

North Hinksey Parish Council has offered to meet with the Scout Group on numerous occasions over the past two years to try and reach some agreement about longer-term plans following the obtaining of planning permission to redevelop the area granted on 31 July 2019. All of those offers were refused.

The former lease that the Scout Group refer to expired on 1st July 2020. Since that time there has only been a Tenancy at Will in place. In early July 2020 the Scout Group were offered a new 1 year rent-free lease, with the possibility of extending the lease further at the end of that time. Our intention was to enable the Scout Group to remain on site as long as was practically possible before building works begin on a new pavilion.

The Scout Group agreed to work towards a deadline of signing that lease by the end of July. More than four months later than that deadline the Scout Group have not signed. Had the Scout Group signed the new lease (which would have given them the security that has been lacking since their previous lease expired) then we would not have reached this current position. We fail to understand why they have not done so.

We never had any intention of ordering the Scouts to leave, but if they wish to stay we need an agreement. It is very unfortunate that they have chosen not to discuss this with us but have gone down the legal route. As such, it would be inappropriate to comment further while that process is ongoing.

This matter will be debated again in the Parish Council meeting to be held in two weeks' time, although that discussion will be private due to the ongoing legal proceedings. It may still be possible to extend the period that the Scout Group will be able to remain, however, that will require the Scout Group to agree a sustainable legal footing through a formal, signed document.

As offered in our recent open letter on 18th November we remain willing to meet with the Scouts at any time.

Sharon Henley, Clerk to North Hinksey Parish Council
David Kay, Chairman