

Press Statement from Steyning Parish Council – 28th August 2014

Steyning Parish Council has agreed to the following **resolution** at a recent Extraordinary Meeting held on 19th August 2014.

Resolution - Owing to advice, only recently received from Horsham District Council, that due to the Village Green status, Steyning Parish Council is unable, at this present time, to deliver Skateboard facilities in the Memorial Playing Field to the young people of Steyning and therefore is, regrettably, withdrawing its planning application. The Parish Council is of the opinion that the Village Green was improperly registered. Having due regard to all other users of the Memorial Playing Field and, for their future benefit, the Parish Council will now seek legal advice to rectify the Village Green status on the Memorial Playing Field. Cllr Rogers – **Proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd. **Agreed unanimously by all councillors present.**

Background

Following the positive result of a Town Poll, Steyning Parish Council has been pushing forward with a proposal to build a Skateboard facility for the youth of Steyning in Memorial Playing Field.

The Parish Council had looked extensively at all the suitable space available to it. Only one location fitted the bill, MPF, and this is the location the community voted for. The Parish Council filed a Planning Application with Horsham District Council based on three important factors:-

- 1 The land was owned by the Parish Council and they could therefore control the project and bring it to fruition at minimal cost
- 2 The current and historic use was, and always will be, for sport and recreational purposes in perpetuity
- 3 It fulfils the decision of the democratic process taken

The planning application has been with the District Council for very many months and during this time and as part of the planning process, the Parish Council has followed the recommendations and suggestions of the professional bodies consulted and the officers of the District Council to fine tune the planning application in order to fully meet the environmental, landscaping, sound and equality issues raised. This action was taken with the genuine desire to mitigate the impact on local residents of any noise disturbance. This took in total over 12 months. The final modification was made in early 2014.

The planning application was due to be heard in May 2014, but was subsequently delayed by HDC until June and then July. However, during this time, the Parish Council was advised by HDC that the Planning Officer was going to recommend approval.

In August 2014 HDC requested a meeting with the Parish Council where we were advised that HDC could not now approve the planning application due to the Village Green status placed on the MPF site by WSCC in February 2013, following an application by a member of a local protest group.

The Parish Council is therefore regrettably unable, at this present time, to deliver the Town Poll mandate of a Skateboard facility in the Memorial Playing Field for the benefit of the young people of Steyning.

We are extremely disappointed and upset at being placed in the position of regrettably having to withdraw our planning application.

The Parish Council has had wonderful support from a majority of the residents of Steyning of all ages, and we cannot thank them enough. This has included, but not been limited to, letters of support to the local press, support on the District's Planning website, vocal and moral support at parish council meetings and even a very well attended social gathering in MPF where youngsters had the benefit of professional tuition on the existing tarmac strip used by skaters as well as a temporary wooden structure used for the day and supplied by HDC.

It is well known that the local protest group submitted an alternative planning application for a skateboard facility at the Steyning Leisure Centre car park. The owners of this site (the Grammar School and the County Council) have stated emphatically that they will not give permission for it to be built there. The decision of Horsham District Council to refuse this application is being appealed against by the local protest group. The Parish Council have stated that they will not support this site.

Steyning Parish Council