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Newbury Community Football Group

Community Groups says that Judicial Review proves that West Berks Council still has no plan for a replacement of the football ground they closed 5 years ago - and urges a review of “wasteful” Sports Hub plans

Newbury Community Football Group (NCFG), a Community Interest Company who have been campaigning for many years to save Newbury’s local Football Ground have urged West Berks Council to scale back their plans for a £10m “Sports Hub” at Newbury Rugby Club, now it has been confirmed through a Judicial Review that the plans are not a replacement for the Football Ground in Faraday Road that the Council closed in 2018.

In a statement NCFG said:

Whilst the outcome of the Judicial Review went against the Claimant, the positive news is that the case does provide absolute clarity that the Council’s Monks Lane proposals are definitely and irrefutably NOT a replacement for the Faraday Road Football Ground that they needlessly closed 5 years ago.

A key question for West Berks Council to answer now, is why are they spending £10m and committing to a 40-year lease on a facility that provides limited access to local community sports groups, when a replacement 3G pitch-only scheme could be provided on the site for around £1m without the need to rent any land or pay huge annual subsidies to the Rugby Club.

Other pressing questions are:

- Why are there still no plans for a replacement football ground for Faraday Road, which has been closed for nearly 5 years?
- Why is the Council still enforcing a ban on organised children’s football at the Faraday Road football pitch?
- Why can’t the Faraday Road football pitch be re-opened with temporary changing rooms and toilets?

Lee McDougall from NCFG said:

“Regrettably each of the 1,666 days from when the Council closed the football ground until the Judicial review was a day when the local community could not use their local football pitch, despite the Council’s own Playing Pitch Strategy advising that they are at least 8 full-size football size short in the area.

To spend £10m of tax-payers money and commit to a 40 year lease on the scheme at Monks Lane is wasteful and offers very poor value for local tax-payers and sports groups, we urge the Council to scale back their plans at Monks Lane and use the saved capital to invest in building at least 4 other 3G pitches in West Berks, including utilising the Planning Consent they unanimously gave Newbury Community Football Group for a 3G pitch at Faraday Road in November 2022”

Newbury Community Football Group www.ncfg.uk



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