

Lindfield Parish Council

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Mr Mike Vine
County Development
County Hall
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10 November 2009

Dear Mr Vine,

WSCC/063/09/HH: APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A FLOODLIT SYNTHETIC TURF PITCH WITH ASSOCIATED GROUND WORKS AND LANDSCAPING WITHIN OATHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE, HAYWARDS HEATH

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon application WSCC/063/09/HH. The matter was addressed by the Lindfield Parish Council Planning and Traffic Committee, acting on behalf of the full Council, at their meeting on 9 November 2009.
2. The application generated a great deal of interest and concern from Lindfield residents, in particular those in Pelham Road and Appledore Gardens which lie to the east and in the immediate vicinity of Oathall Community College. Residents from Haywards Heath also expressed concern for the impact of the proposals on people living in Penn Crescent and Oathall Avenue to the south.
3. The Parish Council Planning and Traffic Committee were unanimous in voicing very strong objections to this application. In detail, their concerns are as follows:
 - a. There was recognition of the high quality of education provided by Oathall Community College, but they had no support for this application which, with its floodlighting, would have attendant issues of noise, light pollution and traffic congestion for neighbouring properties at unsocial times of weekdays and at weekends.
 - b. There was concern for the potential loss of tranquillity in the heart of a residential area; the application would breach advice and principles relating to, for example, nature conservation, light pollution and noise as expressed in PPG17. Additionally, disbelief was expressed at the unrealistic noise report which was based on only 6 players shouting during matches and no account was taken of spectator noise.
 - c. Floodlighting breaches Mid Sussex Local Plan Policies B3, B24, R1 and R5; such light pollution could have a significant impact not only on residents, but also on wildlife, including birds and bats in the abutting Scrase Valley Nature Reserve. The Committee were not convinced that advances in floodlighting since 2002 would ameliorate their concerns about such pollution.
 - d. There would be the loss of visual amenity currently afforded by mature trees in a park-like setting which would need felling to accommodate these proposals.
 - e. This is the third very similar application, on this occasion the pitch being re-orientated, but this change does not address the concerns expressed on previous occasions. In particular, the appeal of March 2000, against the refusal by MSDC of application HH/248/98, clearly established that such a development would be inappropriate. Whilst it would provide a recreational facility of benefit to the area, the Inspector did not consider that this would outweigh the harm it would cause to the living conditions of residents. The second application, HH/01/0095/FUL, sought to introduce a pitch but without floodlighting; this was also rejected by the Parish Council on grounds of noise. Nothing in the latest application has dissuaded the Parish Council that the issues of noise and light pollution have been adequately addressed or their impact ameliorated.
 - f. The merits of the application could be realised better at another site where there might be marginal impact on residents. Indeed, other sites in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill already exist or are proposed.

4. In sum, the Lindfield Parish Council objects most strongly to this application for a floodlit, synthetic turf pitch at Oathall Community College on the grounds of noise, light pollution and traffic congestion.

Yours sincerely,

Pieter Hemsley

Pieter Hemsley
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