

Lighting Camera

Piers Leigh

Monday, 1 February 2010

FAO: Director of Legal and Democratic Services

**Concerning: Village Green Application,
Elthorne Park, Brent River Park, Boston Road, London W7**

I am writing in response to a posting in the Ealing Gazette concerning an application for registration of Elthorne Park as Town or Village Green.

I would like to register my opposition to Elthorne Park receiving Village Green status.

Primarily, I would like to register my opposition on the grounds that this is a municipal park used by a broad section of the community, including Oaklands School for its sporting events. My understanding is that Town or Village Green status would effectively freeze the park as it is in terms of the features and facilities.

While I understand that there would remain scope for improvement of existing facilities, it would seem a real shame if there were no opportunities in the future for adapting the park to the changing needs of the local community.

In particular, there are currently lots of people who have moved to the area to benefit from our great primary schools. This is changing the area's demographic and is leading to increased intakes in these schools.

When I first moved to the area, four years ago, I realised there were very few facilities for young people between the age of 11 and 18. This age group is one which will become more prominent in the next ten years as the children currently in primary school grow up.

We need, as a local community, to be able to respond to the changing needs of our community and it was with this in mind that I began a campaign for a skatepark. The council received our 800 strong petition and went to consultation. The consultation received over 70% positive feedback in favour of a skatepark.

I suspect that the Village Green application has been made by opponents of the skatepark who, frankly, are riding in the face of local public opinion. While I respect people's right to oppose change, I also feel strongly that the right to change features and facilities in our community should also be respected, especially where change reflects democratic processes and popular will.

Elthorne Park is a municipal park owned by Ealing Council. In putting forward planning for a skatepark, Ealing Council has listened to a majority of local residents and responded positively. In the past the Council has added Tennis Courts and a childrens' playground and I would like to ensure that future generations can benefit from Elthorne Park as a municipal park.

It would be a huge shame if this project, or indeed future projects, would be blocked by the park achieving Town or Village Green status. I appeal to you to reject this application so that future residents can continue to shape their beloved local park.

Yours faithfully, Piers Leigh