

## Disposal of Open Space at Rudloe

Dear Mr Gray,

*Reference the Wiltshire Council Legal Notice in the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald announcing the intention to dispose of open space to the north of Westwood Road, Rudloe, my objection follows.*

You should know that the open space, known locally as Rudloe Green, is the de facto village green of Rudloe Estate, the award-winning council estate completed in 1964. This estate replaced the prefab estate designated Hostel Site 14, one of many local estates built early in World War II for the 'immigrant' workers recruited for the local, underground factories and ammunition depots. The award for the 1964 estate cited its design, incorporating 80 flats, 26 maisonettes, mix of 2- and 3-bed family homes and retirement bungalows with a central green overlooked (and overseen) by one block of flats and other houses/maisonettes. As the award recognised, this overseeing of the central green enabled an early form of community watch whereby parents and neighbours could keep an eye on the estate's children at play - see below.



Extensive studies commissioned by previous local administrations have been lost in the anodyne blandishments of the Core Strategy. The North Wilts Open Space Study (was here: [http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/northwiltsopen\\_space\\_study.pdf](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/northwiltsopen_space_study.pdf) but is now 'lost' - however, I have a copy) designates Rudloe Green as Public Open Space (specifically a Local Park in para 4.41, table 8) within an area, Corsham and Rudloe, “**where the deficiencies of**

**Public Open Space are most acute”** (para 4.76). Also, the Wiltshire Open Spaces Study 2015 – 2026 (which may be found here: <https://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MTcvMDQwMDEvT1VULDEyMTQ5NDY=> ) in section 8.1.3 (Existing provision to be protected), states that "the starting point of any policy adopted by the Council should be that **all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required**". Rudloe Green is certainly 'required' - see the paragraphs on the village green application below.

Anticipating and dreading a future when Rudloe Green may be lost at the whim of authority that has little care for the prosperity of Rudloe (evidence: the disinformation to be found in the minutes of the June 2018 Cabinet meeting regarding anti-social behaviour directed at Rudloe Community Centre (RCC) - even now, four years since its closure, there has been no anti-social behaviour directed at RCC; at the same meeting, two Corsham councillors described Rudloe as "sad" and "deprived" - one of these councillors, who fights earnestly against developments in Corsham, supported the notion of more social housing at Rudloe - an area not in his parish!), 105 local people supported the 2019 application to have Rudloe Green to be assigned village green status (as indicated above, it already has that status, de facto, but this application was seen as necessary to protect it from disposal and development). A summary and consolidation of the 105 representations for the village green application is attached - you may see the strength of feeling about their beloved green embodied in the words of local people.

You may know that notwithstanding the strong case advanced, the application was returned because Wiltshire Council had just lost a 'village green' case in the Court of Appeal, the upshot of which was that no (future) village green applications could be accepted if the proposed green was within a settlement boundary. On the face of it, this was a quite ridiculous judgement as by their very nature (most) village greens would be at the heart of a settlement, as was/is ours.



Para. 34 of the June 2018 Cabinet minutes includes the following: *'The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, which allows the Council to disposal of the Council's interest in*

*the land where the Council considers such disposal will help to secure the promotion or **improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area*** (my bolding). None of these aspects will be 'improved' by this proposal. Certainly, during the 3-year timescale of the demolitions and construction of the proposed development, **the social and environmental impact will be catastrophic**. Whilst you may consider this to be an aspect to be addressed in the planning process, I believe that this is of such importance that it should be considered now, before extensive reports on a planning application are commissioned and representations made. GreenSquareAccord (GSA) has published the plan for its supposed Rudloe Regeneration project - it demonstrates a complete lack of consideration of social and environmental concerns. The timetable for the 'regeneration' will be as follows:

- In years 1 and 2 - demolish the 20-year-old, £800k Rudloe Community Centre and build 25+ homes on Rudloe Green
- In years 2 and 3 - relocate existing tenants from the 25 homes to be demolished to the homes built on Rudloe Green
- In years 2 and 3 - demolish the 25 homes vacated
- In years 2 and 3 - build the remaining homes (of the 51 proposed in total) of the regeneration plan in the area of the demolished homes
- In year 3 - create a promised green space principally in the area between these new homes

With Rudloe Green lost, where does GSA propose that the children of the estate play, particularly the children of the 80 flats which, naturally, have no gardens or, indeed, the children of the 26 maisonettes which have limited garden space? GSA has not considered this aspect of their plan which will be socially and environmentally disastrous. And there can be no mitigation - **but not only that**, with play space lost, the estate will be a demolition and building site for up to three years. With just one entrance/exit to this estate of 250 homes, a school and a nursery school, the demolition and construction traffic may be a prescription for disaster or at the very least, mishaps.

Even after these **lost years of recreation** for the estate's residents, but particularly the children, the GSA proposal for a replacement green space of equal, or larger, size does not stand up to analysis. The map attached shows the current green space (including Rudloe Green itself) at 2.22 acres; GSA's proposed 'green' is calculated at 1.67 acres.

It is imperative that the open space known as Rudloe Green is not disposed of and that it remains Rudloe Green, a de facto village green, part of an award-winning estate, used and enjoyed for generations by Rudloe Estate residents and others.

Sincerely

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