

STEYNING PARISH COUNCIL EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING TO BE HELD 11TH JUNE 2013

Steyning Parish Council welcomes Mrs Gill Muncey as the winner of the recent election held for the vacant position on the council.

On the subject of the skateboard facility I do believe the vast majority of Steyning Residents support the building of a skateboard facility, the issue is one of location. For several years the Steyning Parish Council (SPC) has looked at many locations and in particular the following three locations:

- 1 In the grounds of Steyning Leisure Centre
- 2 On field opposite the Steyning Leisure Centre owned by Wiston Estate
- 3 At the top of Memorial Playing Field (MPF)

The Leisure Centre site had to be rejected as we could not get agreement from the stake holders to make space available, these being HDC, WSCC and most importantly Steyning Grammar School Foundation Governors.

The field opposite the Leisure Centre was also rejected due to safety of children accessing the site, (across a busy road), leasing costs of the land and the fact that this site is isolated.

This left MPF. It should be remembered MPF is for the enjoyment of residents and all members of the community and for the purpose of sport and leisure activities. Over the years this has resulted in the opening of facilities for Steyning Cricket Club, Steyning Tennis Club and Steyning Bowls Club. In addition, Steyning Strikers youth football teams have enjoyed fantastic success using MPF as their local base, and with the support of SPC, will continue to do so. They currently have the use of two pitches and have the capability to play 3 games simultaneously for different age groups.

Friends of Memorial Playing Field (FoMPF) are keen to develop an alternative location at the Leisure Centre which they believe they are capable of achieving. Based on this project, two recent meetings have been held with FoMPF, which have been held in a very cordial and friendly atmosphere. The first was for them to lay out their plans for the Leisure Centre site. The SPC welcomed the initiative and asked to be kept in the loop as far as progression was concerned.

At the second meeting, FoMPF updated those members of SPC present and whilst there was some movement with their plans, more work needed to be done. When the Chairman of FoMPF was asked what he needed, the simple and honest answer was "a Pause". Following a brief adjournment at that meeting, the SPC offered to propose to an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting (to be held on Tuesday 11th June) to recommend a delay in proceeding with the Council's MPF planning application until the end of September to give FoMPF time to complete their action plan. The SPC also offered to attend meetings with WSCC, HDC and the Steyning Grammar School Foundation Governors if asked to by the FoMPF. Whilst the SPC have yet to make a decision on their formal support or otherwise for the Leisure Centre site, as a goodwill gesture, we are proposing to defer our application to see if the FoMPF can achieve success at this location. This approach was warmly received by the representatives of FoMPF at the meeting. SPC did say they would not withdraw the current planning application for the MPF site because if the SLC site failed, we would be left with nothing as a community.

A recent letter from WSCC, which has been placed on the HDC website, would suggest WSCC as landowners of the Leisure Centre site, object to the site being used for this function for a number of reasons. In addition, we are led to believe the school, as second landlords are also opposed to use of the site for similar reasons.

There is therefore a genuine concern as to the ability to build on the Leisure Centre site. Nevertheless, SPC feel we should honour our proposed recommendations to give FoMPF the time they asked for, whilst continuing to hold our other option of MPF in reserve.

Many will have heard of the Judicial Review that has been taken out by of the Vice Chairman of FoMPF against the SPC. Our legal advisor is dealing with this matter on our behalf and in the meantime I am sure all will understand it is inappropriate for any individual councillor or the SPC to respond or comment on this issue.

Phil Howell MBE
Chairman Steyning Parish Council