

Mrs SUSAN MACDONALD

I fully support this application for the Bath Recreation ground to be granted as a Town Green for many reasons.

I have personally been aware of the continual campaign to attempt changing the covenants so that the Rec. can become a big business and commercial asset by the past and now present owners of the club for more than a decade. I even attended a meeting around 2002 that launched a design and plan for a three storey roman style amphitheatre at the rugby club suites. I never heard any more about this plan, and then was surprised when I received the recent invitation through my door with an offer to attend the 'first time' opportunity to consult with the public on plans for the Rec. by the rugby club- have they forgotten this last time? For me, as a real citizen of Bath, living in the city since 1997, the issue is a simple one. The legal opinion that has been presented here with a recommendation to reject this TV Green application is just that - a Barristers opinion and drafted by the Barrister based on a brief he has been given, it is not legal judgement, which only a judge can do. The only judgement made regarding the Rec, has been the High Court ruling, which would likely support this TVG application. I would urge that to take this forward it would be in all parties' interests to seek an independent review, with proper public consultation in a public enquiry, as this has never been done. Why?

When Captain Forester bequeathed the Rec. in 1922, he did not give away his own personal property, a valuable asset then, and considerably more valuable today, so that a commercial business would solely benefit from his generosity. What position do you think his descendants would be in today if they owned the Rec? His intentions were made very clear, and have been outlined in the documents supporting the application at length, as we have all read them.

We have talked today a lot about words and their meaning. Again my point is a simple one. This is also about the word 'trust'. He bequeathed his property into a trust - he trusted that his actions and intentions would be upheld by those trustees forever and they have been entrusted to ensure that his intentions are followed. This is why so far, despite considerable sums of money and full time legal staff employed to try to find a chink in the legal conditions and two very wealthy owners, it has not been so easy to get hold of the Rec. for exclusive use by Bath Rugby.

Access to the Rec. was intended to be free and open to all of us Bath Citizens- completely contrary to accessing the rugby on the Rec. where I would have to pay around £40 per person for 15 home games in a season- not very inclusive, is it?

I know too that women's rugby and the children's mini rugby are also not allowed to play on the hallowed Rec. pitch - only the male teams, primarily if not exclusively from anywhere but Bath - pretty exclusive of many citizens don't you think?

Today we can see a new mock up designs for the new rugby building, I think Prince Charles would refer to this as the 'Boil of Bath' - and in a World Heritage city. That aside, do you have any idea what 17000+ people looks like? How will the city centre cope with this volume of people, traffic, and rubbish in the centre? I laugh out loud when I hear that 'wives' will go shopping when their husbands are at the Rugby if it remains at the Rec. The idea that Bath Rugby fans would not travel to any other venue than the Rec. to see their team play is ridiculous, most of the current audience travel into the city already, and I am sure they would be just as happy to go to another venue, more in tune with facilities they claim they need. If you have visited purpose built out of town venues such as the O2 and Olympic village in London, you would see the plus side of these venues in an instant when compared to the inner city venues, and London is a far bigger place to accommodate large crowds. Why should those of us that use the Rec. be forced to tramp off to the muddy flood plain at Lambridge to wade around on a substitute and substandard Rec, already rejected by the rugby club, when we have a wonderful, sunny, flat land that is ours already by right, in the centre of our city?

Each day look out of my window and see so many different activities on the Rec.- joggers, dog walkers, kite flyers, kids playing footy, tennis in the summer, croquet, volleyball, lacrosse, jumble sales, cricket, the bath half marathon and even a triathlon used to be held here . Just as Captain Forester intended, when he put his property and his trust in you all sitting here today.

You have a duty to respect the rules.