



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr & Mrs D N Mayer
68A Coombe Lane
Westbury on Trym
Bristol
BS9 2AY

30th July 2010

Our Ref CL/FR

Dear Mr & Mrs Mayer

Thank you sending me a copy of your letter to Bristol City Council about Stoke Lodge Playing Fields. I am impressed by the details of your objection, your work has been very useful to me, and well done for holding Bristol City Council to account.

I have now had a chance to investigate matters and, as you may be aware, I and your local Conservative councillors are actively supporting the campaign to stop the proposed fencing. Stoke Lodge is a highly valued community asset, used daily by people of all ages. It seems incomprehensible to me that the Council should even contemplate fencing off the playing fields for the exclusive use of Cotham School, who use the site on just few occasions a week.

There are two main reasons put forward by Council officers to support the fencing: To prevent dog mess on the playing field and for the safety of the Cotham School pupils.

I believe both reasons to be red herrings. Having spoken to a cross section of local users, including sports users, it is clear that there is little dog mess – certainly no more than seen on The Downs' pitches. The situation would be helped by the provision of dog mess bins, which curiously the Council have refused to provide.

As regards to the general safety of the Cotham School pupils, there is of course a requirement to keep pupils safe. However, pupils are only on the site to play sports matches and are closely supervised by teachers. There is no need for the pupils to be "fenced in".

Member of Parliament for Bristol North West

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To use "health and safety" as a reason to spend £1m of taxpayers' money on fencing is ludicrous. David Cameron has made it quite clear that there has to be a sensible, pragmatic approach to health and safety laws and the growth of the compensation culture.

The final decision on the fencing will be taken by Cllr Clare Campion-Smith, Liberal Democrat Executive Member for Education. She has said that she will not make that decision till after the Neighbourhood Partnership meetings on the 25th August and 15th September have been held. Therefore you may like to attend these meetings and have your say. The August meeting will be at St Mary's Church, Mariner's Drive, Stoke Bishop, starting at 6.30pm, and the September meeting will be at 7pm with the venue still to be announced.

In summary, I and your local Conservatives councillors will do everything we can to keep Stoke Lodge open to all.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Best wishes

Charlotte Leslie

Charlotte Leslie MP
Bristol North West