



JULY 2011

IRVINE ROAD AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

newsletter

Your voice in the local community

<http://www.irara.org.uk>

THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE IRVINE ROAD FIELD GOES ON – NOW IT'S TIME TO MAKE OUR COUNCILS KEEP THEIR PROMISES

IRARA launches new petition in campaign to save the Field

Regular readers will by now be aware of our latest push to get Essex County Council to keep the promises they made as part of the 'softening up' process to pave the way for the Philip Morant School Access road. Stephen Castle (Holder of the property portfolio?) went on record as saying that the Irvine Road Field would be handed over to Fields in Trust "Regardless of the outcome" of last year's talks.



The map shows just how little public open space is left to the local community. Of all the green space shown, only the Field and the Green (arrowed) are accessible to the public.

IRARA believes that one of the most effective ways of securing the Field and the Green would be to have the whole area included in the QE2 2012 Challenge. Colchester has few other entries and there is no limit, so the chances of the Field making it onto the list would be very good.

The problem is that the Irvine Road Field is owned by Essex County Council and the Green is owned by Colchester Borough Council, and as landowners, only they can recommend the area for inclusion. Despite repeatedly claiming that they are in favour of keeping our open spaces, both councils are doing their best to walk away from their commitments to support us.

It couldn't be simpler. All ECC and CBC have to do is fill in a couple of forms to say they want the land included in the QE2 Challenge and it will happen!

Instead, ECC have refused to do or say anything and CBC have invented a clause in the QE2 Challenge rules, which they claim limits the

number of potential open spaces they can submit to the scheme (they are already submitting the playing fields at Mile End and various public spaces in outlying parts of the borough).

We can find no such rule; all the QE2 Challenge website has to say on the matter is:

"At the moment, the target is for 2,012 fields, but FIT (Fields in Trust) has an ongoing programme of saving and enhancing outdoor recreational space, so we would always be interested in more."

In other words, there is no limit.

What you can do

As usual, it is up to us to make our wishes known to the local politicians and try and hold them to their promises. We've proved before that they will listen if we can gather enough public support. Our petition in 2009 objecting to the Philip Morant School access road was very successful in raising awareness of the levels of indignation

at the prospect of losing any part of our public open spaces, particularly among those local politicians up for re-election last year! This is partly why we have decided to once again ask local people to put their names to a petition asking our councils and councillors to keep their word.

Green Oasis

As the map on the previous page shows, the Irvine Road Field and the Green at Painters' Corner form a tiny oasis of public open space in an area extending far beyond the boundaries of the IRARA area. It is important to a lot of people, of all ages, who have nowhere else to play, gather or walk their dogs.

We will be canvassing the entire area, from Prettygate and Norman Way to Maldon Road, Drury Road and the side roads in between as previous experience has shown that the vast majority of residents in these areas support our efforts very strongly. Also, as the Painters' Corner Residents' Association has now ceased to exist, it falls to us to represent those Prettygate residents who want to save the Field and the Green.

To sum up; please make sure you sign the petition (if you support our aims) and if you want to get more involved, we need volunteers to collect signatures from as many friends and family as possible. Committee members will be knocking on your doors over the coming weeks with petitions to sign and to collect annual subscriptions from households wishing to become IRARA members.

Membership

If you haven't already joined IRARA, please consider doing so. Membership is only £3 per household and helps pay for necessary expenditure on printing, subscriptions to organisations like the Open Spaces Society and to help finance occasional events, but the main point is that in order to effectively represent the local community, IRARA needs to keep membership figures as high as possible.

Local politicians and councils are less likely to dismiss our concerns and ignore our views if we are organised as an effective residents' association and not just a few concerned individuals.

Email

An increasing number of members are now asking if they can receive newsletters via email, which strikes us as an excellent idea. Email is a very fast and effective way of keeping members informed of developments in ongoing issues and other news, and of course it allows members to directly contact committee members if they have any problems or information.

In order for this to happen, of course, we need your email address. The easy way to get onto the subscription list is to email Dave Kennedy at info@irara.org.uk or use the contact form on the website at www.irara.org.uk.

Alternatively, you can fill in the form below if you haven't already joined and we will send you future newsletters via email.



Member of Federation of Colchester Residents' Associations

Member of Open Spaces Society

Irvine Road Area Residents' Association

Membership application/renewal form 2011/12

Annual membership of IRARA is £3.00 per household and is open to anyone living in Athelstan Road, Audley Road, Capel Road, Irvine Road and adjacent parts of Maldon Road and Shrub End Road.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

I wish to newsletters via: email hard copy

Telephone No: _____

I/We wish to apply for membership

I/We wish to renew our membership

Do you think the association should continue to fight for the preservation of our public open space for the benefit of local children? Yes No

Would you be interested in helping with some of the association's activities (for example, leaflet drops, litter clearing etc.) Yes No

Please fill in this form and hand it to your representative or send it to: Daniel Fox, IRARA Treasurer, 33 Irvine Road, Colchester CO3 3TR.