

Future of Approach Golf Course

Statement for 22nd July Cabinet Meeting

Patricia Ludlam

I am representing Sion Hill and Summerhill Road Residents Association concerning the future of the Approach Golf Course.

Sion Hill borders the northern side of the Golf Course on High Common and many of our properties have boundaries with the Common and access gates onto it. Other properties overlook the Course.

Because of this very close association with the Common and hence the Golf Course, Sion Hill residents are particularly concerned about any change that could affect the land that has been here as a wonderful green and open space, for over a century. Golf has been played here for 60 years and with careful management of the land for golf, a tranquil setting has been maintained that walkers and golfers can enjoy in harmony.

Our residents want the golf to continue on the 18-hole course. We appreciate the financial constraints but note that the Approach Course actually made a profit 3 years ago and with good management and enterprise could surely do so again. Golf is played on the Approach by young and old and seems popular with students.

The Course is now closed, and we are told is unlikely to open until a new operator has taken over. As this could take months, we are concerned that the lack of management of the site has led to anti-social behaviour.

During Lockdown, High Common has been enjoyed by large numbers of residents who have come for exercise, picnics or just admiring the wonderful views from the top. Golf is still played by those who have their own clubs, although with some difficulty when people are sitting on the greens.

Unfortunately, there have been groups, mostly youths, who spoil it all. Some bring bikes and ride around the greens, later racing down the Course at speed. Others noisily set up football games on the greens. Groups of young people gather in the evening and often stay on after dusk sometimes until midnight, drinking, playing loud music, and creating a disturbance.

There are no controls in place that one can refer to. There used to be a sign saying 'no cycling' on the Course, but this has been removed. We urge the Council to address the problem of the anti-social behaviour occurring during this interim period. New signs, with restrictions such as seen for the Botanical Gardens could be installed at the entrances.

Thank you