

The Mercury

LEWISHAM BOROUGH

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BLOT HERE, MATE

Multi-sports court mooted for fields with wonder views

A MULTI-SPORTS court aimed at youngsters could become a blot on the landscape, say some nearby residents.

A furious row has broken out over Blythe Hill Fields, Blythe Hill, known for its panoramic views of London and

By JULIA LEWIS

the hills of Kent to the south.

The site is also of archaeological interest, since the Roman road from London to Lewes in Sussex once cut through it.

But while a group wants to build a hard surface court, other residents claim it is set to ruin the area.

Last month the Blythe Hill Fields User Group voted by a majority of 11 to eight to try for funding to build a 30m by 15m hard-surface ball court

with regeneration charity Groundwork.

Opponents are furious, saying there is already a ball court in the area and there are plenty of sports facilities within walking distance.

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Sports court blot on landscape fears

From p1

They fear the proposed court, with its 3m-high metal fence, would dominate the skyline and detract from the beauty of the fields.

Sydney Couldridge, of Montem Road, said residents didn't know it would come up in the March meeting and would have voted against it.

He added: "A hard-surface ball

court goes against the wishes and needs of residents."

Neighbour Tom Silvester said the court would be on the only flat part of the park, about 10 or 15 yards from his home, and residents would suffer from noise.

He said: "Our views have been sidelined. Wheels are turning without people getting a fair hearing, that is what rankles."

But group member Elisabeth

Downie said so far it was not a full application, only "an expression of interest", and it had been agreed to continue negotiations at an open meeting.

She added: "Even if it is decided by the group that a full application is made it would need planning permission."

A spokesman for Lewisham council said: "We recognise the importance of Blythe Hill Fields to

the community and any changes would require full consultation with users and residents."

To date no planning application has been submitted.

● **What do you think? Should a multi-sports hard court take precedent over a beauty spot?**

Write to *The Mercury* at 2-4 Leigham Court Road, Streatham SW16 2PD or email us at mercury@slp.co.uk

Perhaps TV's Time Team could give our fields higher profile

I READ with interest your story today regarding the proposed funding application for a multi-sports court in Blythe Hill Fields. This proposal raises some interesting points for consideration. It was stated that the site is of archaeological interest. Are there plans afoot for this "interest" to be acted upon? Prior to the implementation of a sports facility, would it be feasible to contact Tony Robinson and his TV Time Team to arrange a dig? This move would undoubtedly raise the profile of the fields and give the area a much-needed boost. Also, as any resident with children would reliably inform us, there is very little in terms of facilities for young people in the locale. Are complaining residents in the article parents? If an application

is to be submitted, is the infrastructure of the area going to be taken into consideration? Currently there is little or no lighting within the park. Would there be an expectation of the young people to play in the dark, or perhaps an implementation of floodlights for the sports court, similar to that on the Honor Oak Estate? Finally - and perhaps most importantly - would policing and security be taken into account? With the increase in crime and disorder (especially against young people) in the area around Blythe Hill and Crofton Park, would the bid include a provision for CCTV cameras or the presence of police safer neighbourhood teams or the community wardens?

E Geddes, By email



The front page of last week's Lewisham edition of Mercury

No lighting is park's appeal

THE comment by a previous writer that "there is little or no lighting within the park" is precisely the attraction of Blythe Hill Fields. Where else in the vicinity can you get such a wonderful view of London: the firework celebrations over the town; the New Year fireworks; the comets as they go over (it's amazing how many people we met up there in the dark watching for the comet shower) and other stargazing happenings - without the intrusion (and lessening of the wonderful experience) of lighting. I hope that when planning permission comes up before Lewisham council, notice is issued appropriately in order that we can have a voice of protest against any plans to change this wonderful area in any way. And, yes, I am a parent, and have spent some great summers in this park with my children.

Sandra Nagre
Polsted Road
Catford

Mercury 12/4 April

User-friendly park

THANK you for your front page article "Blot here mate" (Lewisham Mercury, March 29). As a nearby resident in Montacute Road for many years, my major disappointment with the fields is that they are not used as much as they should be. I would welcome anything that changes that. Toilets and a cafe would be an excellent addition to any hardcourt facility to make the park more user-friendly. Even a small car park would be useful.

Mercury 12/4

David French, By email

The Mercury, Wednesday, April 19, 2006

News

Fields of interest meeting

BLYTHE Hill Fields User Group, a voluntary community group, is holding its next meeting on April 27 at the 1st Forest Hill Scout Hall, St German's Road, Forest Hill at 7.30pm. Anyone who is interested in Blythe Hill Fields is welcome to attend.

Email blythehill@purplepelican.org.uk for more information.

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6431 with your news**