There are very few places in our area where our children can play safely.

If it is used exclusively by the school, the local community (not the community the school serves) would not be able to access Stoke Lodge at all; within or out of school hours. The time that the school would have use of it is so limited - maybe 2-3 hours daily. The community (of all ages) use this green space from very early on to sunset - at least 12-16 hours a day.

As a Cub Scout leader for a local cub group, Stoke Lodge is close enough to walk to and is used by us almost every week in the Spring and Summer, as it provides a large space where we can play games. When we use this space, it is always being well used by other groups of people - local children playing football; people playing cricket; people practicing on their musical instruments; people walking their dogs; people just going for a walk; and other community groups( Brownies, Guides).

Stoke Bishop, an area already under resourced (no parks, libraries, community secondary school, post office,), always seems to lose out. Our children deserve similar opportunities to other children in other parts of the city - a green place to be able to play sports, meet with their friends and be safe!!

### Therese Millar



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This action would seriously impact the quality of life of the residents of Stoke Bishop and beyond, and is totally incomprehensible taking in to account the fact that these open spaces have been fully available for reasonable access by local residents for half a century or more.

### Richard and Julie Hensey

We wish to object to the fencing off of Stoke Lodge Parkland for the exclusive use of Cotham Grammar School.

### Mr & Mrs Vincent

Out of interest, were you aware that Redland Green has its own sports field just off Kellaway Avenue and from my casual observations this appears to be underutilized? This site is already set up for school use and is also much closer to Cotham School than Stoke Lodge. I really question the motives behind this proposal.

Clifton High school also use the site and I am not aware of any desire from them to have it turned into Stalag Stoke Lodge.

I am particularly anxious to learn how the local Scout Group of which I am Chairman were not part of any public consultation.

Secondly, please note my objections as both a local resident and Chairman of the 43<sup>rd</sup> St Mary's Magadeline (Bristol) Scout Group expressed below and take these into account in your discussions with the Council and the other parties involved in this matter.

### David Faulkner

Re Abraham's memo

1. What is "the Sport England" money he talks about ? Is it the same as the "refurbishment project" mentioned by Hinks ? Is the need for the university to spend money the driver behind all this, ? It's not clear to me who has control over SL - the Council ,the University , any other party. ?
2. What is the "Town/Village Green application ?
3. How would the creation of footpaths around pitches keep people and dogs off them ?

Re Hinks

1. It seems odd that years after the changing rooms were burned down, in a sudden rush of concern for teams' changing facilities the University would like to rebuild them and re-locate them. Did they have no money in their budget before to provide a pretty essential service ?
2. The business of hedges, fences, entrances and exits around SL is very vague. Would a Town/Village green application have a bearing on all these things ?
3. On -site parking instead of in the streets would use up a fair chunk of space - which part would be sacrificed to concrete ?
4. A "small exception" of an artificial cricket pitch with floodlighting would not be very welcome . The University has two pitches on its Coombe Dingle site that are presumably unused during student vacations.

### John Hollyman

- The changes started when the Uni got involved does not surprise me one bit.
- Implications appear to be that money is going to have to be found and this probably comes thru further development rather than who owns what.
- If the Uni is anything to go by, then the reception rooms, squash courts, other hard courts and general development of grounds away from flat grass will happen before residents have their say
- All this has happened very quietly, why have we not heard from the council, councillors and general any news media what is going on.

### John Stringer

It is clear from the briefing Note that more emphasis is being put on future Council revenue from sale of the land for development (see para 5.3) than to the present and continuing benefit to the local Stoke Bishop community, many of whom overlap with our own.

This motive appears, in my view, to be counter to the spirit of the guidance issued by DCSF which considers that school premises are a resource not only for the school but for the wider public. Fencing off the land after all this time of free access for sport and recreation can only be seen as a clear step backwards.

What the briefing note does not make clear - among many other things - is how the health and safety issues (including a need for risk assessments several times a day!!) are now so important when they have not been over the last 60 years of public access.

Ironically, the consequences of the use of the Sports grant may actually reduce the amount of sport, both formal and informal, taking place in the parkland surrounding Stoke Lodge and does call into question whether this site is the most appropriate beneficiary for this grant.

### David Blackwell - Friends of Blaise

No one in the vicinity of Stoke Lodge seems to have any idea of Council planning when I spoke to a few of them today. Are they supposed to know anything about it ?? And whose idea is it that Cotham Grammar School can have exclusive use of the playing fields ? - quite extraordinary.

### Fiona Grinham

I believe you are all "concerned" parties as regards the frightening prospect of fencing off Stoke Lodge playing fields.

### Bryan McKenna



The first point I would make is that the area of Stoke Lodge has been used as open public land for well in excess of the 20 years required under the Commons Act 2006. Personally, I have only lived in the area for 15 years and my children are 13 and 9 so they have not used the field for that period themselves. However, I am well aware from speaking to more longstanding neighbours that their children used the field, in the same way as my children do now, way back and certainly prior to 1990. Further, at any point of any day there is some member of the local community using the field responsibly for pursuits such as running, playing non-structured sports such as football, cricket etc. It is beyond argument that a "significant number of inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on land for a period of at least 20 years". I would add that Cotham School only use the facilities very infrequently and nowhere near as often as the local community use the site.

I note that the report mentions that registration for open access should be frustrated where landowners have proactively taken steps to keep people off their land to prevent future registration. At no point has the landowner taken such "proactive" action. There are numerous open access points to Stoke Lodge, including the access point on the most direct walkway from Coombe Dingle Leisure Centre (the administrators of the site on behalf of Cotham School).

### Stewart Mason

'can it be proved that this property belongs to the 'people' of Bristol, particularly as Cotham Grammar School is likely to opt out of LEA control under new Gov. proposals, taking the Grounds with them or simply move on, to a cheaper to maintain site; who would inherit the developed facilities?

### Sue Mayer

As a former Chartered Surveyor involved in the management of the Eton College Estate in Hampstead, I have always regarded the management of Stoke Lodge as extremely unprofessional. The superb job of management of Tyntesfield by the National Trust shows what can be done.

The notices on the playing field warning people that they are trespassing by entering the area are on a level with the advice I received from your City Clerk's department over 30 years ago, that Broadmead was private property. Actually, in law it is a public highway - as is the Stoke Lodge park. Closing it for further public use as a valuable amenity space (much used by local walkers, Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Church and other football clubs, and Stoke Bishop Primary School) would amount to misconduct.

Finally, this side of Bristol has a number of playing fields with superb facilities already provided and under-used. Cotham School should be encouraged to make arrangements to share some of these, such as Golden Hill, Manor Farm at Sea Mills, or the University playing fields off Coombe Lane - or to share the extensive and beautifully cared for grounds of private schools on the other side of the river near Failand - such as Bristol Grammar, the Cathedral, Q.E.H., Redland, etc.

### R.K Davey

As a local resident this is our nearest green space for walks, dog exercise etc. Our children were able to use this for their activities as they were growing up and we hope it will be still be there for the young in the area to take advantage of in the future.

### Carol & Colin Harris

We cannot believe what we hear. How dare the council think it their right to prevent the public from using Stoke Lodge parkland. Since we moved here, two major grassy areas have disappeared - both where we once had well-supported sporting activities. We understand that there is now a proposal to cut down trees, put up floodlighting, build a conference centre and have an extensive car park, together with fencing off the ground - and at a cost of £1.6 million (or more?) of public money, to the detriment of the general public.

We readily see that many youngsters are overweight, yet here "we" are, setting up to prevent the general public from coming and using this precious parkland for sporting activities. In any case, this land constitutes part of the planet's natural breathing space and (oxygen/carbon dioxide) lungs. At a personal level, this parkland is great for jogging - and it gives us and our grandchildren quite a buzz when just walking through the area with a football and generally playing etc. Grassy patches such as this are very important for the "feel good" factor in life.

Why can't we all live and play together in this quiet open space without fencing etc? Fencing divides society. We are Stoke Bishop, not Johannesburg.

### Professor Richard and Mrs Pam Elderton

I have lived in the area for over 20 years

- I have four sons who have regularly used the Stoke Lodge Parkland
- They have played football, rounders and all manner of other kids games
- My neighbours and I continue to use it for running, walking dogs etc etc



- It will severely damage the area to have this facility removed
- When The Grove and the ISC playing fields were developed, we protested about the loss of facilities
- We were told that neither were available for public use and hence their development would not affect us
- When this was queried, we were told that Stoke Lodge was the only publicly available facilities
- How can the Council now argue that it can be fenced off and removed from public use.

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### Malcolm Ravenscroft

We are upset at the very thought of not being able to enjoy the beautiful playing fields. It seems unjust to prevent members of the public from enjoying this rare oasis in the city. The space is enjoyed by people of all ages - it is open and safe and a place for neighbours to bump into one another and chat and for new friendships to be made. It is a very important place for the community and seems to be a sad sign of the times to take it away. It's a friendly place where local people walk alongside school children playing sports and families spending time together. We have lived here for 18 years and have walked around the field most days. Our children loved playing in the fields when they were little and now find it an ideal place to relax.

### Jane and Paul Hayward

This is an area that we use regularly for exercise and we are aware that it is used by many other people in the area for recreation, exercise, picnics, family occasions etc.

It is also regularly used by community sports clubs throughout the year.

The removal of this facility is short-sighted and detrimental to local council tax payers. Please do not allow it to happen.

### Carolyn Farr (Mrs)

I live in West Dene. These playing fields are an important wildlife resource, as evidenced by my research on foxes, badgers, and a diversity of other wildlife in this part of Bristol for nearly 35 years. As a result of this work, Bristol is famous for its foxes and badgers, and they have featured in several highly successful films that I made with the BBC (Foxwatch, 20th Century Fox, Brockside, etc). In addition, a few years ago my garden featured in Wild in your garden, with live broadcasts on the wildlife for a week, with Kate Humble, Bill Oddie and Simon King all sitting in my garage describing the importance of the local wildlife. It was extremely popular and spawned the highly successful annual series Springwatch and Autumnwatch, and their associated programmes. So the wildlife in this area is of great local and national importance. In addition, I am sure you are aware of all the research on the very significant public health and quality of life benefits of local access to green open space and urban wildlife.

My recent research has been looking at the adverse effects of lighting on wildlife, especially bats. This is another significant issue, and I am sure you will have seen The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) Report on Artificial Light in the Environment, published earlier this year.

This highlights the very significant adverse impacts of artificial lighting, both on wildlife and human health.

The playing field at the other end of West Dene, on Coombe Lane, has already been impacted by similar developments that have had significant adverse effects on the local wildlife. All the other playing fields in the area (the one that used to be at the end of Parrys Lane and the fields on the other side of Shirehampton Road) have been lost to housing developments, further enhancing the value of the one remaining field that has not been developed.

### Professor Stephen Harris

This is the only area in Stoke Bishop available to the community for exercise, recreation, picnics and sport. I notice a number of community sports clubs use it when I am there.

As a local resident I would like to raise a strong objection to this proposal. Without Stoke Lodge people will have to get in their cars (if they have one) and drive to the Downs (which is not very environmentally friendly). Please advise how we can stop this happening. I don't see why Cotham Grammar School can't use it without fencing it off or preventing access to the public? It is also quite ironic that local children here can't seem to get into Cotham Grammar School but they are happy to take our field!

### Judith Murphy & Tim Wollaston

Any visitor to Stoke Lodge would see large numbers of local people using the space for all activities - picnics, children's parties, playing football, jogging, walking, and recreation for the large number of old people who live nearby and many others. The area is easily large enough to accommodate school children and local residents alike without conflict. I have lived in the



of hours a week for Westbury Art Club. I was quoted £10 (I thought they were joking initially) and I managed to get alternative accommodation for the club (much better, in fact) for half that cost. If I'm right and that was the Council's scale of charges, will the University charge less – I don't think so.

**Keith & Gill Edwards**

We don't believe the agenda is at all mysterious. As a building site Stoke Lodge would be worth many millions. To a council still in denial over the need drastically to cut its superfluous expenditure, and grappling with the demand for new and affordable housing, it is not surprising that destroying areas such as Stoke Lodge seems less painful in its eyes than coming to terms with financial reality. Unfortunately quality of life is difficult to measure.

We are both involved with Bristol Orienteering Klub, and were just on the point of asking permission to map Stoke Lodge properly for orienteering purposes, primarily as a perfect site on which to work with local schools. Fencing, by excluding all the peripheral geographic features which could be used for orienteering control sites, would render the area completely useless for orienteering.

Surely within the impressive gathering last evening there must reside some professional legal people who could be approached to advise the team? My completely lay understanding of access rights was that if you wished to prevent establishment of a right then it was necessary explicitly to exclude the public periodically (e.g by closing something on Christmas Day). Surely after 63 years a public right over the whole area has been established, which fencing would deny?

**Mark Dyer**

The area is a valuable public space used by many locals for sports activities, walking, general recreation, etc.

To deny access to the local residents and people who use the space from further afield would be totally unjustified and cause nothing but resentment of the Council for taking this action.

By all means the school should have continued access to the area, as they do at the moment, but not exclusive access. What would happen when the school is shut over the Summer? It would be ridiculous to have this valuable public space fenced off unused.

The area should be kept as it is with public access for all. There are no problems with the current public access as everybody using the fields does so sensibly and responsibly.

**David Main**

This fine landscape has been used for the whole population of the surrounding area for over 60 years. Its use for one privileged group is in direct opposition to the now widely practiced concept of multiple use for public open space. Fencing would be an enormous waste of taxpayers' money.

Should Cotham School need a sports ground there has been an excellent ground available and unused on the Portway for many years. If the school was really interested in sport - which is doubtful - it would create a partnership with other schools in the area to buy that ground, and fund raise to do that. It should not seek an easy way out by robbing local people of a rare and well used piece of public open space.

**Bernard Lane**

This evening I have walked around Stoke Lodge, with my dogs. I met three other dog walkers, all equipped with litter bags, and controlling their happy dogs. There was a small group of children playing football, with 'make do' goals and few rules. They were having a great time. A couple of young women walked across the field purposefully, on their way home from work, enjoying the atmosphere and the view. There was a rugby training session in the east corner of the field, preparing for the forthcoming season. The sun was setting, and the whole scene was restful and beautiful. Stoke Lodge.  
~The Lungs of Stoke Bishop.

The benefit to Bristol of changing the use of Stoke Lodge appears a mystery, and the awful consequences for the residents of this part of Bristol immense. In the 20 years that we have lived in Shirehampton Road, we have seen 2 of the three open spaces in Stoke Bishop sold off for housing; The Clifton High School Fields and the Smelting Works Playing Field. We have been left with only Stoke Lodge. We will therefore join with the hundreds of local people to do all we can to preserve the use of this open space for the continued use of the local community.

**Phillip Smith**

**Stoke Lodge and its environment has an historic importance to Stoke Bishop and Bristol.**

The 'arts and crafts' gentleman's residence is only part of the Stoke Lodge environment. The original farm buildings (allowed to deteriorate by the education dept, so that now it is difficult to see them as they were) together with The Belvedere (recently refurbished with lottery funding) walled garden (currently used as a car park), together with the original cottages on the field boundary (known as Stoke Lodge Cottages at the end of West Dene) with their cast iron original farm gate, the perimeter stone wall, (which still exists on many parts of the boundary), and last but not least, The Arboretum, all need preserving and cherishing. We in Bristol have so much architectural heritage that it easy for us all to become blase about it: if you have lived in other areas of the country where these buildings are much sparser you



would see that every fine building will be cherished and not seen as a resource to plunder to subsidise the local agenda-whatever that may be.

Indeed Stoke Bishop itself, as an original 1900s-1920s 'garden' suburb itself is of architectural and social importance. Many of these areas in the UK, built at a time of enlightened development, to provide green living convenient to the City are threatened and need to be cherished and fought for. I do believe that people are becoming much more aware of this.

R. John Hall and Jill M Hall

I am still struggling to come to terms with the absurdity behind it. Those involved should be ashamed! I can imagine how during times of prosperity that private and public organisations alike can be tempted to undertake unwise, selfish and frankly ridiculous projects, but at a time of financial adversity such as now, it simply beggars belief that such a project should be considered...and that's on purely financial grounds...before you even start to consider all the other environmental, social and other arguments against this plan. Whatever your politics, this prejudices against the majority at great expense for a tiny tiny minority. If this area did indeed belong to any school that used it as little as it is by Cotham there would be an outcry and it would be taken away from them or they would at least be forced to share the facility. Am I mistaken but aren't most schools increasingly obliged to share their facilities to ensure a degree of utilisation efficiency and social fairness/equality.

John Argent

Stoke Lodge Playing field is the last large open space in the area. In recent years two other fields have been sold off, built over and lost. Stoke Lodge field is used regularly by local football teams, and by people having impromptu kickabouts. In the summer months there are numerous cricket matches.

Families play with their children in the field. I have seen people practising Ti Chi, jogging, flying kites, throwing frisbees, and generally enjoying themselves in the fresh air. These people all use the field responsibly and do not deserve to be prevented from doing so by the erection of a fence. People walk their dogs on the field, and I do know the problems which can be caused by dog mess left on the grass. However the local dog-walkers are very aware and take care to clear up. If the field were to be made a Public Park, and run by that department, notices could be put up to remind dog owners of their responsibilities.

I hear that Cotham School regards Stoke Lodge Playing field as its own, and that it wants fencing for Health and Safety reasons. It is very, very rare that I see any pupils from Cotham School using the field at all. I suggest that they could use another field which is already fenced on the few occasions they need it, such as the field at Coombe Dingle or at the Oasis Academy: Brightstowe.

Judith Evans.

I was one of the large number of people who attended the meeting at St Mary's church yesterday, who voted unanimously to oppose the Council's proposal to restrict access to the Stoke Lodge parkland by erecting a perimeter fence.

Reg Andlaw

Usage:

1.) Cotham School use of Stoke Lodge is at most just a few hours in a week – with very small groups of students and no use in many weeks of term. Such minimal usage would not confer with the reference to Stoke Lodge as 'primarily Cotham School Playing Fields'. If Cotham School were to opt out of the LEA, the associated 'ownership' of Stoke Lodge (referred to in the report as "Cotham School premises") could place the whole area at risk.

2.) Informal community usage by a huge variety of users is considerably higher. Community team sports and physical activity/relaxation would be restricted by the proposed development especially where many could not afford the anticipated increased charges for access. In giving priority access to Cotham School many other children within the local community could be prevented from participating in local community sports activities. Environment:

3.) Stoke Lodge is recognised as exemplary area for wildlife. A world expert on mammals has stated that fencing off Stoke Lodge would be disastrous for local wildlife. Development for improved sports facilities could also impact the historic trees at Stoke Lodge which are a great home to many national birds, insects and wildflowers.

4.) Stoke Lodge is a beautiful & important historic landscape with a Grade II Listed building. Fencing would detract from the views, while levelling the parkland could damage the landscape including issues with drainage. Constant need to cultivate the lawns for sports usage could have impact on wildlife.

5.) Litter is not much of a problem with local residents picking up sweet wrappers, orange peel, plastic water bottles, etc. when they use the parkland.

6.) A common area of concern is fouling of parkland by dogs, if Stoke Lodge was managed like a city/woodland park with clear, enforced rules for dog owners this would be reduced.

Alternatives:

7.) A fenced sports facility is already available within 2 miles of Stoke Lodge at the Coombe Dingle Sports Complex. It is securely fenced, highly developed & dedicated to sports usage by teams/individuals – it would be advisable to maximise the usage of this facility before spending BCC budget to develop an alternative facility in such close proximity.



years, this development (£1 million minimum) needs to be re-evaluated and alternatives (including maximising use of already available school fields/sports facilities) examined. The £600K Sport England fund could be used to support such alternatives.

**Elaine and Paul Spellward**

I am concerned at the deterioration, rather than improvement, in quality of life that will be offered to the young of our neighbourhood, if the field is developed in the major way proposed. Furthermore fencing and floodlighting (unnecessary for school use) will seriously damage not only the residents but also the wildlife present on the site.

**Judith Sheather.**

we face two threats at Stoke Lodge.

A long term threat to retain the potential for development of the site for profit, this will require free public access to be removed, albeit this may take a long term action plan

- a) A short term threat to start the process of taking areas out of free public access, this is subject to the high profile PR process we see at the moment trying to describe the current proposals (whatever they are?) as non threatening.

**David Mayer**

I cannot believe you are even prepared to contemplate this proposal. It's an affront to common sense.

I very much look forward to the meeting on August 25th.

**David Faulkner**

Look also at the DCSF website

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/>

Much of what is in the briefing paper comes from them. Their motto is Every Child Matters - not just those from one or more schools I would suggest.

Why also should it be up to Cotham to decide whether or not to allow community access. It is not their land.

<http://www.thisiswesternmorningnews.co.uk/news/Persimmon-golf-course-case-affect-landowners/article-2012287-detail/article.html>

**Robert Walters**

There is always something to see in the Parkland: walkers (with & without dogs), joggers, ramblers, children playing, golfers practicing their swing, teams training etc, not to mention the resident and migratory birds and animals. The people of Bristol in general, and the local area in particular, are very fortunate to have had over 60 years of unlimited free access to this magnificent open space.

Kellaway Avenue was recently totally, and expensively refurbished, yet I rarely see any concentrated sporting activity there; and part of the vast Monks Park site was sold off for housing but still retains a massive sports field.

And where will all those who currently use the Parkland be able to enjoy their activities locally; perhaps they will all be able to get in their cars and drive somewhere else; hmm, isn't that a good idea? Ms Champion-Smith, by default, advocates a greater use of the automobile whilst the City & County of Bristol is becoming the "cycling capital" of the area.

**Mike Whitworth**

It is a very beautiful parkland with many old trees in it. Additionally, the evidence can be clearly seen, i.e. the regular use of Stoke Lodge Parkland. It is a very popular green space which is utilized not only for dog walking, but also for many other activities, e.g.

- a) families picnicking
- b) young boys playing football
- c) local residents walking across it to gain access to school and to the shops
- d) Kite flying
- e) jogging

need I say more!

I feel that it is also snub to residents that the council in their 'wisdom' took Stoke Bishop off the catchment area of Cotham School but now feel that it is appropriate to utilise this parkland for Cotham School Sports. Or is this just a smoke screen for a potential development as a super sports facility.

**Celia Worral**



immediate area for nearly five years and has never heard of a complaint from the school about local resident's behaviour.

With regards to health and safety (the report mentions detritus that could include broken glass, dog faeces and 'sharps'), the playing fields are generally very clean and the majority of dog walkers very responsible in removing dog waste. With regards to crime and antisocial behavior I have never heard of any incidents and it is one of the few local places that I would be happy for my son and his friends to play unsupervised.

If a fenced off area is truly required for school children, the nearby Coombe Dingle sports ground has ample grounds and fantastic sports facilities that are generally empty during the weekday daytime.

#### Rolf Hudson

As a local resident and user of the Stoke Lodge Parkland, I can see no valid reason, strong or otherwise, for the Council's proposal to fence off a vital, much loved and much respected local amenity.

I note from your email below that you would like to keep the focus on "solving problems". As a daily user of Stoke Lodge, I can honestly say that I cannot think of any significant problems that currently need to be solved. As far as I can see the land at Stoke Lodge has been utilised harmoniously by many groups and individuals for over 60 years! I would be interested to hear the Council's perception of problems that need to be solved.

#### Nerys Rowsell

I actually believe that Cotham is being used as a smokescreen and I was surprised at the comments that no-one knew what was motivating this policy behind the scenes. I would have thought it is highly likely to have a significant commercial basis. In the short term, the Council, through the Education Department and in cahoots with the University, realises that it can charge significantly more for dedicated sports facilities which are protected, cared for, clean and which have good facilities for changing, showering refreshment, etc, which comply with current health and safety legislation. Furthermore if one looks at the proximity of Stoke Lodge to the Coombe Dingle University playing fields in Coombe Lane, the advantages are obvious. The entrance by the pavilion in Stoke Lodge is linked by a road (West Dene) to the entrance to the University fields, barely 100 yards away in a direct line. In the long term, of course there is the commercial possibility of selling the land for development.

#### Sir Peter Simpson

***Stoke Lodge is an amenity enjoyed by all, including persons living quite some way away from the site, and many of us have strong objections to any restrictions being imposed either on access or usage of the playing fields.***

***It is hoped that you will recognise the wishes of so many in the local community that Stoke Lodge remains available to all as at present.***

#### Eric & Sheila White

- 1) These areas are used by the general public for recreation and have been for over sixty years.
- 2) The parkland is used responsibly as all residents in the area confirmed at the meeting of 28/7/10
- 3) It is essential that this open space is preserved for everyone to enjoy. It is totally unfair and unjust to propose that one school should have exclusive use at the expense of everyone else.
- 4) As for the fencing proposal; it is hard to imagine a more insidious plan - a reverse of the prison system.
- 5) There are plenty of facilities nearby which can be used.
- 6) This proposal begs the question- what is the real agenda of the individuals who have proposed this horrible and selfish plan?

#### T. Lawson

I don't know what the current arrangements with the University might be but I'm guessing that the Uni gets to look after the parkland and the Council continues to use and control the building. If loadsa money is being chucked at the site as part of a development project I think that is bound to change (it would if it was my money) and the control over the building would almost certainly be transferred to the Coombe Dingle mob for the future. Will the adult education organisers be able to afford the charges? As an example, I made enquiries a year ago into the cost of a room for a couple



Stoke Lodge playing field is a place where people meet, talk, get to know one another and share information. It is also the only open space in the area where children can play safely together.

Since moving to Bristol, many of the friends and acquaintances my wife and I have made have been through the playing field. At a time when public finances are stretched and funds for other community activities are therefore limited it seems inappropriate to remove a facility which, aside from maintenance costs, has free access for use by members of the community

Alan Houston

As we understand it, the "upgrading" and fencing off of Stoke Lodge involves landscaping, terracing and other major works. This must impact on the appearance of the parkland, notably the population of mature specimen trees which is so beautiful to see. We would like to see Tree Preservation Orders placed on the trees in and around Stoke Lodge to put in place an obstacle to those who want to upgrade and fence off the grounds.

As a further obstacle to these plans we feel that a proper audit should be taken of the wildlife inhabiting Stoke Lodge and the area around it. The area has already been featured in the BBC Nature Watch series because of the rich variety of wildlife in the area. It could well be that barn owls, badgers, bats and song birds have their habitats in the area and this ought to be taken into consideration when assessing the viability of the suggested "improvements".

Jenny & David Baker

Re: Plans to make Stoke Lodge parklands for exclusive use of Cotham School.

As a resident in this area for over 20 years and having brought up 3 children here, I find this proposal astonishing.

When my first 2 sons were very young, we played ball games together and regularly walked around the grounds as a means of fresh air and exercise. At 11 years of age (1985 and 1987), neither were allowed to attend Cotham School as it was 'not in the catchment area'. However, we still enjoyed the open space.

My youngest son who at 11 in 2000 was again considered outside the catchment of Cotham School, but spent much of his childhood freetime on this ground. Not only did he play for the local football team which trained and played their games there, but also it was ideal for practising cicket skill - batting requires plenty of space. (He later played for Gloucestershire Cricket Club).

Cotham School already uses this ground, as well as other local junior schools. Why should Cotham have exclusive access?

Is it fair that local children should be denied access to this ground by a school which they will be unable to attend? This is an unfair distribution of resources and certainly contrary to the known wishes of the local population.

Jenny Currell

It has just come to my attention that the council has a plan to close off Stoke Lodge playing field to external use.

There has been no consultation regarding this and it was not mentioned during the recent election.

This area is widely used by local schools, cricket clubs and is a safe area for children and adults to play and exercise. I would have no issue with this area being maintained and used more widely but it would be to the great detriment of the health and fitness of the population in this area if this area was no longer open for use by local residents on foot.

I trust I will hear more from the council prior to this proposal being developed any further.

Jeremy Bewley

I would like to know what is likely to happen to the Stoke Lodge Parkland in the future and why the council believes that Cotham Grammar School should benefit from this land and not the local residents.

Victoria Noyce