

# Hanham Community Centre

## Press Release – Public Statement

4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2017

Following the recent 'front page' coverage in The Week In (issue 502) regarding the Hanham Community Centre Sports Ground on Abbots Road, the Trustees wish to clarify their position as well as highlight some inaccuracies in the somewhat confusing statements presented.

Since the public Hanham Abbots parish council meeting (held at Hanham Hall in March 2017), the Trustees have held three exploratory meeting with the developers to seek clarification over options; but have not made any firm commitments; nor have we had any further meetings since August 2017. As Trustees, we seek to maximise the assets and opportunities for the charity – and hence, if there is an opportunity to provide improved sporting facilities for the community of Hanham, it is our duty to consider it. Indeed, keeping the Sport Ground out of the green space may increase potential opportunities for the charity, either in the short or longer terms; and as such, we should do so to ensure we maximum future opportunities.

In regard to the article in last week's issue, which on reading more closely is rather confusing in its wording. Firstly, Mr & Mrs Goddard stated *““We were disappointed that Hanham cricket field (aka HCC Sports Ground) was not put forward for green space designation as it is a well-used and much-loved place in Hanham. However, the landowner objected and so it is not appropriate to be designated in the PSP”*. Even if we had objected (which we haven't), how does this makes it inappropriate to be designated in the PSP – nevertheless this is an incorrect statement, and the council have confirmed we have made no such objection, and were, in fact, not consulted to make such an objection. The source of their unreliable information would of course be interesting – and it's unfortunate this was not checked before the article was published. Staff at the centre have had to deal with some very angry residents since this article was published. The second confusion is a few paragraphs later, where Mr Skidmore (MP) seems to contradict the Goddard's by stating *“... the process seemed “remarkably undemocratic and unfair”. I collected 1,200 signatures versus the owner who requested that it come out as a green space. The minister has agreed to look into the process and will be writing back to me.”* the Trustees are not quite sure what he's trying to say here (could be typos), or what he thought was undemocratic (one hopes not the collection a few signatories), but he goes on to suggest the Trustees asked for the land to be included in the green space (i.e. come out as a green space). Both these quotes are somewhat ambiguous and out of context.

In summary - just to be clear, the Trustees will aim to keep as many options open as possible, and that would appear to be out of the green space. That doesn't mean you will see cricket or tennis moving anywhere else in the next 20 years, but it does mean the Trustees could look at opportunities to improve the sporting and/or community facilities in Hanham in the future - either on the current sites or on alternative local sites – and I would have thought this would be something our MP and councillors would want to support!

**Hanham Community Centre Trustees**