



## **NEW PROPOSALS BY BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL TO CLOSE FACILITIES ON HORFIELD COMMON AND SELL WELLINGTON HILL PLAYING FIELD FOR DEVELOPMENT!**

**20 June 2010**

### **What are the new proposals?**

Bristol City Council have launched a consultation for their new Parks and Open Spaces proposals '**Area Green Space Plans ideas and options consultation**' which you can view in full at

**<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Environment-Planning/Parks-and-open-spaces/information-and-advice/area-green-space-plans/area-green-space-plans---ideas-and-options-consultation.en>**

Briefly – this document proposes a number of ideas for improving or changing the Horfield Common area, including:

- 1. Development of, improvement of, or closure and demolition of, the Ardagh Sports facilities (including tennis courts and bowling green) on Horfield Common.**
- 2. Sale of Wellington Hill Playing Field for housing development as this proposal document deems it to be 'surplus to requirements as open space.' Wellington Hill playing field is more commonly known locally as 'the Church Field.'**

### **What are FOHC's concerns about the proposals?**

FOHC is interested in local residents' views about the proposed changes to the Horfield Common and Ardagh facilities (including their potential closure), and is particularly and urgently concerned about the proposal to sell Wellington Hill Playing Field for development.

FOHC believes that the loss of this green space will have a detrimental effect on the local community, and the local environment, and therefore lead to a reduction in the quality of life for residents in the area as well as further reducing opportunities for recreation, sporting activity and play for young and older residents.

Arguably, the proposal to sell Wellington Hill playing field contradicts the council's own stated ambitions in this, and other of its own policy documents. There is an overarching aim in this 'Area Green Space Plan' proposal to create routes between neighbouring areas of the city through green spaces and off-road walking routes. The loss of Wellington Hill playing field as green space with open access - as shown on the map accompanying the 'Area Green Space Plan' - would mean people were forced to walk back on to the main roads surrounding the field and larger Horfield Common area.

In previous published public documents, the council has repeatedly reasserted the need to protect green spaces in Bristol as the 'lungs of the city.' This proposal to further reduce the outdoor and green space available to residents by selling the Wellington Hill Playing Field contradicts the council's own previous findings that the Bishopston/Horfield area lacks the quantity of green and open space necessary to support the high numbers of local families and other residents who live in the area. The need for locally accessible sports facilities is also repeatedly

reasserted, so it appears illogical to propose that this open space - which includes a sports facility that is accessible all year round - is surplus to requirements as open space.

Horfield Common and Wellington Hill Playing Field are considered as part of the Horfield and Lockleaze Area Green Space Plan. Of course, the artificial division of the city into neighbourhoods is necessary for administration purposes in terms of the council, but FOHC believe that failure to consider the needs of the community that surrounds the Horfield Common and Church Field area towards Gloucester Road, Bishopston, Wellington Hill, Manor Farm and Henleaze, as well as towards Lockleaze demonstrates a lack of joined up thinking by the council in relation to these proposals.

In view of the above, FOHC is intending to submit an application to have 'Wellington Hill Playing Field' registered as a Village Green. This status would ensure that the land remained as open and green space for use by future generations as well as current local residents. Whilst we are confident that this application will be successful, it is not guaranteed and so FOHC also intends to take an active role in the consultation process for the 'Area Green Space Plans' in relation to Wellington Hill playing field to ensure that members, other local residents and users of the common area are all able to input their views. Additionally, FOHC intends to discuss the proposals for the Ardagh Sports Club area of the common with FOHC members, other local residents, and groups who use the common, and from this aims to develop a response to submit to the council from FOHC as a group.

## **What can I do?**

- 1. You can support FOHC's application to have 'Wellington Hill Playing Field' registered as a Village Green**, by completing an FOHC Evidence Questionnaire. These will be available at the FOHC Summer Picnic 2010, and from the website from the following week.
- 2. You can comment on the 'Area Green Space Plans' proposal in writing or online.** FOHC intends to comment on the proposals set out in the 'Area Green Space Plan', and would also like to encourage all members to comment individually. Comments can be submitted by e-mail/online (there is a link on the Council website, and there will be a link through the FOHC website from the week beginning 21/6/2010)
- 3. You can comment on the 'Area Green Space Plans' proposal in person.** A representative of FOHC will be going to the session at the Cameron Centre, Cameron Walk, Lockleaze, BS7 9XB on 14 July for the start of the session at 12noon. If any members of FOHC would like to join them – all are welcome. There are other sessions planned – full information is on the council's website at [www.bristol-city.gov.uk](http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk)
- 4. You can talk to FOHC about your views** on the proposals to develop/improve or close and demolish the Ardagh Sports facilities (including tennis courts and bowling green) on Horfield Common, and the proposal to sell Wellington Hill playing field for development, and help us to ensure that local residents' views are represented through this consultation period. Members of FOHC will be talking to local residents about their responses to the proposals for and we will develop a response from this to submit on behalf of FOHC.

**Please take the time to look at the proposals for the area's outdoor spaces and make your voices heard in one or more of the above ways as part of this consultation process.**

**If you would like to discuss any of the above or to input further into FOHC's response to the proposals– please contact:**

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