



11 August 2017

Ms K Forster
Clerk to Friston Parish Council
Orchard House
Chediston Road
Wissett
Halesworth IP19 ONF

Dear Ms Forster

Friston Village Green

We moved into [redacted] when there were just two swings on the village green near our house. These were quite popular with local children from the village at the time but did not cause any problems. The rest of the green was just an attractive open space.

To our dismay, and without any prior notification, in 2007 additional play equipment was installed, including the tower and climbing frame, from which our rear garden is totally overlooked. We were told by councillors at the time that trees would be planted on the green to alleviate the overlooking, however the owner of the green, Charles Wentworth, refused to allow any trees to be planted in this location or on the verge in Church Path. We have tried to establish planting within our garden but we are limited in what can be achieved due to lack of space and because the ground level of the village green is higher than that of our garden.

Our observations are that the play equipment tends to be used mainly by visitors to the village, especially during holiday time, and also by children from other villages whose parents regularly park their cars outside our house causing difficulties with access to our driveway. Some of the older teenagers also tend to sit on the top of the climbing frame and even on top of the roof of the tower. We have never seen the basketball net used by anyone nor have we seen the goalposts used, other than to be climbed on by children. It does not therefore seem that there is great demand for play equipment from resident children.

It was therefore with some concern that we have learnt that Friston Parish Council intends to further develop the sports and play equipment on the village green. Would the Council please consider the siting of any new equipment away from the current location as there are other areas, which would not cause a nuisance or overlook nearby houses.

In particular we note from Suffolk Coastal District Council's Parish Schedule for Outdoor Play Space in Friston that they recommend that an additional play area be established to the west of the B1121 (Aldeburgh Road) to serve Mill Road, Chases Lane and Low Road, where the highest concentration of houses in the village are.

The Council should also consider the increased demand for parking and that this will inevitably occur outside our house if no provision is made on the green itself. We would also ask, now the Council has a lease on the village green and it is no longer owned by Charles Wentworth, that planting be introduced to screen the existing play equipment.

We understand that grants may be available for play equipment and that the Council would like to take advantage of this, however would the Council please consider the impact of such equipment on nearby residents.

We also note that the Council is considering introducing a bus shelter on the village green. The school buses collect the children from the western side of the Aldeburgh Road and the children and parents use the Jubilee Shelter in inclement weather. The Jubilee Shelter also serves as a bus shelter for those travelling in the direction of Saxmundham.

The only function therefore for a bus shelter on the village green would be for persons using the relatively infrequent bus service to Aldeburgh and Leiston. This bus service does not appear to be used at all frequently by village residents and we rarely see anybody waiting for a bus on this side of the road. We believe the Council should therefore carry out a detailed survey of residents to ascertain how many people would actually use a new bus shelter in this location.

It should be remembered that a new shelter would also require regular cleaning and maintenance and need to be of a very sensitive design (similar to the Jubilee Shelter) so as to avoid spoiling the ambience of the Village Green.

Friston Village Green is a very attractive open space enjoyed by residents of all ages and where we can all gather to celebrate important occasions and hold fund-raising events. It is only too easy to spoil this natural area with the introduction of equipment of inappropriate design and materials. Any development should only be undertaken with wide ranging consultation with residents and appropriate expert advice.

Please could you bring this letter to the attention of Councillors prior to their next meeting on 4th September.

Yours sincerely

A large, dark, irregularly shaped redaction mark covering the signature area of the letter.