

### Tennis charity offers funds for community

The Wimbledon Foundation, the charity of The All England Lawn Tennis Club, is offering funding of £50,000 to local charities and community organisations to help meet social needs in Merton and Wandsworth.

The Wimbledon Foundation Community Fund distributes £100,000 annually to benefit the community in recognition of the help given by both boroughs in staging The Championships.

This is the sixth round of funding to date and grants of up to £5,000 are available to projects which address issues including mental health and wellbeing, poverty and isolation.

KIDS Lady Allen Adventure Playground in Battersea successfully applied to the Wimbledon Foundation Community Fund in November 2016.

The playground provides a safe place for children with a range of disabilities to play freely in a setting which support their requirements.

The grant from the Wimbledon Foundation is being used to provide transport to and from the playground for some of the most disadvantaged and isolated children in the area.

### Top quality pitches to be used in all weathers

Kids have new football pitches where they can play in all types of weather.

A new third generation (3g) football facility has opened at St Dunstan's Jubilee Ground in Catford.

The project which cost more than £300,000 will offer six five-a-side pitches featuring the latest pitch technology including LED lighting.

St Dunstan's Educational Foundation provided the cash.

The pitches will be available for hire and new leagues will run from the site.

Gavin Halil from St Dunstan's Enterprises Ltd said: "We are excited to be opening such facilities which will offer our students and the community access to superb pitches which will improve the experience for regular players and attract new players to our facility."

# Football club asks fans to tell planners to move the pitch

BY TOBY PORTER  
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A football club has appealed to their fans to write in with their support for plans to move the club's pitch.

Cash-strapped Dulwich Hamlet FC joint scheme with developers Meadowhall Residential LLP Company would see up to 151 homes built on the site of the current ground - and the Champion Hill outfit saved.

But residents living nearby oppose the scheme, because the pitch would be moved westwards onto its current astro turf pitch - but would lead to the loss of a 10m wide strip of land in the next-door Greendale, which is classified as Metropolitan Open Space.

Currently, an agreement between Southwark council, leaseholders J Sainsbury's and landowner King's College dictates that no building work can happen on the Champion Hill pitch.

Isle-of-Man registered Greendale Property, who own both sites and a next door car park and squash courts, had appealed to Southwark to lift the restriction but their application was rejected in December.

The building work on the pitch and lifting the Section 106 agreement banning work there is currently the subject of an inquiry by the Government's Planning Inspectorate.

Dulwich Hamlet bosses have appealed to their fans to show their support for the building scheme, to secure the future of the club, which owes more than £100,000 - and they say the club could go under if the project does not go ahead.

The 270-member Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust (DHST) overwhelmingly backed the scheme last year - 94 per cent voted to support it in a poll last year.

If the scheme is given permission, the 124-year-old club would own its own ground when it is complete - and Greendale, which the club currently leases from Southwark, would be returned to the borough's residents.

Alex Crane, the new chairman of the Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust said in a direct appeal to fans: "It is imperative that the Planning Inspectorate understands the wide backing that this scheme has from the community."

"We feel that at present too many people are quietly supportive, and the small number who object to the plans are shouting louder."

The chance of the redevelopment being approved, and therefore the future of our club being put in severe jeopardy, will be put at risk if supporters and the local community more broadly do not act to back the scheme.

We urge you to take action now - support our



A bird's eye view of the Champion Hill stadium and surrounding land

stadium."

But local resident Jonathan Hunt, former chairman of Dulwich Hamlet Supporters' Trust said: "I agree with many of the points Alex Crane makes about the trust."

"We have given excellent support to the football club and have contributed to the 600 per cent rise in attendance figures. But the club is not at risk financially. When Hadley took over, its chief executive Peter Bennisson said that the debt was around the £140,000 level."

"With the huge rise in attendance, with associated increase beer sales, why has the "debt" increased to around £600,000. Meadowhall have some serious questions to answer about its financial stewardship."

"The owner, whoever it is, stands to make some £20million on land values alone were it to gain planning permission for 155 units to sell to rich absentee owners."

"But the reality is that it can't get planning permission. Any inspector would be bound by a

precedent set by the inspector in 1990 who turned down an appeal by Homebase who also wished to build on the pitch and move the stadium on to Green Dale, which enjoys Metropolitan Open Land protection.

"It is also protected by a covenant that prohibits the ground being used for any activity other than football."

"I am one of the 42 per cent of trust members who did not vote on the proposal, which rather undermines the claim of 98 per cent support."

"Another reality is that the former five-a-side artificial pitch is not big enough for a stadium of this size, and that it would need a 10-foot high wall on the upper ground to meet League regulation to prevent people watching for free."

"We must also remember that we are citizens as well as footie fans."

"Green open spaces are disappearing at a rapid rate in the inner-city, and Green Dale offers a peaceful area where residents may relax and commune with nature."

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