

LITTLE BADDOW PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH MEETING

A Parish Meeting was held in The Memorial Hall on Thursday 1st November 2007 at 7pm. It had been called to discuss the '**Implications of the Application to register the Sports Field as a Village Green**'

Chairman: Mr J Robinson
Mr. Alan Morley *Open Spaces Society.* Mr Nigel Farthing, *Solicitor*

In Attendance: Mr R Shepherd MBE Parish Clerk

As this was a Parish Meeting only the electorate of Little Baddow were allowed to speak should they so wish. Each member of the electorate was issued with an orange card that indicated they were a resident of the Parish.

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

Apologies for absence were received from: -

Councillor T J Thorogood, Councillor J Roberts and Mrs Mary Klaber.

Present.

Councillor M Buckley, Councillor T Clayton, Councillor C Hodgson, Councillor J Rigler, Councillor K Ferguson, Councillor S Johnson, County Councillor P Martin and **160** members of the Parish.

The Chairman outlined to the meeting that an application had been lodged by Dr. Michael Tubbs of Parsonage Farm Parsonage Lane Little Baddow to register the Sports Field as a Village Green. In order that an unbiased presentation could be given both Mr. Morley and Mr. Farthing, who were part of the panel, were from outside the Parish.

The meeting then commenced with a presentation by **Mr Alan Morley** who appraised the meeting with the benefits of having the Sports Field registered as a Village Green.

The benefits were as follows:

- (a) The protection of the open space for development in the future (unless the land was compulsorily purchased)
- (b) A village green is described as 'an area of land for local people to indulge in lawful sports and pastimes' but other people may use them to.
- (c) No part of the green may be fenced off and no buildings may be put up on the green.
- (d) Events may be held on the Green (providing not for commercial gain) and providing no damage is caused to the green.
- (e) To make the best use of a green it was essential that local people got together and discussed how best the green could be used.
- (f) Once a village green has been so designated it cannot be lifted.

Mr Nigel Farthing then outlined the legal technicalities in such an application and that there were limited grounds on which to register objections should anyone wish to do so. His opinion was that the Sports Ground would come under the definition of a Class 'C' Village Green and that the application would be rejected if it could not be demonstrated that a significant number of local residents had used the area for at least 20 years "as of right"

rather than with permission. If the registration were accepted by the Registration Authority (Essex County Council) then the following would apply: The Village Green could only be used for 'lawful sports and pastimes'

- (a) The Parish Council would lose control of the land.
- (b) The current booking system for the use of the Sports Field could not be relied upon and any inhabitants would be entitled to use the Village Green as and when they wished.
- (c) No fee could be legally charged for the use of the Village Green
- (d) Tennis Courts-with enclosed netting-could be legally installed on the Village Green, subject to planning permission.
- (e) Temporary fencing such as around a wicket- was a debateable point - and persons could, if they so wished, occupy the pitch area
- (f) No vehicles may be driven or parked on the Village Green.

The following members of the Parish then put various questions to the panel, or made statements to the meeting:

Mr Paul Jackson of North Hill	Councillor S Johnson
Lady Stewart of North Hill	Mrs V Briggs North Hill
Mr. Sargeant of Jarvis Field	Dr. Peggy Garrett of North Hill
Mr. David Martin The Ridge	Dr. Michael Tubbs Parsonage Lane
Mr Michael Cassell Spring Elms Lane	Mr Andrew Dodd Chestnut Walk
Mrs T Brewer Brambles North Hill	Mrs Sian Hurrell Colam Lane
Mrs M Cartwright The Ridge	Mrs Jenny Spencer Spring Close
Councillor Clayton Mill House	Mrs Ann Jones Birkenshaw The Ridge
Mrs Ann Brocklebank Graces Lane	Mrs Jenny Russell North Hill
Mr Richard Godden Jarvis Field	Mr. Ralph Davies The Rysley
Councillor J Rigler Poleighs	Mr Eugene Bryan Darcy Rise
Mr Brian Luscombe The Cottage	County Councillor Peter Martin
Mrs Harriet Middelboe Postmans Lane	Mrs Felicity Coxhead North Hill
Mr Mark McCullum The Ryefield	Mr Peter Irvine Riffhams Chase
Mr. Paul Buckley The Ridge	Mr G Lennard The Ryefield
Mr.Dennis Mills Tanglewood.	

Financial Implications

Councillor Ferguson addressed the meeting as the Councillor responsible for the Finance for the Parish. The income from the letting out of the Sports facilities was some 15% of the Councils income and should this be lost because of Village Green status he would have to consider increasing the precept to cover any shortfall.

Both Mr Morley and Mr Farthing summed up their views and were thanked by the Chairman for their assistance. This vote of thanks was endorsed by all those present. The Chairman stated that the Council would consider the matter at the Council meeting on 8th November and would come to a decision.

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm.

Chairman