

Lisa Percival

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: 28 February 2013 14:14
To: [REDACTED]@cpresussex.org.uk; admin@steyningcricketclub.com; [REDACTED];
info@southdownssociety.org.uk; rambblers@ramblers.org.uk
Subject: FW: Open Spaces Society news release: Village green victory at Steyning, West Sussex

You kindly registered your objection to the pending planning application for a skatepark on the Memorial Playing Field at Steyning. This application is due to be heard on 19th March. In the meantime by successfully registering the whole of the MPF as a village green we have achieved an important success in the teeth of opposition from the Parish Council. Even if the planning application ultimately goes against us we think this is a historic achievement for future generations of Steyning residents. We thought you would like to see the press release from the Open Spaces Society. Thank you very much for your continuing support.

[REDACTED] Friends of Memorial Playing Field)

Steyning
West Sussex
[REDACTED]

OPEN SPACES SOCIETY

NEWS RELEASE

VILLAGE GREEN VICTORY AT STEYNING, WEST SUSSEX

The national Open Spaces Society⁽¹⁾ and the Friends of Memorial Playing Field at Steyning in the South Downs National Park are delighted that West Sussex County Council has resolved to extend village-green⁽²⁾ status to the whole of the Memorial Playing Field (MPF).

The council took the decision on Tuesday 26 February, to register land adjoining the existing village green, thereby extending the green to double the original size. The application for the green was submitted by the Friends and opposed by Steyning Parish Council, the landowner. The council objected largely because it wants to site a skatepark here. However, that objection was not considered to be relevant.

West Sussex County Council's public rights of way committee concluded that the applicants had satisfied the tests for green status, proving that the land had been used for informal recreation for at least 20 years, by local people without interruption or challenge.

Says Paul Campbell, vice-chair of the Friends: ‘With the assistance of the Open Spaces Society, we have ensured that this beautiful, tranquil area has the highest status of protection. This will help to preserve MPF’s unique qualities for future generations.

‘However, this special area remains under major threat because of a planning application for a skatepark in the centre of the lovely vista. The Friends of MPF have called for this application to be abandoned in the face of the successful registration as a village green.’

Adds Nicola Hodgson, case officer of the Open Spaces Society: ‘We were pleased to help the Friends of MPF with their application and are delighted that the land has been registered as a green. We too oppose the skatepark which would be detrimental to the amenity value of this peaceful area within the national park.

‘With the skatepark application pending, the registration of MPF as a green would not have been possible had the government’s Growth and Infrastructure Bill been in force,’ Nicola continues. ‘This Bill will prevent people from registering land as a green if it is threatened with development. This damaging measure will take effect two months after enactment—which could be next month.

‘So the Friends of MPF did well to get in ahead of the guillotine, but other spaces will suffer. It is essential that local people apply to register any land which they have enjoyed for 20 years, without being stopped or asking permission, as soon as possible. By May it may be too late.’

The battle against the skatepark planning application continues, with a decision due to be made by Horsham District Council on 19 March. The objectors include the Open Spaces Society, the Ramblers, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the South Downs Society, Sport England, the Steyning Society, Steyning Cricket Club and a large number of local residents.

ENDS

Notes for editors

1. The Open Spaces Society was founded in 1865 and is Britain's oldest national conservation body. It campaigns to protect common land, village greens, open spaces and public paths, and people's right to enjoy them, throughout England and Wales. www.oss.org.uk
2. Land can be registered as a town or village green if it has been used by local people for 'lawful sports and pastimes' (ie informal recreation) for 20 years freely and openly. Once registered the land is protected from development by nineteenth-century legislation.

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*Growth & Infrastructure Bill –
the threat to town and village greens
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