

Yatton RFC Statement re. Relocation of the Junior Pitches

(made to the members at the Yatton RFC 2015 AGM on 10th June 2015)

At the time of this statement no planning applications have been submitted and no permissions have been granted.

Background

On 1 January 2008 YRFC signed a 5 year lease to use the 4.6 acres of land owned by Children's Hospice South West (Hospice) situated next to the rugby club adjacent to the netball courts and bottom (floodlit) pitch.

The negotiations at the time referred to the use of the land as a sports field or as a hybrid sport field/agricultural land and as it has been used solely for rugby since 2008 and maintained by the rugby club it is 'deemed' sports field.

The Hospice has now granted an option on the field to Persimmon Homes.

It is the intention of Persimmon to apply for planning permission to build 83 new homes on the 4.6 acres plus 1.8 acres on the 'Grange' land (also owned by the Hospice).

If planning permission was granted Persimmon would buy the land and commence development.

Discussions

YRFC has been in discussion with Persimmon and the Hospice about the situation.

Everyone is aware of the objections being made against all the building developments in Yatton. However we are also all aware that current Government policy is to build new houses.

Sports England has been asked for advice. They are aware of developments of this nature on a national basis.

Sports England advice is that we (Yatton Rugby Club) try to aim for a 'win, win' situation. In their opinion if the landowner gets to sell his land and the developer gets to build his houses and the sports club gets replacement fields to at least the same standard in a convenient location, then they (Sports England) consider this to be acceptable in the current climate.

Sports England get automatic notification from North Somerset Council if a planning permission is submitted on playing fields. If it is 'rugby' fields then they automatically contact Jon Bendle at the RFU.

Persimmon is aware that one of the biggest objections to their planned development is building on playing fields. Therefore they consider they have to include in their planning application a proposal of what they would do to replace the fields.

The Proposal

Persimmon has been in negotiation with a local landowner/farmer. This landowner has several acres of land over the rhyne at the bottom of the '2nd pitch'

Persimmon's suggestion is that they would lease (x) acres which they would use to dump spoil/topsoil from other developments and build up and drain the land to a standard that would be useable as playing fields. They would build a bridge(s) across the

rhyne so that the land could be accessed from the rugby club land. There is also access to the 'new' fields from the Moor Road.

The rugby club has taken advice from people with expertise in such matters and the advice is that it would be possible to adapt what appears to be peaty/boggy land to a standard that would be acceptable.

Persimmon's intention is to have an area ready for use by May 2016.

The rugby club has a signed lease with the Hospice and could be asked to leave the Hospice land on a month's notice. This condition has been in the lease since it was signed in 2008. As part of the negotiations the Hospice has agreed that we can occupy the land until the end of April 2016. (end of 2015/16 season)

The suggestion is that the club vacate the 'hospice' land and use the 'rhyne' land from May 2016 or from the start of the 2016/17 season.

Further Considerations

It has not been discussed what would happen if the 'rhyne' land was not ready for use by the start of the 2016/17 season but development of the Hospice land had not commenced.

It has not been discussed if the hospice would ask the club to vacate the field if planning permission was refused.

It has not been discussed under what terms Yatton rugby club will use the 'rhyne' land.