

WHITELEY PARISH COUNCIL PRESENTATION TO
WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY
19 JULY 2006

1. Madam Mayor and members of Winchester City Council thank you for the opportunity of speaking to you this evening on an issue that has tested the resolve of the Whiteley community. I will be fairly brief.

2. From the outset Whiteley Parish Council has done its utmost to capture the mood of the local community and since the County Council public meeting in February this year, opposition to their proposal to build a school on the Meadowside Recreation Land has continued to grow. This opposition can be reflected in the number of petitions that have already been handed to the City Council.

3. The position of the Parish Council and the majority of Whiteley residents is clear. A new primary school “Yes” but not on the Meadowside Recreation land which is the only open space in Whiteley, and which in the words of the National Playing Field Association “ is a shining example of sports development which is making a major contribution to the achievement of the City Council’s Cultural strategy and Government and Sport England’s targets for healthy exercise, increasing participation among young people and encouraging well qualified committed volunteers”. The NPFA also went on to say that all of these would be jeopardised if the Hampshire proposal goes ahead.

4. The majority of the local community feel that Hampshire County Council has grossly underestimated the strength of opposition to the use of the Meadowside land and other than a public meeting there has been no

face to face dialogue with local residents and the many users of the Meadowside in an attempt to allay concerns. Quite simply the County Council failed to appreciate that support for a school is quite different from building a school on much treasured and used recreation land.

5. The strength of opposition can be further reflected in the recent consultation exercise in which more than 85% of those Whiteley residents who responded to the City Council stated their opposition to the Hampshire County Council proposal. Indeed many of those residents who are against the use of Meadowside have children who would have benefited from the new school. Additionally a further petition containing 380 resident's signatures was handed to the City Solicitor's office last week. Perhaps I should add that those

opposed to the County scheme have also indicated a preference for a school being built in North Whiteley.

6. Since the Cabinet meeting on 10 July the residents of Whiteley have received a further communication from the County Council, which in effect places their failure on everyone except themselves for their lack of strategic planning. What is most disappointing however is that they have managed to insult many Whiteley residents by implying that we do not value children.

7. In summary therefore, the Parish Council welcomes the recommendation by Cabinet and the subsequent endorsement by the Principle Scrutiny Committee not to proceed with the appropriation and subsequent disposal of land at Meadowside. It is the right decision and the Parish Council looks forward to working closely with the City Council in pursuing the North

Whiteley land option. The Parish Council strongly urges Council to endorse the recommendations made by Cabinet on 10 July. Thank you.

MRE

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