

ANNUAL COUNCIL - 13 MAY 2014

ITEM 8 – QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

QUESTION TO COUNCILLOR T J PENDLETON

Basketball Court, Lillehammer Drive, Coalville:

- How long will the games area be closed because me and my friends have nowhere to play ball games
- How will the Council talk to me and my friends about what happens next to make sure it's right for us

Submitted by: Justin Crawford, 63 Adam Morris Way, Coalville.

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR T J PENDLETON

I would like to start by thanking Justin for asking these questions and for coming here tonight. Justin, I will answer your questions directly but I do need to explain the issues briefly for everyone here tonight.

The Council approved a housing development on the old Coalville Tec/Stephensons College site in 2005 and as part of the scheme it approved a Multi Use Games Area. The games area was the last part of the development to be completed and it started to be used in January 2013.

Since its opening the Council has been receiving regular complaints from the surrounding neighbours of the games area and the Police have received over 58 reports of Anti Social Behaviour.

I must say at this point that in many cases it is alleged the poor behaviour came from young adults who did not live on the estate. I also must say the games area has been used by residents and children on many occasions without any Anti-Social Behaviour.

However, some of the issues are unavoidable as they are caused by the design of the games area which creates high levels of noise from normal ball games activity and also from balls leaving the court and entering/damaging neighbouring property.

The District Council, the Police and the County Council have tried various things to reduce the Anti Social Behaviour including attendance from the County Council's Impact Team and by increasing the police presence.

The games area is currently owned and maintained by Barratts as part of the housing development.

The Council did attend a meeting on 17 March between Barratts and the surrounding neighbours to hear about the issues they were having.

Following the meeting a letter was received from the Police outlining their views and also from Barratts requesting a temporary closure to the games area to give respite from the anti-social behaviour issues for the surrounding neighbours.

The Council in response agreed the following;

- Temporary closure of the games area through fencing it off, to provide immediate respite for the surrounding neighbours. This action had the full support of the Police and the local ward members.
- Agreement for the fencing to remain for a maximum of 6 months providing a planning application is received by 4 June detailing proposals for the future use of the area.
- If no application is received by this date the Council reserves its right to consider action against Barratts for breach of the legal agreement to provide the facility.

The Council has not yet received an application from Barratts with any proposals for the future use of the area.

If an application is received by the Council normal planning consultation processes will be followed but in addition the Council will arrange a separate meeting with the young people to explain the application, its proposals and listen to their views.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Legrys for raising the matter with the Council through his locality work and supporting the Council in seeking to resolve the anti social behaviour issues.

Justin, I did say that I would answer your questions directly and thank you for your patience whilst I explained the background to this issue.

So Question 1) – How long will the games area remain closed?

It will be closed for up to 6 months (until mid October) that is if we receive some proposals by 4 June. If we don't receive any proposals we will meet to decide what to do next. The proposals may include changes to the games area or moving the games area somewhere else but we don't know yet.

Which leads me to your Question 2) – How will we talk to you and your friends about what happens next?

We will contact you and your friends (through your parents) and we will arrange to meet you to explain and discuss any proposals which we are waiting for. We don't have any at the moment but when we do, you will be hearing from us again and you can then tell us what you think of them.

Finally, I would again like to thank you Justin for asking the questions, for listening tonight and for coming along to our meeting, thank you.