

Jo'L (S) 18/04/057/OUT

Dear Linda; re Chard Town FC

PLANNING APPLICATION 18/04/057/OUT.

MOUNT HINDRANCE - CHARD



You will no doubt be aware that the above was not approved by Area West at the meeting recently and will now be referred to the Regulation Committee on the 18 Feb 2020.

I know the application was recommended for approval by the Council's Officers. It failed by the casting vote of the Chairman, Jason Baker Mayor of Chard!!

I've taken it on myself to forward a copy of the attached to each member of the Regulation Committee. Regards

Mr Brian Beer
60 Glanvill Avenue,
Chard,
Somerset, TA20 1BU
14 January 2020

To all Members of the Regulation Committee
South Somerset District Council.

Ref: Planning Application - 18/04057/OUT – Mount Hindrance Lane Site Chard.

Dear Sir/Madam

I recently spoke in support of the above Application at the Area West Planning Meeting held in the Guildhall, Chard when I explained the urgent need of Chard Town Football Club to relocate and the fact that for over 30 odd years the Club has made repeated representation to the Town and District Councils in respect of the Club's dire situation. The allocated time of 3 minutes does not afford sufficient time to provide evidence of the Club's efforts over the years and the effect it has had on the Club's future, hence my written attached report on the various sites and opportunities that have come and gone over that period.

The Mount Hindrance proposal affords the chance for the Club to be relocated together with the provision of other pitches to rectify the shortfall of pitches required for the Town. As regards traffic movement the site is ideally located with the access point directly off the Business Park and linking with the A358 Furnham Road. Recent evidence from your own Officers have stated that Chard is short of 4 Senior, 3 Junior and 2 Mini pitches according to the Playing Field Strategy together with the fact that a 3G pitch should also be included for the Chard, Ilminster & Crewkerne area.

Whilst I Understand that there are aspirations to relocate the Club on the Key Site area the question is when or where – No site has been identified and therefore no timescale. That in my opinion is too late for the future of Chard Town Football Club as it could be "Light Years" away.

Just over 4 years ago the Football Association gave notice to the Club the need to have a ground in compliant with F A rules to continue to play at Step 6 (The Western League) The previous Planning Application at Mount Hindrance was put forward and the Football Association at that time gave the Club time to at least have an Outline Planning approval in place with the support of the Member Clubs of the Western League. That extension expired on 31 March 2019. It should be borne in mind the current Planning Application was submitted to your council in December 2018. (See the attached received from the Football Association 17 May 2019). The exclusion of the Club from Step 6 has had a detrimental effect on the Club. Nearly all the senior players have left the Club to continue to play at Step 5 or Step 6 with other Western League Clubs. Furthermore 4 years ago the Football Association excluded the Club from competing in the F A Cup, F A Vase and F A Youth Cup due to the ground not compliant.

From a financial point of view the Club have lost income a minimum 10K to 50K over the four years through match prize monies and participation in these competitions has denied the Youth team the opportunity to play at a National level. In addition, the Club has also lost the Toolstation Sponsorship money, all of which would have helped the Club finance the provision of football in the Town of Chard.

There is much more I could put in writing regarding the situation, all I can do is to ask you all to give serious consideration to the Planning Application for the future of football in Chard and also bearing in mind this area at Mount Hindrance will no doubt be developed sometime in the future.

Yours faithfully

Brian Beer



ME/1819/170519/001

Adrian Clifford

Chard Town FC

Sent by email to: [REDACTED]

Step 6 status – Chard Town FC

17 May 2019

Dear Adrian,

We are writing following a meeting of The FA's Leagues Committee held on Tuesday 14 May 2019 where the Clubs' continuation at Step 6 of the National League System was discussed. We thank the Club for its various submissions and contributions from both the Western Football League and Somerset County Football Association.

The Committee discussed this matter at length and concluded by deciding that the Club are to be relegated to Step 7 on the following grounds:

- The Clubs' current ground does not meet the full G Grade, owing to the pitch having too steep a gradient
- The Club are yet to receive accepted planning permission for any new site
- The Gantt chart provided suggests that any development would not be completed until the close season in 2022, at the earliest
- When drafting the club allocations, the Committee needed to relegate a club from the Western League. It was deemed unfair to relegate a fully compliant G grade club at the expense of a club that did not comply

I appreciate that this will not be the decision that the Club had hoped for but we hope that the above provides an explanation, particularly the final point above.

Any appeal in relation to this decision can be made in accordance with FA Regulations, to the Judicial Services department within 7 days of this communication by emailing [REDACTED] and making payment of the necessary appeal fee.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Matt Edkins
National League System Manager
on behalf of The FA's Leagues Committee

Mr Brian Beer,
60 Glanvill Avenue,
Chard,
Somerset, TA20 1BU
16 January 2020

Councillor Val Keitch,
Leader of South Somerset District Council,
1 Heron Way,
Ilminster,
Somerset, TA19 0BX.

Dear Councillor,

As the leader of the Council and an Area West Member I feel it common courtesy for me to furnish you with the written representations I have submitted to each member of the Regulation Committee regarding the situation concerning Chard Town Football Club in respect of the Planning Application 18/04057/OUT Mount Hindrance Lane Site, Chard.

I understand that the meeting of the Regulation Committee arranged for Tuesday 21 January 2020 has been cancelled and has now been rearranged for the Tuesday 18 February 2020.

May I thank you for your support at the Area West Planning meeting when the application was refused by the casting vote of the Chairman who is also Mayor of Chard but could not support Chard Town Football Club despite their efforts for relocation for well over 30 years.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Beer

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of three horizontal strokes of varying lengths, positioned to the right of the printed name 'Brian Beer'.

Brian Beer
60 Glanvill Avenue,
Chard,
Somerset, TA20 1BU
16 January 2020

Mr. Marcus Fysh,
Conservative M.P. for Yeovil,
22 High Street,
Yeovil.
Somerset, BA20 1RF

Dear Mr. Fysh,

Firstly, congratulations on your re-election as the M. P. for the Yeovil Constituency.

As you are aware Chard Town Football Club is experiencing considerable problems regarding relocation from its Zembard Lane site in Chard which is not now compliant with F A Regulations. Whilst I accept that Planning issues are up to the Local Authority, I feel you should be aware of the Club's difficulties over so many years and the failure of local Councils to address the situation together with the shortage of football pitches in the town. Chard is the second largest town in South Somerset, but it is the worst served in respect of Sport & Recreation.

The Planning Application 18/04057/OUT – Mount Hindrance Lane Site Chard includes the relocation of the Club and further pitches for Community use. This Application was refused by the Area West Committee on the casting vote of the Chairman, it will now be put before the Regulation Committee on 18 February 2020.

I have enclosed copies of my representations for your information and I would be grateful if you would kindly forward same to the Minister for Sport.

Yours Faithfully,

Brian Beer.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of three horizontal strokes, positioned to the right of the typed name 'Brian Beer.'

①
PUBLISHED IN C.I. NEWS.

It was with great sadness and disappointment to me and others that Chard Town has been relegated from the Western League after 43 years. I am truly devastated.

My involvement with Chard Town spans well over 60 years during which time I served as its secretary and chairman for a period of somewhere near 40 years. During my tenure as secretary and chairman together with others involved in the club we have strived to take the club forward. Alas, a lot of those good hard working individuals are no longer with us.

For many years the relocation of the club has been the target and many opportunities have come and gone through no fault of the club to achieve this. It is my opinion and that of others that the Zembard Lane ground has hindered the progress of the club due to the slope which, due to engineering difficulties, could not be rectified. I will in due course, over the next week or so, outline the various sites investigated and the reasons they have failed to fulfil the desired option.

Some 30 odd years ago the whole situation could have been resolved not just for Chard Town FC but for the benefit, I feel, of the footfall in the town centre. At that time Bass, the then owners of the Denning Sports Field, submitted a planning application to build a supermarket on the site with all three clubs situated there - football, tennis and cricket - offered completely new facilities, fully built and each club given unencumbered freehold. In addition to the supermarket there would have been free car parking in the centre of the town with other retail outlets included.

As a result of a misguided petition and concerns of some businesses planning approval was not given, the result of which was that Tesco's supermarket was then built on the old Bass depot in Tapstone Road, which has had a dramatic effect on the footfall in the town centre. This will now be compounded even further with the move of Lidl to the Tapstone Road alongside Tesco's.

As a life member of the club I attended the recent AGM just some four days after the news of the relegation. It was gratifying to see such a great attendance of players, members and supporters - the best attended AGM that I have seen in many years.

At this meeting, obviously the question of relegation was discussed at some length and perhaps my stance on the merits of appealing against the decision of the FA does not make me flavour of the month in some eyes. In my own experience and what I was able to ascertain from League, FA and County officials I concluded that there were no grounds to appeal as no outline planning had been approved by the deadline of March 2019, which had been defined by the FA 12 months earlier.

Outline planning was sought by the developer in December 2018 but, due to the then pending local elections, meetings for planning etc were suspended until after the result of the elections.

I must pay tribute to the sub committee of the club who for some time now have worked tirelessly in their efforts to secure the relocation of the club. After many hours of work and meetings, agreements have been reached by them which we should all appreciate. I know they will continue in their efforts to achieve relocation.

I am now in my 85th year and I appeal to the powers that be to look at the bigger picture for the future and not to pander to misguided opposition.

Sincerely

Brian Beer
Life Member Chard Town FC
President Toolstation Western League
Life Member Somerset FA

PRESS RELEASE. NOT PUBLISHED IN C.I FOR SOME REASONS.

has lost

One of the district's leading and oldest sports club which marks its centenary in 2021 - Chard Town Football Club - will ~~lose its~~ Toolstation Western League status if plans for a new ground and facilities are again rejected.

And one of the men who has led the search for a site for over half a century says a failure of local councils over the years to find a solution to the club's predicament and the town's shortage of football pitches is to blame.

He has called on the authorities to back the latest plans or the club will disappear in its current form - and could even disappear altogether.

And he also stressed that the latest plans which have been given publicity showing a grandiose 'stadium' scheme have given the wrong impression of what is required.

Brian Beer's credentials when it comes to Chard Town are impeccable: joined the club in 1957, was its chairman and secretary for over 30 years, is a life member, a member of Somerset FA and serves as president of the Western League.

He believes the club's stature has been a problem with local authorities. But he stressed: "Chard Town FC is no different to any other senior football club throughout the country. It is not a private organisation but is run by volunteers, we raise our own funds and we provide sport in the form of football for local people. We are a limited company by guarantee only on the advice of the Football Association.

"But we will lose that if we don't get planning permission for this new ground and facilities. If agreed, it will help us to get back to the times when we ran seven youth sides as well as our two main teams."

"The town has been crying out for new football pitches for decades and nothing has been done."

The current plans for a new ground are centred on an application for a site at Mount Hindrance where developers Mactaggart and Mickel want to build:

295 homes,
a floodlit football pitch for Chard Town
ancillary facilities with proposed clubhouse available for wider community use,
modern facilities for players and officials,
two further full size pitches,
small scale facilities comprising retail, commercial and community use,
significant other areas of open space,
the ground would have a buffer of trees.

A similar proposal but for 350 homes was submitted back in 2012 and rejected in 2016, a decision that was later upheld in the High Court.

Importantly, the inspector stated in his conclusion that the existing Local Plan, which had just been adopted, should be given time to succeed and if the Local Plan strategy in Chard faltered or failed then a conclusion on the site might be different. In addition, and also significantly, the district council still cannot show that it has the required five year housing land supply.

The developer would donate the land for the ground and facilities plus two other community pitches. One of these grounds could be used for training but both would also be available for local junior football teams and the whole would be managed by CTFC on behalf of the district council.

Chard Town would be able to make a big financial input into the project through its share of the proceeds from the sale of their current Zembard Lane ground by pub chain owners Mitchells and Butlers. Back when the site was owned by brewers Bass, the club signed a 999 year lease on the ground with a 40 per cent stake from the proceeds if it was sold. This money would go towards providing the facilities at the new site. They would also have to apply for grants from the Football Foundation and local authorities whose input would be necessary to help provide the community side of the pitches and facilities.

The site has been identified in the Local Plan Review as a preferred option for housing development while part of the site is included in the Chard Regeneration Plan 2010 for possible relocation of Chard Town FC.

The planning documents put forward with the planning application unfortunately included a 30 page 'masterplan' booklet on the Chard Town FC 'new stadium'.

This showed a clubhouse and changing rooms development to serve the three pitches but also pictured a predominant 224 seater grandstand on top of the roof of the clubhouse, with a large roof above. It was labelled as a stadium and the drawing has been publicised in local papers.

"It is very unfortunate that this 'stadium' development masterplan was used to go into the public consultation," said Mr Beer. "It is far beyond our current needs and way beyond our means to provide such facilities and would be required only if the team got promoted up through the ranks of the football pyramid.

"While the definition of a stadium is a sports ground with tiered seating for spectators, it is just not necessary on that scale for our needs. We obviously require a level pitch and excellent new changing and clubhouse accommodation - but a small 'grandstand' of covered seating development for spectators would be sufficient, a modern version of the one which we used to have at the Zembard Lane ground which was demolished 30 or 40 years ago.

"This would not need to be on top of the clubhouse facilities, as modular seating terrace units are also available - and shown in the brochure - providing a much more economical solution for the club; these would be at ground level rather than on top of the clubhouse development. There would also be covered standing for spectators, but that is also similar to what we had at Zembard Lane.

"With an average attendance currently of under 100, it is easy to see that we would not require a grand scheme providing seating for hundreds of spectators. That would only be necessary to meet spectator demand if the club progressed up the national league pyramid," said Mr Beer. "That could then be met by an added extension on the side of the main seated accommodation.

"In fact if less seating was provided it would only require a covered standing terrace to make up the numbers of spectators to meet the grade required."

Mr Beer outlined the history of the club's search for a new ground to replace the heavily sloping Zembard Lane facilities which are now not up to FA standards. And he was full of praise for the work of the late former councillor Leonard Fisher, who was also a past president of the club, in trying to find somewhere for Chard Town and also for other local junior clubs to play their games.

He spoke of teams playing on pitches in the town where players had to urinate in hedges because there were no toilet facilities on the ground, and teams who had to walk in their kit through the town to get to their pitch after changing in licensed premises in the town centre. Only very recently has the local authority allowed Portakabin type units to provide changing and toilet facilities on site. "I personally applaud the two clubs Chard Utd and Chard Rangers FC on their efforts in getting this done," said Mr Beer.

"This has been a 60-year battle to get new facilities for the club and the town but we have been foiled at every turn. The development would provide six changing rooms each with showers and facilities for match officials, a club room, meeting room, offices, kitchen and other rooms. In fact all of the facilities required to meet 21st Century standards and see the club through many years.

"It will also provide valuable extra pitches for the junior clubs in the town and help us to relaunch our youth sides which were so successful in the past."

In the 1950s there was a pitch in the St Mary's Close and Crowshute area which was included in the 1974 Town Plan, part of a designation of 16 acres for sport and recreation - the land was eventually used for homes.

There was a site at Guppy's Bridge which should have provided two football pitches and plans were drawn up and presented at a consultation meeting with district and town councillors. But there was opposition from the county highways department because they said there was no bus route to Guppy's Bridge and the lane going to it was too narrow, so they objected. Also at that meeting an environmental officer objected to the site because there were dormice in the vicinity.

When a site was offered near Forton a sports consultant made inquiries about getting planning permission, but again highways intervened saying they would object to that proposal unless Chard Town FC widened the road from Holbear to Forton. That was a non starter due to cost. It was later investigated by the district council but has since made no progress.

"In the 1970s Leonard Fisher dedicated land to the district council near the Chard Reservoir at Touches Farm for recreation including football pitches - but it became a nature reserve.

"At Snowdon Park in the 1980s another site was also dedicated by the landowner for sport and recreation which didn't materialise for various reasons. The local authorities spent money on it planting trees and footpaths - and it is now a dog park.

"Leonard Fisher was trying hard to help us find a pitch. He provided land at Cricket Lane adjoining Windwhistle Golf Club for our youth sides. We applied for planning permission to provide temporary accommodation for changing rooms but there was opposition from a local parish council and it was withdrawn. At that time in the 1990s we had six youth teams aged from 10-16, plus two ladies' teams - they don't exist now.

"Throughout this period there has been a drastic shortage of football pitches in Chard but there are problems with every suggestion. It is necessary to reflect on what has been tried in the past to show the strenuous efforts that have been made to get us to this point."

Two years ago Chard Town tried to forge an alliance with Holyrood Academy to build an all weather 3G football pitch which Holyrood would use during school hours, and Chard Town for its matches, also putting money into the project and managing it. There would have been a clubroom and dressing rooms reached from a separate access in Furnham Road.

All seemed to be running smoothly with all parties in favour of a successful conclusion but then came the problems.

Mr Beer added: "We were told there would be a conflict of interest with other existing 3G pitches in the area. This included the existing all weather pitch at the school but that is used specifically for hockey, a new 3G pitch at Axminster and 3G pitches at Langport and Yeovil. But they were all for junior teams and were not of the grade required for our level of football. It would also have meant the possibility, for instance, of us playing our home games five miles away in Axminster.

"An officer of the district council stated that Chard was not due to have a 3G pitch until post 2026. We have since learned that there are SEVEN 3G pitches in Weston-super-Mare and none of those comply with our status.

"Clubs of our comparative level with suitable 3G pitches include Toolstation Western League sides Keynsham Town, Roman Glass St George on the Gloucester FA

pitch at Almondsbury and Dorchester Town where Yeovil Town's ladies also play in the national Women's Super League.

"The only all weather pitch that could feasibly conflict with the one we wanted to build was at the school and that was made for the specific use of hockey and yet there are three 3G pitches in Yeovil.

"In the current application there is an objection from Sport England - who exist to *'provide new sports facilities to meet demand'* - stating that the site for the new pitches exists in Flood Zone 1 land. In the national flood map for planning, all land that doesn't fall in flood zones 2 and 3 is flood zone 1 - that is land that is assessed as having less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding - it is the lowest probability of flooding. In fact the guidelines state that if there is no reasonably available site in flood zone 1 then planners should consider flood zones 2 and 3 for development where it does flood! And there are tests to steer development away from areas at worst risk flooding to areas at the lowest risk which this site obviously is.

"It is just one of 11 points put forward in their consultation by Sport England and rather than helping to *'provide new facilities to meet demand'* they appear obstructive and are far from helpful. After so many years of negotiations, they recommend that further discussions and amendments are made.

"But we have faced obstacles like this at every turn."

Four years ago a survey in the town showed that there were 200 footballers at junior level aged above 16, registered as playing but having to go outside of the town to play due to the shortage of pitches for clubs in the town. "It is obvious there are just not enough pitches," said Mr Beer.

"The borough and then town councils relied on our local brewers Bruton Mitchell Toms who provided land for the town football, tennis and cricket clubs," said Mr Beer. "They provided the grounds and the clubs have maintained and developed them with very little cost to the local authorities. This should be compared to other towns such as Ilminster, Somerton and Langport where recreational facilities are provided for the clubs by the local councils. But in Chard the local councils and so the local ratepayers have not had to put their hands in their pockets for any major financial outlay. The only grants the club has received from the local authorities are £1,000 from Chard Town Council when the present floodlights were installed which cost £12,000, with the rest of the money found from club funds. A further £1,000 was received from the town council and £1,000 from the district council for the upgrading of the lights a few years ago when the total cost was £17,000 which the club funded with the help of the Football Foundation.

"Without a new ground there is no future at this level of football for Chard Town," said Brian Beer.

Delivered by



Registered
SALES & TRADING
High Centre
21/01/2020
20/05/21
1154182280

STAND TOGETHER

Holocaust Memorial



LYNDA PINCOMBE.

SPECIALIST - STRATEGIC PLANNING.
SOUTH SOMERSET DIST OFFICE

BRYMPTON WAY

YEOVIL

BAZO 2HT