

# BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Hon Secretary Mike Veal, 36 Long-thorn, Backwell, BS48 3GY

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To Lee Bowering, Planning Dept

North Somerset Council

15<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Mr Bowering

## **Objection to Application 20/P/1847/OUT – Land at Rodney Road, Backwell**

Backwell Residents Association (BRA) is a membership organisation representing over 450 paid up households. The attached submission is supplementary to my letter of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Rose

On behalf of Backwell Residents Association

## Numbers of Young People using the Rodney Road Entrance into Backwell Playing Fields

### **Introduction**

This paper gives evidence to support the concern that residents have of the danger to young people if the proposed new road is created to give access to the development of 65 houses. The **photos**, taken on Saturday morning Nov 6th, show the busy Playing Fields and the traffic and parking problems on the roads outside the Rodney Road entrance. Similar congestion occurs on weekdays, particularly in the early evening.

The 17 acre Playing Fields are the location for many organised activities, as well as having paths across the fields for walkers and general recreation. There are entrances to the Playing Fields from the A370 and from Rodney Road. The organised facilities are close to both these entrances, with large green fields between them.

The Rodney Road entrance is used for activities almost exclusively serving young people. The **table** lists the large numbers who use the facilities near this entrance each week. The **map** shows how close they are to the Rodney Road entrance, and how narrow the gap for the road would be.

Near to the two A370 entrances there is the floodlit football pitch for Ashton & Backwell with 3 adult teams; and a Bowls Club. There are 5 all-weather tennis courts used by a membership of 270, with coaching provided for 200 juniors and some adults. These activities are not covered in this report, but are mentioned to show the intense usage of Backwell Playing Fields as a whole.

There is only one access into Taylor Wimpey's development field, which would pass through the narrow gap between 18, Rodney Road and the Scout Hut. At present pedestrians access the Playing Fields on safe pavements. There is also a "layby", next to the island in Rodney Road which has a rare protected cherry tree on it. This section of road has limited room for parking and for dropping children off safely.

### **Organised Activities near the Rodney Road Access**

**The table** shows the number of children of all ages attending the organised facilities in or close to the Scout Hut, who use the Rodney Road entrance. Numbers of users have been obtained from those running the services, and total approximately 715 each week. Most of these activities are paid in advance and absences are kept to a minimum by parents. The absences could typically reach 10 -15%. However, the numbers shown in the table exclude leaders and helpers, which would broadly make up for this reduction. The figures in the table represent the full complement of users and as such are a reasonable estimate of the number of users+ helpers involved. There is a concern that many of these activities are concentrated at times when commuters would be coming in and out of the proposed development. For example, on a Tuesday evening there are 24 Beavers from 5.15pm to 6.15pm followed by 30 Scouts at 7.00pm, with 40 members of the Judo Club arriving from 6pm onwards. In the winter months there is the added danger that these movements are in darkness.

## **General Usage (not linked to an Organisation)**

In addition to all of the above, extensive use is made of the Playpark near the Scout Hut, the skate ramp, zip wire and fitness machines.

There is an excellent path leading into the Playing Fields from the Rodney Road entrance, which is much used by walkers, cyclists and scooter riders. Many dog walkers use this entrance every day. The fields are also the major centre of activity in school holiday periods, for young people of all ages, with older ones often going unaccompanied via the Rodney Road entrance.

## **West Leigh Infant School**

West Leigh has 240 children aged 4-7 years, and also has the Meadowside pre-school on its site for an extra 20 young children at various times of the day. The main access to the school is via Westfield Drive, though cars are very strongly discouraged from driving up the Drive to drop off. There is also a pedestrian access from Backwell Vale. However, an alternative area for a drop off is in the layby in Rodney Road and, using the footpath across the field to the school. A popular activity is for those with a younger sibling to call at the playpark after collecting their child from school.

## **Conclusion**

It is evident that **hundreds of mainly young people use the Rodney Road entrance each week**. One point to note is that a parent taking a child of infant school age to an activity could pass the access point four times with their two return trips.

The Rodney Road entrance to the Playing Fields is safe and supports NSC's Active Travel Strategy, including those walking to and from West Leigh Infant School. This section of road is currently a cul-de-sac with very little vehicular traffic - allowing children on foot or cycle to travel safely before they meet the main Rodney Road.

**Constructing a road for the vehicle access to 65 houses, will make it much more difficult for children to negotiate safely. This is contrary to the concept of the NSC Active Travel Strategy, which places the emphasis on walking and cycling.**

**Backwell Residents Association has a strong conviction that NSC should refuse this application on Health & Safety grounds alone, as it would replace a safe access with a dangerous new road.**

**Backwell Residents Association  
November 15<sup>th</sup> 2021**

## Organised Group Activities located near the Rodney Road Entrance

Organisation	Details			Total number of users each week
<b>Scouts</b> <b>Beavers ages 5 - 6</b> <b>Cubs ages 7 - 9</b> <b>Scouts ages 10 - 14</b> <b>Explorers ages 14 - 18</b>	Monday Tuesday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Thursday Friday	6.45 – 8.00 5.15 – 6.15 7.00 – 9.00 7.00 – 9.00 5.15 – 6.15 6.45 – 8.00 7.00 – 9.00	24 cubs 24 beavers 35 scouts 40 explorers 24 beavers 30 cubs 35 scouts	<b>212</b>
<b>Rainbows ages 5 - 7</b> <b>Brownies ages 7 - 9</b>	Sunday Wednesday	2.00 – 5.00 5.30 – 7.00	18 rainbows 20 brownies	<b>38</b>
<b>Judo</b>	Tuesday Thursday	6.00 – 9.00 6.00 – 9.00	40 people 40 people	<b>80</b>
<b>Rainbow preschool</b> <b>Small children</b> <b>Ages 3 - 5</b>	Monday to Friday Breakfast Club, Morning, Afternoon Preschool & After-School Club.	From 8.00am to 5.30pm	Serving 41 families in total.  Average daily attendance of 23.	<b>115</b>
<b>Junior Football - Sept to May</b>  <b>Ages 6 -12</b>  <b>Some training continues during the summer</b>  <b>Ages 13 - 16</b>	There are 5 pitches available for games and training.			
	Saturday morning games for 6,7,8,9,10 years old	9.00 – 12.00	Around 175 children	<b>270</b>
	Saturday afternoon matches	2.00 – 4.30	Around 55 young people	
	Sunday morning games for 13 and 16 years old	9.00 – 12.00	Around 40 young people	
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>715</b>
<b>NB This total excludes all general users e.g., dog walkers, and pupils travelling to and from West Leigh Infant School</b>				

## Saturday Morning Traffic & Parking Problems in Rodney Road



The layby with the tree island on the right  
Parking is at a premium near the entrance



Scouts arriving to load up at the hut prior to a  
weekend expedition



Spectators line all 5 pitches



Other matches are visible in the distance



The proposed entrance is left of the red car



Walkers use the same exit as the blue car

