Proposed Works on Tooting Bec Common COM/

I live in Balham, only 5 minutes from Tooting Commons and I've enjoyed The Triangle area for over 20 years. I run 2 local WhatsApp groups to help my Road and the Community. I attend the Safer Neighbourhoods Police and Council meetings and liaise regularly with my local WBC Councillors on how we can improve the local area. I've created art school lessons for local kids during Covid and have organised 3 Street parties for my Road. I care greatly for the well-being of my local community.

I am a volunteer dogwalker for the NHS and walk dogs on Tooting Commons Triangle. It's a wonderful great open space and fantastic for exercise, for well-being and to keep in touch with other locals. I meet up with local friends, parents, kids, neighbours and other dogwalkers on a daily basis. We walk together, strike up conversations and our dogs play and have fun together... where the dogs are now 'dog friends' coming together.

Above: Tooting Commons and surrounding paths and open spaces of the Triangle.

It’s wonderful to see them get so excited to see their ‘dog friends’... they huddle together and even look like they are hugging. It’s therapeutic for us to see our animals having so much fun on Tooting Commons. Our dogs are part of our families. In some cases, they are like our ‘pet children’ too.

Below: Dogs absolutely love the freedom of the free pitch space:

On Tooting Commons Triangle, there are paths alongside the existing sports pitch, by the boxing club, which are the most common routes for dogwalkers. It is amazing to walk along these paths and just experience nature on your doorstep... we walk and chat about spotting butterflies, the growing berries and other plants and creatures along the way. You really do not feel like you’re in London!!! You are mentally transported to the countryside as it’s so tranquil, stunningly beautiful and peaceful.

Below: The absolutely idyllic natural view just off the path behind the ‘football pitch’… with lots of seats to sit and enjoy the peaceful scenery.

Every single time I walk off the pathways behind the pitch, and see the greenery, I'm astounded at the beauty of it all. It's very much integral to locals' lives here… this beautiful green space. It's all open and free for us all to roam including the current sport pitch.

We often walk late at night in the dark in small groups... and this little spot (Tooting Triangle) is wonderful to see and hear creatures along our journey.
Local nature specialists regularly post about the animals and insects that live there. Walking with friends in this environment is so beneficial as it's really quiet and so great for mental health. Fresh air is fantastic! Nature is a wonderful thing.

Below: Tooting Commons nature widely posted on social media.

Having a commercial football pitch with outside clubs visiting would completely ruin the dynamic of this special natural area. We would be very concerned about the daily, regular, weekend and late evening monopolisation of the proposed football clubs and especially with the plan for high fences around the football pitch.

We can see on the websites from the developer's other sites that there's really large groups of shouting at games and supporters well into the late evening. This of course also involves using extra bright spotlights and this would completely change the dynamic of the Tooting Triangle natural space. Plus, an extra 100 or so cars would be impossible to accommodate locally.

Above: Current 'natural' pitch nestles into the natural background.

Above: Mock-up of the Proposed fenced off pitch, with lights becoming an obtrusive eyesore – not fitting into the natural beautiful landscape and existing natural habitat.

The area directly around the sport pitch has always been used for picnics, for parents to keep an eye on their kids on the pitch. Kids use the pitch without any booking fees for badminton, cycling, cricket, football etc. However, with the expected level of noise and the horrific eye-sore of the fences, it would prevent people sitting close-by to enjoy the beautiful green space.

Plus of course cyclists, keep fit trainers and runners use the pitch and the surrounding paths too. With lots of players and supporters trekking across them to the proposed new pitch, it would prevent these existing groups also being able to use the area easily. We believe that this area is for everybody... runners, cyclists, rugby, badminton, dog walkers… not just footballers and especially NOT football teams from outside this area.

It's also a current benefit that the pitch is open sided (no fences) and is free to use for everyone. For over 10 plus years, currently every week a group of gentlemen from Tooting play cricket on this pitch. The benefit has been the size of the current pitch… and not broken up as on the proposed plans. On speaking to them they have low paying jobs and they couldn't afford to pay to use a pitch.

I called the other sport sites from the developers and was amazed at how expensive locals would be expected to pay: Football Pitch (Adults) £75 p/h, Football Pitch (U16) £20 p/h, Football Pitch (Student 16-18) £30 p/h (both before 6pm). I contacted all of the developer's current sites, to see if they would offer any free times, reductions for low income, disabled or charity groups and they didn't comment but explained their pricing. So, these poor

cricketers that have used this space all their lives for free, wouldn't be able to afford fees. This is such a shame as it's common land for all the local people.

100's play Touch rugby plays every week as well on the surrounding grass... which with shouting and whistles blowing for the proposed multiple football pitches, they too might not be able to play as they have done for many years.

It's been a real let-down for the locals that the council has agreed to this horrific proposal… as this shouldn't be an over-developed site for one form of sport but should continue to be an unfenced common use pitch for all sports and for all people.

We realise that Councils have to 'eek out budgets' but they have developed so many other park sites around Wandsworth and promote them widely on social media. Including slogans like 'Love Parks'. It has been their duty to maintain the common land on Tooting Commons Triangle, yet they have allowed it to degrade over 5 plus years. It's been a real let-down for locals, who have paid their council taxes, that the area hasn't been maintained or sufficiently improved for a very, very long time. Its horrific that it floods badly every year... **including the playground for kids** and the boxing club. Wandsworth Council have allowed this to be really unsafe for many many, years. It's also a real problem dog walking when it's so flooded. I've been concerned that the water was sewage water as dogs will want to drink whenever they see water. It's so unhealthy and unsafe. This has all been unnecessary if the council had only maintained the space instead of letting the community down.

Above: Winter flooding of the children's playground, boxing club and surrounding area.

Along with my Road, and my area, I want the council to improve what's already there. To especially improve the drainage, so that the Boxing Club and kid's area don't flood every winter. To resurface the pitch so that it doesn't flood and is safe for all the children to use… whether learning to ride their bikes, to play football or to keep-fit. We especially want an improved pitch for everyone to continue to use and not a fenced-off commercialised football pitch that will benefit clubs 5 miles away.

It would be lovely to create an inspirational space that promotes this pitch in it's natural setting, with a surface pattern, like the basketball pitch on Clapham Common.

Above: Painted new surfaces including Clapham Common Basketball pitch.

I want something that promotes the 'Triangle' within Tooting Commons, or something to suggest the space is for all people… for all sports. Most importantly it needs to be natural coloured whether that's beiges as current or green and definitely unfenced!

Above: Suggested new surface for the pitch that includes DESIGN IDEAS eg natural 'triangle trees, tree/hands or community 'togetherness' design cues.

I would also love making the Triangle into an adult keep-fit space where dogwalkers like myself or people running, cycling or training could stop off around the edge of the space and perform extra activities. Including dog drinking water. It would really make the space more fun, more inclusive, more athletic but continuing to be in a natural setting. This would be fantastic in winter months… but most importantly it needs to be for the whole local community to continue to use… and be free. Wandsworth Common and Clapham Common have some similar areas for athletics.

Above: Suggested natural keep-fit around the Triangle.

It clearly shows that Wandsworth Council has spent budgets elsewhere on other park sites. They have let the residents near Tooting Commons down with the lack of investment and consideration for safety and enjoyment of Tooting Triangle.
Now they want to force us to give away our space to a Football League. We don't want fenced off expensive commercialisation… we want to keep it natural and enhance exercise for our local community… for kids and adults… for all sports… for all of us. We want to keep our park!

Laitwood Road Resident, SW12 9QH.