**Report of Hathersage Skate Park Consultation**

An Open Morning was held on 9th March 2013 where plans for the proposed skate park were made available for members of the public to view and ask questions. This had been well publicised by posters through the village; items in the Hathersage News; fliers to residents distributed through the school and businesses; and individual letters of invitation were hand delivered to every one of the 70 properties in the immediate vicinity of the Playing Field, the proposed location.

Hathersage has approximately 1,162 electors on the register.

Eight letters/emails of objection were received with a total of 19 signatories. The following report consolidates the objections and concerns listed, and gives a response to each.

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|  | **Objection/Concerns Raised** | **Response** |
| 1. | Fields In Trust legislation – disruption to neighbours should be considered. Any equipment should be a minimum of 30m away from surrounding properties – anything less results in a loss in amenity. | These issues have been researched in depth with regard to Planning Legislation, Fields in Trust advice, RoSPA guidelines and general legal principles. There is no guideline in place for existing playing fields, and ‘loss of amenity’ is not defined. The overall benefits for the community are taken into account. It is the clearly stated intention of the skate park group that all appropriate measures will be taken to mitigate against disruption to neighbours, see Noise Assessment below. |
| 2. | Noise levels – mentioned in all letters of objection. Noise assessment requested. | Environmental Health advise that the requirement in this area is that noise levels are not “unreasonable”.  The 2nd proposal was put forward in response to the 1st consultation, to increase the distance from neighbouring houses. The chosen surface – concrete- is also the quietest option. A Noise Assessment has now been completed and the findings summary states – “The assessment shows that the environmental noise impact should be reasonable with the proposed noise control measures, including the layout of the facility formed in concrete and set into the landscape.” |
| 3. | Under the Public Sector Equality Duty what measures have been taken to assess this development to ensure that it will not have a negative impact on any particular group of disabled people? | The development is planned in an existing playing field area.  The playing field is also surrounded by/in the vicinity of the outdoor pool, bowling green, hard courts and band stand. There is no discrimination to any particular group of people. See also note 2. re Noise Assessment. |
| 4. | Infringement of Human Right Act – specifically that people have the right to enjoy their property peacefully. | The development is planned in an existing playing field area.  The playing field is also surrounded by/in the vicinity of the outdoor pool, bowling green, hard courts and band stand, already a public recreation area. In terms of Human Rights, the overall benefits for a community would be taken into account. The Noise Assessment shows that environmental noise impact should be reasonable. |

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| 5. | Risk of head trauma/spinal injury. Has the development been assessed by the ambulance service? Access for emergency vehicles – ROSPA guidelines? | RoSPA guidelines have been considered in detail and will be taken proper account of. As the development is in an existing playing field area there is good vehicular access for the emergency services. The Committee will recommend that there is a sign installed advising that users wear safety gear. In addition the close proximity of houses means that adult help would be more likely to be on hand in the event of any accident.  Guidelines specify that there is less risk of serious injury to skate boarders where a skate park is provided compared to skate boarding in other public areas. The post code will be made clearly available for emergency vehicles access. |
| 6. | Possible marginalisation of younger children currently using the playing field. They may be driven away by the presence of older children. | At present there is little provision for older children in the village – it is important that we provide facilities for them also.  They frequently use the park to play football often encouraging younger children to join in. In Hathersage there is generally a good relationship between the older and younger children. There seems to be an assumption that younger children will not use the facility. Visits to a wide range of skate parks have shown that these facilities are used by children of all ages. In addition the design proposed is more suitable for younger children than the “ramp” types. |
| 7. | Other sites should be considered. | The Committee has spent significant time looking into other sites. There are no other sites which provide as safe an environment as the playing field which is surrounded by houses and is in the heart of the village, in line with RoSPA recommendations. Indeed the areas that the children are currently using for scootering etc. are wholly unsuitable and unsafe – the Oddfellows Rd car park and the Memorial Hall car park. There is very little Parish Council owned land available to provide an alternative and there is no more suitable alternative. |
| 8. | Visual amenity and impact, change in existing character of location. | The Committee has gone to considerable lengths, obtaining various designs from different companies, to ensure that the proposal is visually in keeping with the existing playing field. The 1st proposal (in the corner of the field) was chosen specifically to retain the majority of the turfed area. The 2nd proposal is a compromise following objections about proximity to houses on Oddfellows Rd. The planned area (2nd proposal) would be landscaped and all but a very small part recessed into the ground. The second proposal does not involve any removal of existing trees. |
| 9. | The second proposal involves the loss of half the existing football pitch. | As part of the proposal the Committee will ensure that there is still a significant area for the children to play football and other games/activities. In addition, as part of the works, the drainage of the existing area will be addressed – this has been a considerable problem on the pitch in the past. |

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| 10. | The risk of increased traffic and parking on surrounding roads. | The skate park will be considerably smaller compared to other skate parks nearby. The committee envisages the Hathersage skate park is likely to be used by local children who do not have transport to some of the larger parks.  Older children and people travelling from outside the area would probably still travel to the larger skate parks (e.g. Tideswell or Millhouses) |
| 11. | Worries about hours of use and the impact on surrounding properties. | Older children use the park sometimes during anti-social hours – this has and will continue to happen **on occasion.**  The Committee has stressed that the area will continue to be without additional lighting to discourage use late in the evenings. CCTV could also be considered – linked to the swimming pool system. Provision of this type for older children is essential, and a skate park is specified in the village plan – it is vital that we cater for all children of the village. |
| 12. | Lack of supervision. | The playing field is currently an unsupervised area – there would be no change. The majority of skate parks are unsupervised. The safest area for a skate area to be situated in Hathersage is in the playing field as it is surrounded by houses and is in constant use, as mentioned in RoSPA guidelines. |
| 13. | Movement of football pitch closer to footpath could cause safety issues for pedestrians. | The Committee do not believe that the movement of the pitch would raise significant safety concerns for users of the footpath. However, there are alternative routes for pedestrians if they feel the footpath would be unsafe. |
| 14. | Drainage of the proposed skate area. Request for professional assessment? | Drainage has been considered and a soak away is currently proposed. Tests would be undertaken to check this was suitable before the scheme design was finalised. The Committee also intends to improve the current drainage problems on the football pitch as part of the scheme. |
| 15. | Absence of toilet facilities. | There are no existing facilities in the playing field and there are no plans to change that. There are public toilets situated less than half a mile, i.e. less than 5 minutes away. A sign could be installed to direct users to the public toilets. |
| 16. | Village plan states the need for an outside shelter and provision for bikes and skate boards. | The proposed plans are for a universal use area – i.e. can be used by bikes, skateboards and scooters. The decision has been taken not to include an outside shelter, at the moment, to discourage any anti-social behaviour. |
| 17. | Access to the park via private lane in between houses on Crossland Rd. | There are many other access points to the playing field and the introduction of the skate park would not significantly increase pedestrian traffic to this lane. |
| 18. | Have the National Playing Field Association been notified of the proposed change? | This is a matter for the Trustees of King George’s Field. They will deal with it appropriately. |
| 19. | Potential impact that the proposed facility would have on the value of existing houses. | This is a proposed additional provision within an existing public recreationfacility. |
| 20. | Provision should be made for the future maintenance of the skate area. | The Parish Council has budgeted appropriately. |
| 21. | Regular inspection reports | The playing field is inspected on a regular basis for insurance purposes. This will continue and RoSPA guidelines for skate parks will be taken proper account of. |
| 22. | Insurance | Existing insurance company will cover. |
| 24. | Why are Bikes and scooters allowed in the playing field? | There has never been a rule to say bikes and scooters are not permitted in the playing field. |
| 25. | Winter Icing of the facility | The risk is the same as it is for the rest of the facility, and RoSPA guidelines will be taken account of. |
| 26. | Littering | There are existing bins; the caretaker frequently inspects the facility. |
| 27 | Professional risk assessment | There will be a professional post-installation inspection and regular site inspections following RoSPA guidelines. |