



Results and Findings of a Survey, Petition, Research and Community Engagement Campaign by the Friends of Gledhow Field



Background

- The field behind Gledhow Primary School, (known locally as the 'Postage Stamp' or 'Gledhow Field'), will be fenced off this summer, (August 2015).
- The reason given is that there are plans for the school to grow from 2 to 3 Form Entry, (they will have an extra 7 classes, 1 per school year, which amounts to an additional 210 children), and, if that happens, the school would like more land for their expansion. This is subject to planning permission being granted.
- There are no legally binding restrictions on how much land a school must have therefore the school's expansion programme could go ahead without the additional land.
- Planning permission for the building programme has not been initiated at the time of writing and therefore the fence will be erected before a decision is made on the school's expansion.
- Although a public consultation phase was carried out in relation to the expansion of the school, there was no reference to the closure of the field on the Statutory Notices.
- Local neighbours and groups, including the Roundhay Planning Forum and the Gledhow Valley Conservation Area Group, were not informed of the impending changes.

The Friends of Gledhow Field (FoGF)

- In line with recommendations made in the Roundhay Ward Neighbourhood Design Statement which is 'fully supported' by the council and has been adopted by LCC as a 'supplementary planning document', The Friends of Gledhow Field was established to ensure the survival of the field.
- As a result of the planned closure of the field, the group has engaged with local businesses, the police, other relevant organisations and, most importantly, the community to ascertain their views on the closure and their aspirations for the field. Research has included:
 - A petition which asks for signatures to 'save the field'
 - A survey
 - Communication, both formal and informal, with relevant individuals, groups and organisations on a local and national basis
 - Regular 'Litter Picks' to assess the quality of the land
- The research, (survey and petition), has been conducted online and on paper.
- The survey and petition have largely been promoted through word of mouth and via open public forums, social media etc.
- In addition, two groups of people were specifically targeted:
 - Families with young children of primary school age to ensure adequate consideration was given to those who have a direct interest in the school's expansion.
 - Local residents directly affected by any changes to the field, (i.e. those whose houses border the field).

Statistical Results

1). Petition:

- More than 450 people have signed the 'Save Our Field' petition to date.
- Each signatory is asked to comment on their reason for supporting the petition and these comments can be read on the petition itself (www.change.org/p/leeds-city-council-and-gledhow-primary-school-save-our-field). A summary of these comments is added as an appendix to this document, (See Appendix 1).

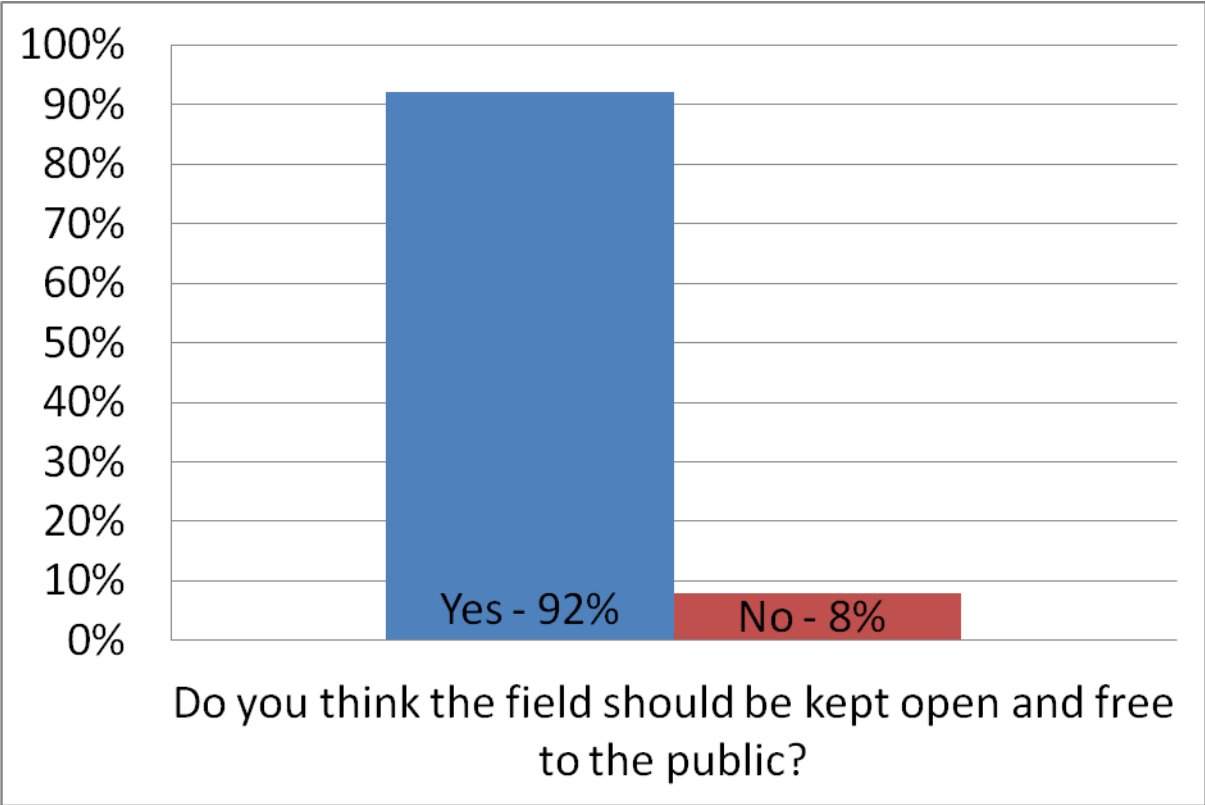
2). Survey:

- 115 people were surveyed over a 4 week period.
- The survey asked questions about the community's views on the closure of the field as well as gaining their suggestions for improving the field in the future.
- Results of the survey are detailed on the following 3 pages.

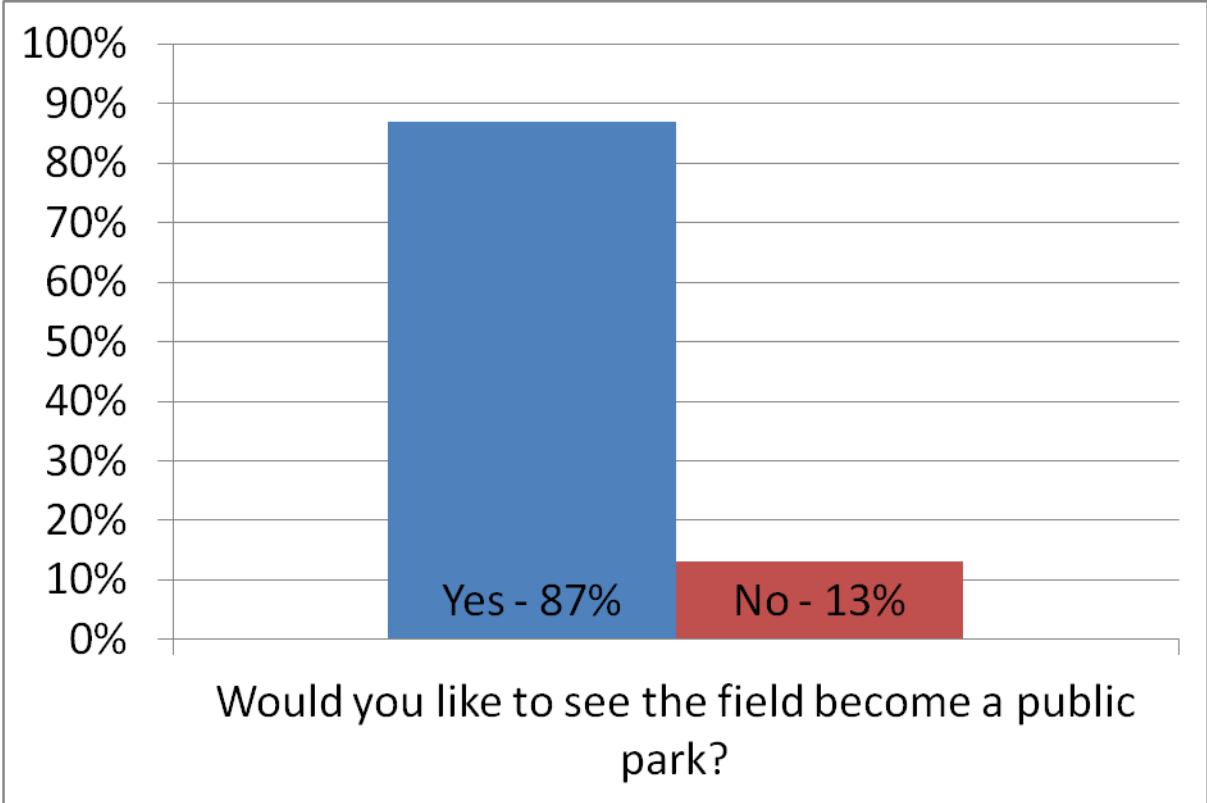
(Please note: Respondents were also asked about their views on all-weather pitches as, at the time, it had not been made known that the private organisation had withdrawn their interest. For future reference, should all-weather pitches be something that is explored at a later date, the results relating to this were as follows:

- *When asked whether they would like to see all weather pitches on Gledhow Field, 91% of people said 'No'*
- *When asked whether they would be prepared to pay to use sports facilities on Gledhow Field, 93% of people said 'No'*

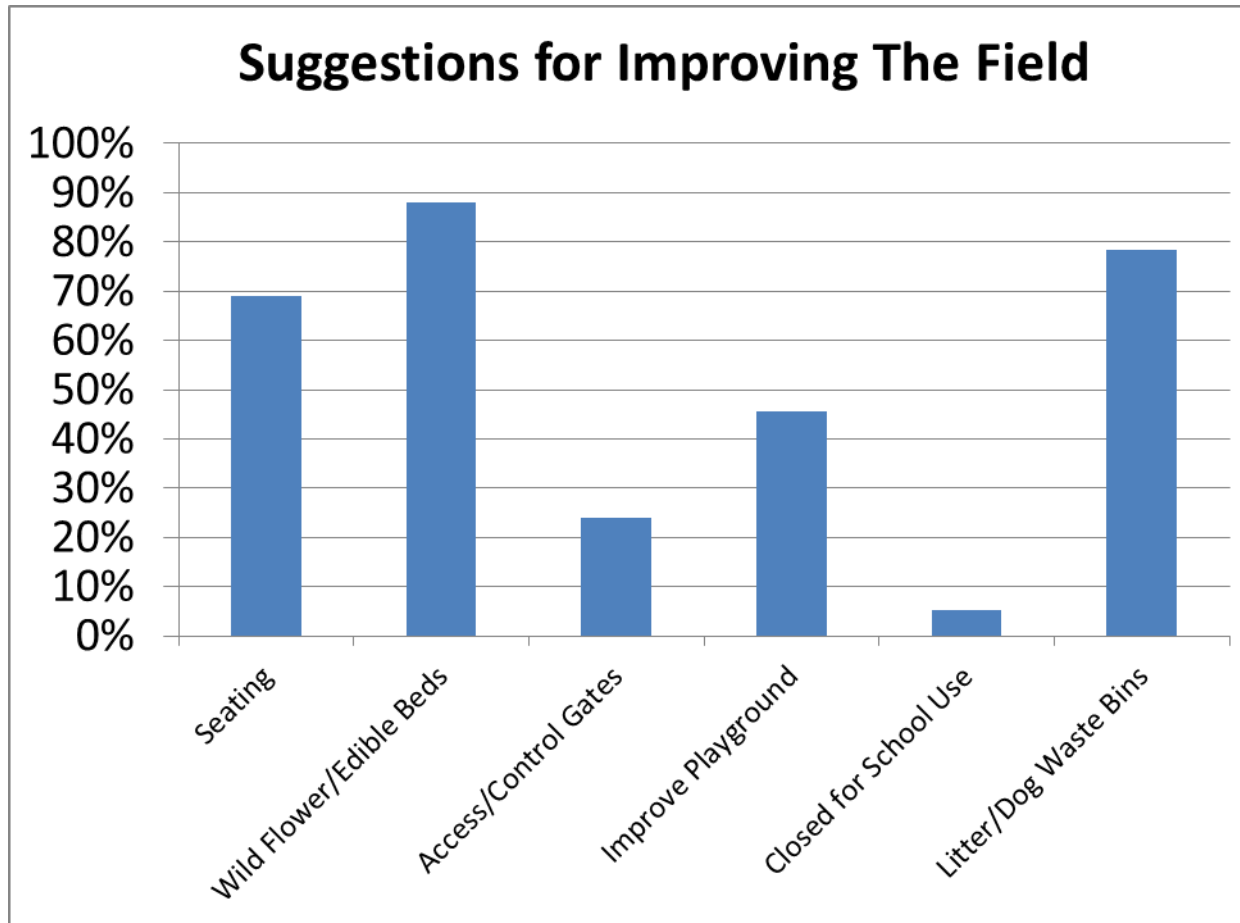
2). Survey (Continued)



2). Survey (Continued)



2). Survey (Continued)



Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of the findings, observations and the concerns raised via the petition, survey and broader engagement process.

Green Space

- The field is a much loved, valued and used green space and the local community is almost unanimous in being against its closure.
- Many wanted the field to become a 'park' with paths, benches and formal flower beds etc whereas others were quite happy with it remaining as an informal recreation ground – both on the condition that it remained open to the public.

Children's Play

- Without the field there is nowhere as safe and suitable for children to play.
- The field is used for football, learning to ride bikes and general play.
- Free play, (as opposed to adult led, structured sport), is essential for the development of a more rounded child.
- If the school expands, there will be higher numbers of children in the area before and after school times thereby increasing the likely use and requirement for open space to play in.
- Concerns were raised that by increasing the land for children to use in school hours, we are removing it from the same children's use after school, during the holidays and at weekends.

Social Inclusion

- The field is currently used by older people, individuals with physical or learning disabilities and other vulnerabilities. Without this field, people who are unable to travel further will have no access to open green space for exercise, playing with young relatives, walking their dogs, socialising etc.
- Questions have been asked about what solutions will be put in place to ensure such groups of people are not socially excluded if this field is closed.

Lack of Engagement/Consultation

- Almost every individual spoken to was not aware of the plans to fence off the land. Even parents at the school did not seem to have understood that the field would be lost to the public.
- There is considerable frustration and concern about the lack of consultation. As the land has been accessed, unimpeded, for decades, most assume that it is common land and that they should be consulted if this is to be taken out of public use.
- Even after being advised that the land is vested in education, as the land is owned by the council which is there to serve the public and paid for tax payers money, it is still largely felt that the community should have been consulted.

Health and Well-Being

- The field provides one of few local amenities for exercise and fresh air.

Money

Some felt that the fence did not represent good use of public money and that funds would be better spent either on facilities within the school or other council projects.

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

- Alternative play and open access areas, (specifically use of Gledhow Field), were solutions recommended by West Yorkshire Police in a court case resulting from anti-social behaviour on the Brackenwood Estate. Concerns are now being raised that this previously resolved issue, may reappear if local youths do not have open space to gather, kick a football around or generally let off steam.
- The field has not had any reports of crime on it, (according to www.police.uk), the Care Home next door regards it as 'peaceful', they are not aware of any crime/anti-social behaviour, and the community generally considers the land to be free from social issues which is why it represents an important area for children and local residents to use safely.

Access

- Access to the shops, woods, residential areas etc was a concern although it is accepted that a formal public right of way will be created.

Comparable Land

- Several people commented on the school's significant existing land bank, many could not think of a single local school which has close to even half of the available playing soft play area that the school already has.

'Community' School

- It was suggested that the school's 'community' status was questionable as they felt that by closing land to the public, they were not demonstrating a community ethos.
- It was also highlighted that school age children represent only one part of the community and that consideration should be given to its whole.

Access to Nature

- In a compact residential area such as Roundhay, it is important for everyone, particularly children to have access to nature and green spaces as opposed to concrete and bricks.
- There are a number of interesting species on the land which should be respected and accessible by the public.

History

- Whilst people accept change is needed, following the closure of the rugby ground, this is now the only green space left in the Gledhow/Brackenwood area. Local residents have used it for decades stretching back to the times when older members of our community remember cows on it. Things do have to move on, but we need to preserve a little bit of the past for our future generations.

Land Quality, Cleanliness and Safety

- Volunteers in the community have conducted daily assessments, over a 4 week, period of the field including collecting litter and dog waste.
- The findings were that litter is not a significant issue, (indeed one political representative commented that there was more litter on the school field than on the open land.).
- Occasional social gatherings cause issues but there are already a number of responsible individuals in the community that clear the land, if necessary. (The addition of bins to the field might resolve this issue).
- Dog waste is a problem which needs addressing, (Bins might also help to resolve this).
- No needles were found.

Dogs

- Closure of the field leaves many dog owners without a safe and accessible area to walk their pets. Around one in 4 households has a dog and it is estimated that there are around double the amount of dogs than children aged between 3 and 11 in the UK, therefore the importance of dog walkers as part of the community should not be underestimated.
- Walking dogs is a common form of exercise and is advocated by both the NHS and Public Health England as key contributor to the health and well-being of both adults and children.
- The field does have an issue with dog waste and this needs addressing.

The Fenced Path/Ginnel

- Significant concern has been raised from both the community and the care home, (many of their staff use the land for access to work), about the safety of a path around the field. Currently the land is wide open with excellent visibility and regular use therefore it is deemed to be a safe route for children and adults alike. With a narrower path, it is thought the likelihood of anti-social behaviour, crime and drug use may increase on the land as visibility will be considerably reduced in this confined space. This has been highlighted to us by both the police, the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and other leading bodies who focus on crime prevention and personal safety.
- Questions have been asked about what plans are in place, (e.g. lighting and CCTV), to improve safety.

Community Socialising

- The land is used by young and old people alike as a community area where they can meet, (planned or otherwise), get some fresh air and socialise. A sense of community is important and there is concern about crumbling social structures if there is no focal point such as the field.

Demand for Community Playing Fields

- The concept of providing a community service for local sports teams and not-for-profit clubs is welcomed but there is a question mark over whether there is a demand for this. The Gledhow Sports and Social Club offers similar opportunities for such activities and there are concerns that by competing with them it could result in the loss of a further local amenity.

What's the Answer?

Short Term – A Temporary Stop on Erecting the Fence for Twelve Months

Putting on hold the current plan to enclose the field for 12 months will give the school, council, community and other relevant parties adequate time to review the decision and define a long term solution. The school will only have one extra class next year and, even though it has lost some of its land to the 'Reception Village', it will still have more than adequate space to fulfil the requirements of the school's Physical Education curriculum. (See appendix 2 which details the space within the school timetable for additional PE lessons).

Given that the council has already committed to proceeding '*at risk*' with the development of the reception village, at a cost of c£230,000, before the planning application has been granted, it would seem imprudent to spend further money on a fence for the following reasons:

- The school does not have planning permission to build, (and they are less likely to receive it if the field is closed), therefore it is feasible that extra land will not be needed. It is assumed that if the school remains as 2FE it would not need to enclose the field given that there has been a previous request that the 'surplus land' be sold due to lack of school use. The installation of the fence should be delayed until the outcome of planning is known.
- The decision to close the field to the public has been referred to the Scrutiny Board who may request a review of the decision to build the fence.
- Evidence has been gathered and an application for common land will shortly be submitted which could force the field back into public use and enforce the removal of the fence.
- In line with the Leeds 2030 'Best City' plans, which includes, as a priority, promoting '**good community relations**' and ensuring '**local people have the power to make decisions that affect them**', a full and proper consultation process is needed to adequately assess the school's need for the field balanced against the needs of the community. This could also overturn the current decision and would require the removal of the fence.

Long Term – Agree To The Community’s Wish To Maintain Open Use Of The Land Or Find A Compromise

With such strength of feeling within the community, it would be unfair and unethical to continue with the current plans to close the field. The following solutions are suggested for consideration:

Solution 1 – The Field Remains open for Full Public Access

That the council reassigns Gledhow Field as open ‘common land’ and it remains in full public use.

Solution 2 – The School and Community Work Together to Find a Mutually Beneficial Compromise

The school is a key part of our community and it is important that, having succeeded in attaining ‘Outstanding’ status, they maintain that both for current and future pupils. However, the school is only a part of a much broader community and, with competing pressures for land within a growing city, the only way to deal with such pressures is by fair and equitable division of resources. Further consultation would be required to facilitate this but examples of ways in which both the school and the community could make best **shared use** of the land include:

- **Split The Land** It is considered, by the community, that the school does not need the land and, due to the topology of the land and drainage issues, parts of the field, without significant investment, will be useless to the school anyway. Therefore, a compromise would be to divide the area by fencing off a part for school only use, which would leave the remainder of the field for shared school and community use.
- **Fence Off A Central Sports Pitch Rather Than The Whole Field** - Our research demonstrates that the information regarding the proliferation of litter and needles has been overstated. Dog waste, however, is an issue, the addition of bins and signage may go some way to eradicate this, but sadly it is unlikely that some individuals within the community would respect an open field. The children’s playground is surrounded by a low gated fence with signs preventing access to dogs and this is respected. A similar approach could be used to fence off a sports pitch on the field which would allow the school to have an

extra sports facility when required, but would also maintain full public access to all except dog walkers when not in school use. Furthermore, a lower and shorter fence would represent a much needed cost saving for the council and would be less of an eyesore.

- **Shared Nature/Tree Planting/Wildlife Areas** – It seems clear that the school and the community actually want the same thing - a safe place for children and enhanced land for enjoyment of such as wildlife and other outdoor activities. As detailed in the statistical results, many of those surveyed were particularly impressed with the edible gardens in Oakwood and were keen to see natural enhancements to the land such as wildflower beds, tree planting etc which, according to the recent letter issued by the school, (dated 'June 2015'), matches with the school's aspirations and outdoor curriculum. Rather than excluding the public, why not work together to improve the land which could be enjoyed by school children **and** the broader community. Indeed there is even a financial incentive to work with the community as grants for certain projects are not accessible to public sector organisations, but would be to voluntary groups.
- **Considerably Increase The Width Of The Path Around The Edge** – Concerns about safety have been raised by the public and the care home. By significantly increasing the width of the band around the edge of the field this would address many of the community's concerns by:
 - Improving visibility and, therefore, safety.
 - Allowing sufficient space for children to play and dog walkers to exercise.
 - Reducing the cost of the fence.

Conclusion

This report evidences that our community does not want to see the field closed, there is considerable objection against this and ideally it should be kept open for continued public use. There is deemed to be no morally justifiable reason why the school should take all of this land as they already have significantly more soft play area than most schools and, leaving the land open to public access, will not affect the ability to expand.

However, it is recognised that the school is an important part of the community and that the need for more school places in our region will put pressure on the current fenced off area. Our recommendations are therefore:

1. That a temporary hold is put on the installation of the fence, for a period of 12 months, until the summer of 2016 to allow for planning permission to go through, the scrutiny panel to make their decision etc and to give time for an effective consultation programme.
2. That an independent working party is formed comprising local stakeholders, (parents, community school governors, local residents, FoGF, The Gledhow Valley Conservation Area Group, The Roundhay Planning Forum etc), with a view to working together to formulate a mutually agreeable proposal which would satisfy the needs of both the school and the wider community.

Appendix 1 Summary Of Comments From Petition

The Following Is A Sample Of The Views Of Our Community, Taken Directly From The Petition

This is the last & only green space in this area where anyone can safely take their children or grandchildren to let off steam & have a run around or play games.

This field is always used by the local people, and has been for many years. Both friends, dog walkers and children all use the field and it would be a huge shame to see it go

I think it's absolutely crucial for children to have safe places to play. They have to spend far too much time sitting down, which is no good for emotional, physical, social or intellectual development.

I have used this field and played on it when young, taken my own 4 children when young on here for picnics, football and been able to let them run around and play safe and I also still use to it meet up with other members of the community, take my granddaughter and take my dogs on here

Grown up in the area and this holds many childhood memories. Perfect place for children, dog walkers, and many more

This field also provides a very fast short-cut from Londis shops to the path in the woods down to Little Switzerland!!! I USE IT ALL THE TIME it saves at least 15 minutes when walking from Gledhow to Chapel Allerton!!!

I've used this field for the last 25 years every day with my children/grandchildren, dogs and childminded children. Sure this appeal will go nowhere little voices don't count but protesting anyway

I'm signing because green spaces are essential for the general health and wellbeing of the public

To enable the local people to enjoy the field as they have the last 20 years.

We need to preserve this green space now and for future generations.

Take away these spaces and kids just end up walking the streets bored and causing trouble, or sat at home playing computer games and getting obese!!

We access this park frequently and losing this means no outdoor for me or my children

I love this field. I can walk through it every day to get to the bus stops on Brackenwood Drive. I can pick blackberries there in the autumn. People walk their dogs here. Kids play football. Please leave this as a field.

Leeds, West Yorkshire has always had Green Belt for our Community to enjoy it's hard enough trying to occupy children during the six week holidays as it is, this field represents the whole of our Community surely that means something to our Council Representatives? Fields & Sports go hand in hand, were will the children go if the field is swallowed up? The children that use this field constantly to train and keep fit deserve somewhere safe to enjoy their chosen sports. Fresh air and regular exercising is the way forward, families enjoy training together it's a "no-brainer" surely!

Gledhow School already have one of the larger open-fields available for students in the area, so why expand it when this would take away one of the major areas for local dog walkers in the area who may not want to go into the woods? It is also a centre point for people wishing to cross from Gledhow to Brackenwood and vice versa, and the fact that it is behind so many houses will just serve as a hindrance to those around it. In short, expanding Gledhow's already vast playing fields will serve to devalue the surrounding area as locals will lose yet another 'green' and open space that positively effects many lives.

There is nowhere to go sit and have a picnic , nowhere to take the little ones , not everyone has got a car and can travel , it's a close knit community and keeps the children off the streets, my grandchildren use it, so I know it's well used

I walk my dog on this field every morning as many others do, there is nowhere else, I also have taught my two eldest to ride their bikes on here and I am intending to teach my youngest too, it would be a shame to lose this field, there are not many left.

We need to preserve our green spaces for everyone, not just for the few. There are no playing fields for the local kids until you get to Roundhay Park, which is a long way from Brackenwood. I think that the vandalism rates will go up if this little haven goes.

The local authority and the school show no sign of taking into account the impact on local residents of their proposal for the field, and appear not to see the need for any kind of consultation process. Apparently the fact that the planners and legal advisers to the Council support the scheme is good enough.

I agree we need accessible and safe open spaces within the community for our children to play and for all age groups to enjoy.

I live in the area play football with my child on the field and feel that it is part of the community and the field should be used as part of community for children to reduce crime

Live locally and we need green spaces in our community for the community! Once it's gone it's gone...

Kids need a field.

Green space is a valuable asset to every community that should be entitled to.

People must have somewhere natural to breathe some fresh air and to take a break from the built environment!

It is important that we retain such green spaces for the future for all to enjoy.

I live just around the corner from this field and lived directly behind it until I left home. I played on it as a child/adolescent and now my son plays on this field and is learning to ride his bike on it.

Through my time growing up in Brackenwood the field has been a place we could all group up and play huge football games without being in fear of breaking anything, getting the police called and just having a good time. It is also freedom for my Dog to run around and also to do some fitness of my own. We need this field

<p>This affects my grandchildren, it's their heritage</p>
<p>Good field, good shape, has hilly regions, lots of grass, trees, bordered by nettles, a top field in general!!</p>
<p>The 'haunted' house next to it was even better! But that is long gone now sadly :(</p>
<p>I'm signing because I use the field out of convenience every day on my way to work and I love to admire the evening sunset on my way back home from work. I also like to sit in the field every now and then to get away from life's troubles. I really do hope we can save this field!</p>
<p>There's nowhere for kids to go these days creating boredom which leads to crimes. The government doesn't need more crimes!</p>
<p>It's the last open space accessible by the public in the locality</p>
<p>EVERYONE needs green space to run, walk, play, and breathe fresh air. When it's gone it's gone and will never be the same again.</p>
<p>If the children could have free access to sports facilities on an evening I'd support this. Creating a "rat run" round the edge of the field and removing the last free green space in this area is not fair on the local children.</p>
<p>I belong to the Gledhow Valley Conservation group and this is an important issue to all regarding keeping our green spaces, especially ones that can be used for the general public. We must try to preserve this unique pocket of land not only for ourselves, but for the generation to come.</p>
<p>This field is fine as it is, just needs mowing from time to time, that is all. Most fields associated with schools have no access on an evening and before we know it that could happen to this field too-where can children play, except on the street where it isn't that safe now due to cars always being in a hurry. The school can still use it for Sports Day enclosing it with a fence restricts who can use it and when. Fields like this one are spaced out within neighbourhoods to give everyone an area where they can get out to enjoy fresh air and sunshine. I've not heard of any major problems with nuisance visitors to the field, so why do the school and council want to change things?</p>
<p>This has been a long established series of footpaths since the Brackenwood estate was built in the 1950's-1960's. It constitutes a public right of way, and is also the last green space in the whole area.</p>
<p>A lot of people that live in Gledhow do not have a garden. Therefore this is the only safe place for children, pensioners and disabled people to go to play or for some peace and quiet.</p>
<p>This field has been in continuous public use since before Gledhow School was built and I believe it is protected by a Covenant made by Miss Kitson who previously owned the field. I and my family have used it for at least 45 years.</p>
<p>Where else am I going to walk my dog and meet with other members of the community? The field has an important for building community spirit</p>

Appendix 2 School Timetable

The following table has been compiled from information taken directly from the school's 2014/2015 timetables published on their website. This demonstrates that the school currently has facilities to have at least 3 PE lessons at any one time. This gives them 60 lesson slots per week, (3 slots per lesson x 4 lessons per day x 5 days per week). Currently 24 slots are filled, a further 12 would be needed when the school reaches its maximum capacity, (630 pupils) therefore a total of 36 slots filled. If they had one less sports pitch, (through loss of land due to building), meaning one less slot per lesson, they would still have 40 slots which would be sufficient to accommodate the 36 lessons required. (This does not take in to consideration swimming lessons which are done off site and therefore the actual slots used onsite are less than the figures quoted).

Gledhow Primary School – Timetabled PE Lessons 2014/2015				
	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
Monday		Year 4 Swimming/PE	Year 4 PE	Year 4 Indoor PE
		Year 4 Swimming/PE	Year 5 Swimming	Year 5 Swimming
			Year 5 Swimming	Year 5 Swimming
Tuesday	Year 1 PE & English	Year 2 Outdoor PE	Year 6 PE	
Wednesday			Year 1 Outdoor	Year 3 PE
			Year 3 PE	
Thursday			Year 2 PE	Year 1 Outdoor PE
			Year 3 PE	Year 2 PE
				Year 6 PE
Friday	Year 3 Outdoor PE	Year 2 PE	Year 1 Indoor PE	Year 6 PE
			Year 6 PE	

This report was prepared by the Friends of Gledhow Field for presentation at a meeting on Monday 13th July 2015 to the school, Local Councillors and LCC staff.

The report will be published on the FoGF website, via various social media sites and will be available to anyone who should request it.

It is requested that, in the interests of openness, the report is copied to all School Governors and published on the website of Gledhow Primary School.

The report has been compiled from the views and opinions of petition signatories, survey respondents, the local community and a number of other relevant organisations. The views are not necessarily the views of the authors. Further information has been sought from other sources, including the School and Council, and is believed to be correct at the time of writing. If you spot any errors in this report or believe any of the information to be incorrect, please contact The Friends of Gledhow Field via email: info@friendsofgledhowfield.org

The Friends of Gledhow Field have only surveyed the community on the subject of Gledhow Field itself, not on the school's expansion plan and therefore we are unable to express a view on this. However, it should be made clear that, individually, the founding members recognise the urgent need for school places and are not opposed to the expansion of Gledhow Primary School.

