

6 June 2016

Mrs Leani Hain,
Assistant Town Clerk, Blandford Forum Town Council
Town Clerk's Office
Church Lane, Blandford Forum
DT11 7AD
BY EMAIL AND BY POST

Dear Sirs,

Bryanston Village Green: Blandford + Draft Plan Consultation

Please forgive the delay in responding to your letter of 15th October. We ask that the views expressed in this letter be taken into account.

I, Anne Singleton, am writing on my own behalf and that of my husband, Barry Singleton, about your letter dated 15th October inviting a response about the Lower Bryanston Village Green/Local Green Space.

I am aged 68 years. I was born and raised in Bryanston. I used to live in The Stables. Since 1960, when I was aged 12 years, my family home has been The Old Forge. My husband has been visiting and, later, living in the property since 1963. I own The Old Forge, my parents being deceased. When I die I shall leave the home to my children in the expectation that they will keep it and use it for the whole family, as it is used now.

Depending on where you consider the boundaries of the Village Green to lie my home fronts on its East side on to about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ of the space that has long been known as the Village Green. Therefore I believe that we are very much affected by whatever listing is given to the Green.

In the past few years there have only been 2 detractions from the openness of the space, namely a path driven without permission across the Green by the owner of Number 7 (who does not own the land) and a fence erected during the past few weeks by the owner of Number 5. Aside from these unfortunate acts the whole area looks much as it did about 100 years ago and as it has done throughout my life. I am sure that your archives contain photographs that show its state in the early C20, which is basically as it is today. There are pictures showing horses being brought to the Forge when it was active and photographs showing that, with minor changes from time to time, much of the space has always been kept clear and mostly in grass.

We would be utterly dismayed if anything was done that could lead in any way to the Green changing. I read your letter with concern as it implies that you may remove the site from the plan so that it does not even have the protection of being a Local Green Space. I ask why you are doing this when this space so obviously falls within the provisions of Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework?

Indeed it is exactly the sort of space that the draughtsman must have had in mind. Paragraph 77 is intended to catch areas

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.* It is immediately adjacent to the community it serves. We all look onto it. We cross it to get to the road.
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.* Your own letter acknowledges the special nature of this space, that it is important visually, that it allows the special houses behind it to be seen, rather than to be hidden by banks of cars parked all over it, and is just generally a beautiful space in the middle of a lovely village the likes of which are becoming rarer and rarer because of creeping commercialisation and the unfortunate influence that people's property aspirations have over what might be right for a community as a whole.

and

- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.* This describes the area perfectly

I understand that there has been opposition based on a belief that calling it a Village Green or a Local Green Space is going to affect property values, inter alia because it is thought that busloads of people might come and picnic. Even were it relevant to what surely should be a decision based not just on people's expressed concern about their property values, but upon a broader consideration of what is right for the village and its fabric for the next 100 years, this belief is nonsense. The established private property rights of the various properties that front onto the space and of the new owners of the Bryanston Estate are not overridden by naming it a Local Green Space or even a Village Green. There is no suggestion that any of it is common land. The law of trespass applies. We strongly suspect that some of the opposition is due to a failure to understand the legal consequences of the designation. Anyway during the 68 years that I have regarded Bryanston as my home I cannot remember any picnic or ball kicking by anyone who was not a resident of the immediate area: neither can my husband, since 1963. Perhaps there should be a further meeting with any concerned residents so that they can understand just what the designation means.

We do not actually understand why you feel the need to apologise for the way in which the matter has been handled. We are glad that you included the space in the Draft Plan naming it a Village Green. At the very least it should be included as a Local Open Space. Deleting it as a Village Green (which it is) or Local Open Space would be wholly wrong. Anyway, we ask that at the very least it be designated as a Local Green Space (and preferably be given the name "The Village Green").

We ask that everything should be done to try to ensure that this village of rare beauty is not spoilt in the name of 'change' and going along with the lowest common denominator. The present occupants of the properties are but custodians for later generations of people.

Yours faithfully