



Good Morning/Afternoon Lord Mayor and Councilors,

My name is Arron Lambert, Chair of the TV Harrison Community Action Group.

I am here today to speak to you in regards to the TV Harrison Sports Ground on Oldfield Lane, Wortley.

Hopefully, the majority of you will be familiar with our City's neglected, abandoned & much cherished Sports Ground. & also aware of the rich historical importance of our City's spiritual sporting Landmark. Our Great City, made Great by our people. People like Thomas Vernon Harrison.

TV Harrison Ground, Oldfield Lane was first recorded as a sports venue in the early 1850s. Cricket, Rugby & Football all being played here. 2 Rugby Yorkshire Cup Finals took place & in the late 1920s, a campaign was run in the Yorkshire Evening Post to purchase the land by subscription. The people of Leeds raised £2,200 & the land was purchased in 1929. In 1931 a ceremony took place on the land as the deeds were handed over from the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Alderman G Ratcliffe To a Mr T.W Shortridge. In the deeds, it clearly states that the land 'shall be left open and unbuilt upon'

Thomas Vernon Harrison was a WW1 Hero who was headmaster at 2 Leeds schools, Hunslet Lane & Christ Church Junior Schools. TV Harrison believed that having a

sports field for children would help with their schoolwork but also help keep them physically fit. With this sports ground being the first of its kind in the country he hoped that other cities & towns would follow suit.

Unfortunately, TV Harrison passed away before the deeds were officially handed over. Due to Mr Harrison's involvement in securing the land, they decided to name the facility The TV Harrison Ground.

As well as School Sports, Sports Days & 'Children's Day Activities, the ground was the home pitch for Leeds City Boys, who are the representative team for our City at school Boy Level. All School Football Finals were played here. The likes of Madeley, Reaney, Harvey, McCall, Deane, Batty, Whelan & Smith all started their careers here. Don Revie & Les Cocker often visited the ground, scouting the next big thing.

Fast Forward to the '90s & all that was remaining was a tired-looking football Ground that had had no upkeep or funding. LSSA (Leeds Schools Sports Association) eventually moved Leeds City Boys games away from the Ground & have since been Nomads, playing at Woodkirk & Wetherby amongst other far-flung districts. The changing rooms were vandalised & this was used as the excuse to shut up shop for good.

We know of at least 3 Sporting groups who attempted to resurrect the facilities in Wortley Boys, West Leeds ARLFC & Armley Amateurs FC. etc. Negotiations with LSSA & Leeds City Council were extremely protracted & ultimately futile on each occasion.

While facilities for our kids are ever-dwindling, School Grounds being fenced off and green land being built on, Wortley & surrounding areas appear to be hit the hardest with pretty much Zero funding. TV Harrison has been the pride & joy of our area. The Jewel of Wortley, even Wortley's Wembley. It is a treasured landmark of Leeds & The pitch is second only, in historical importance to Elland Road. It would be Sacrilege to lose it especially when our kids need this facility more than ever.

In the past, I have read LCC plans to make Leeds The Greatest City in England & as a very proud Leeds born lad, I am ready to beat my chest. BUT, making our City Great does not mean filling up green spaces with homes where the infrastructure cannot support it & where you are leaving little for the next generation in terms of much needed accessible facilities. It will always stay with me hearing Eddie Gray, speaking at the Late, Great John Charles

Memorial. It is the people of Leeds that makes the City of Leeds Great. Leeds City Council needs to stop taking our Treasures away. Too many Generations have missed out on this facility. It belongs to Our Kids & Theirs.

Community spirit is very much alive & kicking & as a group we would like to take the TV Harrison Ground forward. It seems that LSSA lost interest a long time ago & as Custodians/Trustees of such an institution, we feel they are unfit for purpose & should relinquish their grasp. There are so many funding options available. If you look at the funding history within Leeds, you will see Wortley & surrounding areas come up very short! Fundraising ideas are aplenty. There will be no shortage of interest to help, across the whole of Leeds.

We are sure when the time is right & we get enough exposure that Leeds United will play a Big part. The TV Harrison Ground is a Big Part of their Heritage! Let's have an Inner-City Sports Facility to be proud of, Community Hub. All-inclusive.

There are many options available to us to develop the ground into a multi-functioning sports and cultural hub that would meet the following points in the Leeds Economic Growth Strategy:

- Putting children at the heart of the growth strategy

- Best city for health and wellbeing
- Supporting places and communities to respond to economic change
- Building a federal economy
- 21st Century infrastructure
- Backing innovators and entrepreneurs in business and social enterprises
- Maximising the economic benefits of culture

We could work together to explore the options for this ground before it is built on and lost

forever- we feel the wider implications are not being assessed in terms of community benefit.

You outline that the Council are not able to buy this land as a sports field as it will not have a

return on investment, we however see no reason that a socially-serving development that

incorporates social enterprise business, culture and sport would not provide ample return on

investment in regards to the Leeds Economic Growth Strategy. There are opportunities through

The Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, Key Fund and charitable grants which could be used

to reignite the area. As it has been left unused for so long, it will be no loss of income as nothing

has been spent on the ground, nor has it brought in any money to either the Council or LSSA.

YOU have the power to save & indeed re-build an important historical institution, thus improve the social & economic structure of a deprived area of OUR Leeds. It's on YOUR watch. PLEASE make a difference to a generation.