

Darren Blase – notes from the Skatepark report

Dear Skatepark Working Party,

I agree with Claire and appreciate all the hard work and detail that has gone into the report, it was unfortunate that we were not given enough time to read and make comments known to you all at the meeting arranged on Friday 11th January. I am sure you agree that a few hours was not long enough to read a detailed report such as this.

I thank the working party for allowing our notes to be attached to the end of the report before it goes to the R&A and possibly the full Council. My notes are as follows;

Page 8

- You refer to the shelter as a Teenage shelter; can you please advise why this is so. Was it originally built and named as a teenage shelter? If not, please amend.

Page 9 Access;

- I strongly disagree with the statement that most people probably would not want to take their bikes onto the bus. Having previously spoken to many young people they are willing to use public transport (bus/train) to travel to skateparks throughout the County and many of them from our Parish do this on a regularly basis.
- I strongly disagree with the negative intention referred to in the statement that there is a risk that people may be tempted to go at excessive speeds on the return journey down the hill. I think this is something that you have missed from your report; Young people use skateparks to take risks and have fun; falling off and getting back on again is part of life and part of the fun. The same applies when riding at speed down the hill. Many young people do this on a daily basis when travelling from Matthew Arnold School.
- Proximity to housing;
The potential site is approximately (or potentially) 180 to 200 meters from the nearest house as the exact location has not been agreed and a hydrology report has not been set in motion. I draw your attention to the Skatepark under construction at Meadow Lane in Oxford which is 78 meters from the nearest house and is built on a flood plain! Parks can be built near to houses if the correct material and landscaping can be used. I encourage your working party to take a look at this new park to see what can be done. We have skatepark experts on hand if you wish to talk to them.
- By evidence from local residents the MUGA is widely used during daylight hours and particularly in good weather when it can be difficult to get onto the MUGA because so many young people are using it.

Page 10 first paragraph;

- For any site that is a significant distance away from users; On page one you refer to the potential position as relatively far and on page 10 you refer to it as significant. I will put this as plainly as I see it. I have lived in this area for 8 years; I have walked from one side of North Hinksey to the other many times and it takes approx 15 minutes to walk from the Seacourt hall to the Pavilion and even less via bike and/or bus.
- Dr Lambert's report; Can you advise which section of the report advises this action. I reference you to the Meadow Lane build which is being built on a floodplain. The Environment Agency must be consulted before any action is taken any further.

Page 13 Tennis

- Taking the example of tennis; Tennis can only be played by a maximum of 4 people per single court per hour whereas a park of a similar size to a tennis court can be used by approx 50+ users per hour and will be used by skaters, bikes and scooters.
If you wish to build a tennis court alongside the park, I would fully support your case!

Page 15 Applied assumption that a park will be used for its intended purpose. Experience and observation does not suggest this is an easy case to prove

- We have a vast amount of experience from users, followers and parents of park users that prove that the vast amount attending parks do use it for the intended purpose. If you wish to talk to such experienced users please let us know and we will help you to meet up to discuss.

Page 16 Increase in population;

- You suggest that the increase will come from flats rather than family households; is the potential build of approx 100+ houses on Lime road taken into account? I would suggest that if this build goes ahead it may fundamentally change the arguments in this case.

Did the respondents understand the whole question?

- Please be assured that all of the Parishioners collecting signatures made it clear where the location of the Louie Memorial fields is located. No assumption was made.

Page 16/17 Cost of the project explained

- You suggest that the cost of the park could be in the region of £100K to £150K. The size and cost of the park has not been finalised and the total cost which could start at approx £60K and could potentially come all from funding. From my experience of collecting signatures many people who signed the petition did ask where the money would come from; it was our intention to be totally open with them.

Page 18 How far will people walk

- From experience of people attending the youth club and Scout hut on the upper fields; the steep slope that you refer to does not in any way deter these young, fit and extremely able young people from walking or riding up the slope. I strongly disagree with your comments.

- You have also noted that the journey back down the hill could pose a danger as the slope imposes a severe strain on brakes and may encourage excessive speeds; By talking to many young people, modern bikes have far superior brakes than of old and the risk of going fast down the hill is part of the fun! Let's not forget; getting to and from our destination is also part of the fun of life! Just hang around the many hills leading from M. Arnold school at leaving time and see the fun on young people's faces as they cycle down the slopes.

Page 24 Neighbourhood watch report.

- Could you ask the group to let us know those with kitchen windows backing onto the upper field; I recently stood in the MUGA and could not see any kitchen windows to support this case. It is also reported that the fields are often flooded. I have lived in this area for 8 years and have never seen the area of the MUGA/football field as 'flooded'. It is of course as we all know very muddy, but flooded?

Page 26 Powers of the Council.

- Not sure why you have included this section. We would like you to make it clear that you are not suggesting that the Campaign is trying to force the Council to provide a skatepark nor is its intention to sue the Council.

Page 31 People's Voice survey

- Not sure why this has been included; as previously mentioned most people who have signed the petition could walk or bike to the upper fields in **approx** 15 minutes, slope of not!

Thankyou for agreeing to include these and Claires notes onto the end of the report before the R&A meeting.

Kind regards,
Darren Blase.