

Butcher Hill playing fields

We have come here today from Spen Hill residents association who have linked up with 3 other residents groups over this matter. This is Toby Fursdon and I am Peter Owen (West Park residents, Moor Grange residents, Spen Lane residents, also at least 400 apposed residents).

We have a piece of green belt land in our area that has been used by the local people and the local school for 48 years plus. It consists of meadow land woodland and playing fields. One third of the playing field area is owned by the Ripon diocese for the use of the church school however the school wishes to pass the use of this land over to a commercial 5 aside football company to build a complex of 12 pitches and run them all virtually round the clock from 9am to 10.30pm every day, except one per year.

If you can all try to imagine what this will be like for the people that live around this. For example people living near Elland Road may seem to have a bad time of it with football noise and crowds, but at least it is only occasional whereas for us it will be continuous .

The people that live around this land can hear noise on the fields quite easily with their windows closed. The housing consists of mainly families with a large number of young children and old people's flats and housing. These young children will have to go to sleep every night listening to shouting and swearing drifting into their bedrooms. From the 2,500 men brought in from outside the area to play football per week. To inflict this on families giving them no means of escape in their own homes should be unacceptable.

Also the land is used by people for all sorts of recreational activities which as well as football include cricket, rugby, running, bird watching, organised picnics, model clubs, sun bathing and much more. As this is a very pleasant and safe feeling piece of land, that is very well looked after and looks and feels like a park. It also has a wild life species list that would rival Golden Acre Park. Many of the local uses will be driven off this land due to the loud and hostile activity around this complex. Other sites of this intensity are approximately ½ a mile from housing.

We ask the council to stop this development in any way they can and bring this to a close as for people living in the area it has brought a year of extreme stress and depression.

We also would like to ask the council to help us to protect the land for the future as despite being N1 and N8 green belt land the commercial company in question have already had plans drawn up for almost the entire site. We ask that you put the land into trust with Wade's charity that will ensure that it will stay as our open free green space for the school and community. We would like it to also be given the village green status and we feel that if the council does this then we can convince the church to do the same.