

SKDC

7th September 2011

Dear Iain Withington

Under the terms of your present consultation exercise, my neighbours and I would like to object to the proposal by Ulverston Ford Park Community Group to re-designate the area of Ford Park (RN178), as residential land and hence be suitable for building development.

The principal objections are as follows:

Ford Park is one of the few areas of green open space left in Ulverston. The site RN178 forms approximately one third of the area of the main field of Ford Park that is identified as an important open space in the adopted South Lakeland Local Plan.

The site also falls within the Town Conservation area. Under your policy C16 that designation involves the protection of open spaces.

Your original consultation exercise designated this site a 'non-starter' (p.161 of your fact file). That should rightly have been an end of the matter.

I understand that the owners, Ulverston Ford Park Community Group have asked for reconsideration on the following basis: *The owners state that the site (RN 178) is surplus to their operational charity purposes and it is neither used for charity events or any of the town events held here. It is only used by dog walkers.*

Without prejudice, I add additional comments in support of my objections.

I have lived inside Ford Park next to RN178 since 1985 and do not recognise the above description and neither do the undersigned neighbours: RN178 is verifiably the largest flat section of Ford Park. Originally this area was the hockey pitch and has continued to enjoy extensive use for ball games, football, rugby and informal cricket. It is among the most heavily used areas by children for their ball games etc. There is a park entrance on RN178 that is used for access during town events on the Park, which I understood is require for health and safety at such public events. Most recently, the Park owner stopped cutting the grass, which you may wish to consider if that was done deliberately to give the appearance of reduced usage.

Potentially, any attempt to build on the Park is in conflict with the owner's charitable purposes (1088106). The Chief Executive of the County Council confirmed in writing at the point of sale that the charity is required to give 'Public Notice of any such intension.' I can confirm that none of the neighbours adjacent to Ford Park that I have spoken to were aware of such a notice or of your initial consultations. You may wish to consider if the charity has given appropriate public notice of any such intension as required and in accordance with Charity Commission SORP. Additionally, you may wish to seek the advice of the County Council lawyers on this matter before taking it further as it was the Chief Executive's office that introduced the ten-year building restriction to prevent such building developments.

On the last occasion I am aware of from an FOI request, your own Planning Department swiftly rebutted as controversial a request to consider building development on this site. What has changed? A change to residential status could only lead to such a development.

In addition, the site RN178 is subject to a restrictive covenant that dates back to the relocation of the main gate from Hart Street to its present location. It is clearly shown on deeds that the right of road shall cease across an area that cuts RN178 in two. Any building on this site would be subject to this additional legal restriction, which would make vehicle access particularly difficult.

The undersigned trust that the 'non-starter' status for RN178 will remain.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Gesch

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FCLE 422

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