

Planning correspondence to:

Great Bookham,
Surrey,
KT23 4AJ

28th November 2020

Dear Sir,

Location Recreation Ground, Lower Road, Bookham KT23 4DN
Development Outline application for the consideration of access, layout and scale in respect of the erection of a Youth and Community Centre and sporting facilities with car parking and associated works.
Planning Ref MO/2020/2103

Dear Sirs,

The Bookhams Residents Association supports this Application. It should be noted that the existing Youth Centre and Community Centre (YC&CC) was used not only by the local Youth Club but also by several local community groups. With the closure of the existing Eastwick premises at 164 Lower Road, an opportunity has presented itself to relocate the Centre to the Lower Road Recreation Ground (LRRG) which would provide more benefits and advantages than just rebuilding on the existing site.

These added benefits are:-

- i. The location of the YC&CC at the LRRG would make it much more available to youngsters residing in Bookham. Over 500 pupils a day pass this location on their way to and from the Howard of Effingham School and so it would be ideally placed to provide a range of after school care and activities which are known to have social and economic benefits. The Eastwick site is much less convenient as most of the children have dispersed to other parts of Bookham and do not pass this site.

- ii. A survey carried out by the Leatherhead Youth Project amongst Howard pupils showed that young people are particularly looking for sports, fitness and dance. We consider that the combination of a new facility sited close to the school with the immediately adjacent recreation ground presents a unique opportunity to meet this need.
- iii. The expected increase in numbers produced by this more convenient location would permit the YC service to offer more regular after school child pastoral care and supervision.
- iv. The design of the building will allow for the setting up of a drop-in café. Its proximity means that it would be more likely used by families living on the nearby Middlemead Estate. There have been attempts in the past to provide a local community facility on the Middlemead Estate but these had been unsuccessful. A new building on the LRRG site would therefore resolve this long-standing issue, providing both economic and social benefits.
- v. The provision of the new centre with a drop-in café adjacent to the existing children's play areas at the LRRG will make better use of these recreational facilities.
- vi. The Local Plan will undoubtedly result in increased development immediately adjacent to the LRRG site and there is already new development at Preston Farm. A new YC&CC building on this site would better serve these new developments and could be considered as an integral part of the supporting infrastructure.
- vii. The recreation ground is known to be a location where unsupervised use has led to anti-social behaviour. Siting a new, more intensively used centre, designed specifically with local youth in mind, should lessen the need and opportunity to behave in an anti-social way. Youth Club leaders state that there are often other issues underlying these anti-social behaviours and the opportunity for youth workers on site to interact with offenders can make a real difference.
- viii. Youth Club leaders also advise that immediate access to significant outside recreational space where Youth Club visitors can 'let off steam' will have added health and social benefits.
- ix. This new centre would have ready access to off road parking which was not the case with the old Eastwick site.

- x. This new centre would also provide improved facilities for the Bookham Colts football club and replace the existing poor-quality building on the site. The existing single storey building at Eastwick provided 445m² of space. The current football changing rooms at LLRG have 112m² of space. Together this gives a total of c. 557m². The new centre has an area of 559m² meaning that there is no nett loss of community space. In addition, as the new centre will be two storeys, its footprint is kept to a minimum and does not impinge on the recreation ground which will continue to offer two compliant sized football pitches.
- xi. It is worth noting that the benefits listed above would not only provide community support to around to 700 potential children that can be helped now but, over the life of the building (say 40 years), would be able to offer this support to around 30,000 children.
- xii. Finally, it should be noted that relocating the YC&CC to the LRRG will permit the existing Eastwick site to be redeveloped with a greater number of houses thus helping to meet more of the district's unmet need for housing especially in the light of the requirements expected in forthcoming Local Plan.

Yours faithfully,

N L Smith,
Chairman,
Planning Sub Committee.

cc, Cllr Richard Moyse, Cllr Simon Edge, Cllr Metin Huseyin, Cllr Elizabeth Daly, Cllr Roger Adams, Cllr Nancy Goodacre, SCC Cllr Clare Curran, MVDC Planning Department.
The Head of Planning,
Mole Valley District Council
Pippbrook
Dorking
Surrey RH41SJ

COMMUNITY



In July volunteers moved in to the old Bookham Youth & Community Centre and set up a temporary distribution hub organized by Mid Surrey Community Fridges. A real community effort!

NEW BOOKHAM YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE.

Cllr Clare Curran

Residents possibly know that the Bookham Youth and Community Centre at the Eastwick end of Lower Road has been closed for some time and is awaiting demolition. The old centre was built in the 1970s and although still popular and well used, it was proving to be increasingly costly and impossible to maintain to the current standards. Surrey County Council (SCC) agreed that a new centre should be built to replace it.

This is a project that has been worked on for many months now, led by me and in partnership with the existing centre committee, the BRA, the Bookham Youth Project and others. It is really important that there should be a modern, purpose built centre in Bookham to offer our young people a safe place to go and where Bookham Youth Project's youth workers can be based and work out of.

In addition, Bookham also badly needs more space for the many groups and organisations that would normally meet each week - there are a number of halls in the village which are widely used but they are really busy and some are fully booked out.

I have been working with Bookham's Mole Valley District Councillors to try to identify a possible alternative site for the youth and community centre that would be visible and more convenient for young people to use, especially after school.

A range of suggestions have been put



One of the proposed sites for the new Youth and Community Centre is at the Lower Road Recreation Ground.

forward and considered. Most support has been expressed for a plan to build a new centre at the Lower Road recreation ground, giving more opportunity for using the outside space and the possibilities that the playing fields offer.

There has been some good progress made with this plan and an application for planning permission for a new centre is due to be made this autumn, when residents will be invited to give the council their views.

In the meantime, it is also good news that the existing centre is not just standing empty. SCC's COVID-19 Emergency team has been using the centre as the county's distribution centre for food parcels for people who are shielding, quarantining or self-isolating. Also the Bookham Community Fridge has taken over part of the centre and is using it as their headquarters for storing

and sorting the fresh and donated food for the regular parcels that are delivered to local people in Bookham, Fetcham and Effingham.

For more information, please contact our Surrey County Councillor - Clare Curran at:

clare.curran@surreycc.gov.uk