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James Skidmore



Reference: **GT03** and **GT04** Land at Barnwell Farm

Dear Sirs

I have been considering the suitability of the GT03 and GT04 travellers sites since I input my formal objection a week or so ago and I have had an additional thought.

**Leamington FC and the Harbury Lane**

As you will be well aware, Leamington F.C. are now in the Conference North, which is level 6 of the football pyramid. This season they will be playing against teams like Stockport County, who only three seasons ago were attracting an average AWAY following of over 900 fans. Should Leamington be promoted again (which is entirely feasible) they will be one step away from league football and playing at a level that includes 18 ex-league teams, some of which have a sizeable 'away' following.

Other teams that are playing at just one level above Leamington (and as such it is entirely feasible that they will be at the same level by the time that GT03 and GT04 is operational) include Nuneaton (local), Cambridge, Barnet, Grimsby, Wrexham and Luton Town – all of whom can generate huge away followings. It is worth noting that one undesirable supporters group of Luton Town was the birthplace of the so-called 'English Defence League', so whilst most fans are well behaving, it is entirely clear the issue of football hooliganism still very much prevails away from the 'public eye' in England today.

**Football Hooligans**

As your colleagues in both Warwickshire Police and the various football specific operations around the country will tell you, an increasing number of hooligans have attached themselves to non-league football in recent seasons. In fact, Warwickshire Police will be able to confirm the wide scale disorder resulting in around **90 arrests** that took place when **Nuneaton** hosted Lincoln City earlier in 2013. It should be remembered that both Lincoln and Nuneaton were just one defeat away from being in the Conference North (and therefore playing Leamington) this season.

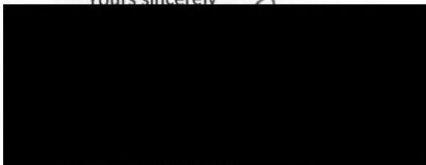
Furthermore, this time next year Leamington could feasibly be playing clubs like Portsmouth FC, well known for an enormous and sometimes aggressive following. Furthermore, as Leamington continue improve and rise the leagues, the chances of them playing against one of the bigger clubs in a cup competition will increase proportionally.

**Siting of GT03 and GT04**

It is of grave concern to me that these proposed sites (GT03 and GT04) are situated next to an 'up and coming' football club. It is my absolute belief that the siting of travellers next to Leamington FC could make it the 'go to' place for football hooligans and trouble makers, for all of obvious reasons. In fact, I am certain that such a site would act as a magnet for undesirable, threatening and intimidating behaviour. This would be a disaster for Leamington FC (and all of the hard work that they have done), for non-trouble making fans, for the Police and for local residents. Furthermore, I am certain that the costs of controlling 'match days' at Leamington would go through the roof, hardly fair on the tax payer or football club itself.

In addition to the objections raised in my previous letter, I would urge you to strongly to consider the wisdom of siting a travellers site next to a football ground that will host professional teams this season. To me, this proposal feels like utter lunacy.

Yours sincerely



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WDC PLANNING	
Ref	
Officer	
29 JUL 2013	
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