

FRIENDS OF UDNEY PARK PLAYING FIELDS

NEWSLETTER No 2 – 1st DECEMBER 2014

Further to our Newsletter No 1 circulated Oct 8th, there follows a short update on progress since that date.

REGISTRATION AS A COMMUNITY ASSET

The team have applied to Richmond Council for the site to be registered as an Asset of Community Value. Thanks to the many of you who were willing to add your name to the application.

We are now dealing with the Council's requests for further information – in particular the names of current, past and future users of the site. You might like to know the list includes; Newland House School, Richmond Cricket Club, St James Cricket Club, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital Staff Cricket Club, Sheen Vets Football Club, Teddington Netball Club, Teddington Swans Netball Club, Kidscoach Soccer School, England RFU Sevens Squad, England Ladies RFU Sevens Squad, Macmillan Cancer Research Big Coffee Morning.

Please let us know if you know of any other past & potential users.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE

On 31 October two of the team met with Imperial's Chief Operating Officer, an Imperial College London (ICL) Board member responsible for all operations and property, and the staff member responsible for Marketing, Communications and PR.

It was a constructive meeting, which ended with a commitment from ICL to continue consultation with neighbours. ICL say they will begin marketing the site soon via Knight Frank, with expressions of interest and short-listing completed by the end of 2014. We suspect this timetable has already slipped. ICL plan to complete the disposal within 12 months. As an interested party, we have asked for a copy of the Sales Particulars.

ICL have refused to rule out some additional building on the playing fields. It may be that the biggest threat to maintaining the playing fields as they are comes from ICL itself. Buying the site in order to develop a large part of it for house building may be too big a risk for a purchaser, given the strong planning restrictions. ICL may be seeking to encourage a buyer to take a smaller risk by taking a chance on being able to build a smaller number of houses.

We hope the Council will shortly announce which site they would prefer for Turing House School. But, at present, building on Udney Park Playing Fields does not look like the front runner (although we cannot be sure until a site is found). We also think building a school on this site would be difficult to justify given the proximity of Collis School and the sheer scale of such a construction.

That said, it will be interesting to hear the Council's forthcoming announcement on the site agreed for Turing House School.

THE COVENANTS – “LEAVE IT IN THE CONDITION YOU FOUND IT”

There are covenants on the land that relate to possible resale and future use. A copy of the Title & Covenants thereon is attached. Only the courts can say what effect they might have, so many years on. But we think that ICL should in any case feel under a moral obligation to leave this as a green space used for sport; not a smaller space with additional new building encroaching on it. We say ICL should think about the legacy they leave behind in Teddington. They should leave this space as they found it. They should not seek to encourage buyers to see how much building they can get away with.

GREATER COMMUNITY USE IN THE FUTURE?

Sale of the site might involve consideration of opening up the playing fields to further community use. There would need to be proper consultation on this. However, we have already heard from a number of groups and clubs who would be interested. And it would be interesting to know about others. Do let us know.

WIDER REPRESENTATIONS

We have circulated the original Newsletter to all relevant local politicians. We have also submitted it to local media who have carried the story and our concerns. We are also in touch with the Teddington Society Planning Group.

PUBLIC MEETING

We hope to be able to organise a public meeting, possibly with ICL in attendance, once the sale particulars have been published. At that time we would propose a more formal structure of the Friends organisation.

Regards

The Friends of Udney Park Playing Fields Team

Keith Atkinson, Gareth Bullock, Nick Dexter, Mark Jopling, Phil Lawrence, Ian Lupson, Clare Mann, Harry Mann

Attachments--

Title & Covenants thereon Official Copy (Register) - MX50258.pdf
Site Plan