



BASINGSTOKE TOWN COMMUNITY FC

c/o Hampshire FA Winklebury Complex , Winklebury Way , Winklebury Basingstoke
RG23 8BF

Sue Tarvit and Trevor Campbell- Smith
Planning Development

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Redevelopment Proposals at the Camrose Ground References 19/01110/OUT, 19/02889/OUT, 19/03116/CMA

This document sets out the definitive comments of Basingstoke Town Community Football Club Ltd (BTCFC) on the planning applications, the operation of protection for playing fields and the prospective s106 process and content.

Who Are We?

BTCFC is a Community Benefit Society , a not for profit mutual formed by supporters (one member, one vote) in July 2017 to deal with the Basron plans to discontinue football and profit from the proposed redevelopment of the Camrose ground. BTCFC has been running the football club since summarily evicted from the ground prior to the 2019/20 Season and forced to play at Winchester in the absence of a home venue. Our football club is more than 11 playing first team football in the Southern League and in fact, is only a small part of the club. We currently have 9 Junior teams from age 8-18, together with a full time sports and educational academy with some forty 16-19 year olds who are part of a 2 year course allowing them to obtain 3 A-Levels and an extension year which will give them an BTEC Extended Diploma in Personal Training.

Summary

- We strongly oppose the loss of the Camrose as a vital community leisure and cultural amenity, especially with proposals that do not meet the town's needs.



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- We fully and vehemently support the continued need for two football stadiums in the town.
- Planning approval conditional on 'like for like' replacement requirements on the developer need to be directed at securing a two stadium future.
- Now that the continued existence of our football club will be achieved by our own and Council investment at Winklebury, section 106 mitigation measures by the developer need to reflect the true costs of providing full replacement at a new site and not be based on simply topping up or exclusively targeted at provision at Winklebury.
- A flexible and appropriate response in the absence of a second stadium site would be for the developer to pay funds into a designated account held by the council that could be drawn upon to provide targeted replacement as the opportunity arose over a fixed period .

Opposition to current redevelopment proposals

BTCFC is strongly opposed in principle to the loss of the Camrose as a sports amenity, our home for over 70 years and its redevelopment for profit. As a community club specifically charged by our constitution to enhance the social and cultural needs of our community, we believe the redevelopment proposals are to the Town's detriment.

In particular, we consider

- the provision and density of proposed flats as not what South Ham or the Town needs
- the opportunistic action to land grab to drive a major road through the Camrose does not represent the best solution to traffic problems connected with Brighton Hill Roundabout and will put heavy traffic close to our neighbours in Mansfield Road. Contrary to green principles, Hampshire County Council should not be using more land for roads. They should re - examine previously identified options that make best use of current road/land holdings. This is especially so when in the light of the coronavirus crisis there is likely to be pressures on public funds and fresh momentum to curb traffic levels generally .



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- With more imagination and the active use of the 29% of the Camrose owned by BDBC it would be possible over time to come up, if necessary, with a more modest redevelopment proposal that retained a stadium dedicated to the community plus limited housing that better reflected local needs. Alternatively, a new site could be identified for a second stadium.

Retaining two Football Stadiums in the Town

BTCFC strongly supports the need to retain two football stadiums in the town , in view of the current size and growth plans, together with increased Council emphasis on leisure /exercise/well being. At the same time, there is increasing demand from other sources such as girls/ladies football and walking football. Since early 2000s the town has had two football stadiums: Winklebury Football Complex (Winklebury) serving Step 6 and below (grade F) and the Camrose Ground Step 3 (grade C). The proposals to develop Winklebury with a 3G artificial pitch funded by the Football Foundation, Hampshire FA and the borough council were conceived and separate from any voiced intention to cease football at the Camrose and redevelop for financial return.

These two stadiums are a great resource for our community . It is the recognition of this resource across the country that led to the statutory requirement to consult Sport England on planning applications affecting playing fields. Our expectation - and that of the wider community - is that the application of the Sport England Playing Field Policy and the Council's policy CN8 will protect the two stadium legacy, even where mitigation measures are implemented through a section 106 agreement.

Simply focusing the majority of mitigation measures on enhancements at Winklebury, required of the developer (Basron or future developer) would in current circumstances undermine the preservation of a two stadium facility. We believe there is a responsible and flexible approach that can support the two stadium status quo. In any case ,while Winklebury allows the first team to play competitively there, the demand for the facilities and the balanced letting policy required of Hampshire FA means that BTCFC cannot obtain training and match play slots for all its existing junior teams, nor a Saturday slot for its



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planned Reserve Team. Obviously our priority is that the Winklebury Football Complex is used by the Community as well as our club, but by the very fact that we cannot use it for all of our teams as we did the Camrose, surely shows that it is not a like for like replacement?

Winklebury and Mitigation Measures

A single focus on Winklebury for mitigation measures has been overtaken by a combination of events. This is because of three factors over a period :

- **Winklebury 3G Project:** The separate project funded by the Football Foundation , Hampshire FA and BDBC provides the major infrastructure that Basron would otherwise be expected to provide : for example , a pitch, pitch perimeter fencing , boundary fencing and floodlights.
- **Investment by BTCFC & BDBC:** Following the repeated refusal of Basron to provide funds to undertake advance works at Winklebury that would have secured the future of the football club , BTCFC and the Council have made or are committed to making that investment themselves: BTCFC (£58,000) for hard standing / stand foundations and BDBC (£150,000) for changing room/ spectator enhancements- not specifically for BTCFC but for the wider football community.
- **Relegation of Football Club to grade D standard:** With the BTCFC and BDBC works described above , the football club first team will be able to play competitively and progress at Winklebury having satisfied the rules of the current league level. In the absence of the required club house , the club will cope not perfectly by hiring the adjacent youth project building.



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Way Forward

There is a way forward that ensures that Basron are liable for a true 'like for like' replacement and the two stadium approach is respected. This involves

building on the principle inherent in a course suggested by Owen Neal of Sport England. In his submission, he identifies both the need for Basron to be required to fund specific enhancements at Winklebury **and** to make a financial contribution for other loss of amenity (astro courts and pitch loss) where the location for such works are not yet known.

Applying that approach, BTCFC would propose that Basron would be liable for:

- specific works at Winklebury : clubhouse, associated foundation and new soakaway ,tarmac and fencing alterations , plus costs of preparatory works (£58,000 and £150,000 referred to above); and
- a financial contribution for additional covered stands and terracing that would bring Winklebury up to grade C; **and** like for like works that would be needed in respect of a new greenfield site.

Or

a more simplistic and easily identifiable approach would be based upon the overall cost of providing an equivalent new facility. Basron could be required to provide the necessary total financial contribution. It matters not that a new site has not been identified at this point.

The financial contribution could be paid as agreed with Basron into an Escrow account held by the Council with arrangements for controlled release of funds for works. So , for example, upgrade funds for compliant grade C covered stands could be released when needed or within 3 years (or deferred for the new site). BTCFC recognise that the reality is that , even if a section 106 is agreed , in the current market the likelihood of money be available and replacement activity taking place could be years away.

Basron should be required to make a full financial contribution in accordance to an assessment/estimate of costs for like for like : the aquisition of a new



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site, the laying of a pitch, floodlights, pitch perimeter and boundary fencing, stands, changing rooms, turnstiles, toilets , car parking, board room to level C.

Terry Brown
Chairman
BTCFC

Kevin White
Vice Chairman
BTCFC