

**Wiltshire Council**

**Western Area Planning Committee**

**17 June 2020**

---

**Item 7a - Application to Register Land Known as 'Great Lees Field' Off Pound Lane, Semington, as a Town or Village**

**Public Statement 1 – SUPPORT – Dr William Scott**

Thank you Mr Chairman.

I am speaking on behalf of the Friends of Great Lees Field.

This is the group of Semington villagers that made the application for the field to be granted village green status.

We've studied Mr Webster's report in detail and we have three points to make in relation to the decision you're faced with today.

The first is that we understand that you will likely decide to accept the recommendation made in the report. We don't intend to try to persuade you that you should not do so.

The second is that we'll not be making any attempt to overturn the decision you reach as we have always said that we'd accept the outcome of the inquiry process.

The third point is to say that, despite all this, we and many villagers are very disappointed by one aspect of the public inquiry process. The rest of our statement refers to this point.

You will have seen from paragraphs 52 to 58 of the report that, midway through the inquiry, and with the assistance of our legal teams, an agreement was reached between ourselves and the landowners.

We'd reached agreement in principle that we would withdraw the application in exchange for the landowners granting a right of way around the perimeter of the field, with permissive access to the rest of the field outside the growing season.

There would also be a new pedestrian (and dog) access to the field from Pound Lane.

This agreement solved the problem we faced as it would give villagers a legal right to use the field for recreation, and it protected the landowners' right to develop the field at some point in the future.

Jointly, our legal teams asked Wiltshire Council for an adjournment in order to work out the fine details of the agreement.

This was turned down by officers on “public interest” grounds, although it was never clear who the public was whose interests were being protected.

We say this because we consulted all 66 households who were party to our original application and none objected to our strategy.

We regret that a local process that established positive lines of communications, and turned antagonism into co-operation, was rejected by officers who had no understanding of matters on the ground.

We also regret the additional costs that were needlessly incurred by ourselves, the landowners, and by Wiltshire Council taxpayers.

We hope that a review of such processes can be put in place.  
Thank you.

William Scott

On behalf of the Friends of Great Lees Field

**Wiltshire Council**

**Western Area Planning Committee**

**17 June 2020**

---

**Item 7a - Application to Register Land Known as 'Great Lees Field' Off Pound Lane, Semington, as a Town or Village**

**Public Statement 2 – SUPPORT – William Stuart-Bruges**

Committee Meeting on 17th June 2020, in support of the Officer's Report in item 7a, recommending acceptance of the Inspector's Report and rejection of the Application to register Great Lees Field Semington as a Town and Village Green).

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My nephew and I hold this land in Trust for several members of our family. We currently farm the land ourselves - maize, winter wheat and rape.

This Village Green Application has had to be defended by us privately. The process has taken nearly 4 years and has been very time-consuming, costly and stressful for us.

We have always wanted to make sure that the village should benefit from any future development of this site, part of which was given for Council Housing in the 1950s.

We look forward to future discussions, in good faith, with the Applicants in conjunction with Semington Parish Council.

We would like to thank your Rights of Way and Countryside Department staff for the thoroughly professional way in which they have conducted this matter.

The Inspector's decision is very clear, well-reasoned and firmly based in the facts presented to him. There would seem to be no reason for you to disagree with any of his findings. We hope, therefore, that you will accept and endorse them.

Thank you.

William Stuart-Bruges

**Wiltshire Council**

**Western Area Planning Committee**

**17 June 2020**

---

**Item 7a - Application to Register Land Known as 'Great Lees Field' Off Pound Lane, Semington, as a Town or Village**

**Public Statement 3 – Peter Smith, Vice-Chairman Semington PC**

Mr Chairman,

I am writing on behalf of the Semington Parish Council.

Prior to the village green application, members of the council were aware that Great Lees Field had been used extensively for recreation by people living in the village. This is borne out by Mr Webster's findings.

For this reason, the Parish Council supported the application along with over 100 parishioners.

What emerged during the enquiry was that high number of villagers used the perimeter of the field for walking and dog walking.

An agreement was reached in principle by both applicants and objectors which recognised this perimeter usage. Under this agreement, a right of way would be granted around the perimeter of the field, with access from Pound Lane, and the village green application would be withdrawn. This was a commonsense solution which was supported by parishioners.

Although your officers felt unable to support what villagers and the objectors wanted, the Parish Council hopes very much that the spirit of this compromise can be carried forward by applicants and objectors.

Thank you.

Peter Smith, Vice-Chairman, Semington Parish Council