

# **Save Stoke Lodge Parkland**

## **"We Love Stoke Lodge" needs our help.**

Since May 2018, after picking up the baton on behalf of the community with regard to securing TVG status on Stoke Lodge, Emma and Helen have worked tirelessly and have achieved great success against insuperable odds and endless frustrations and have secured an Inspector led review of Applications TVG 2 & 3.

This has included extensive research, collation of evidence and numerous legal submissions. These submissions have been prepared by and large by Helen and Emma but have required the input from barrister Andrew Sharland KC to improve the chances of securing an Inspector led review utilising his extensive knowledge of TVG law and its vast body of precedents.

To date, this vital input from Andrew Sharland KC has cost well in excess of £100,000.00 (one hundred thousand pounds). This cost would have been much larger had it not been for the input and drafting undertaken by Helen and Emma. These funds have been raised by Helen and Emma via word of mouth, via their social media platforms and support from Save Stoke Lodge Parkland members, at the same time as dealing with all the other calls on their time including Stoke Lodge, their families and their employers, not to mention the endless disputes and spurious claims by Cotham Academy. This legal cost has been generated in chunks as and when the needs of the process presented itself, not in one go; and this may have given the impression of an endless call for money and may have resulted in some "request fatigue" within some sectors of the community.

On occasions, because Emma and Helen were on a treadmill of dealing with the demands of their Applications whilst dealing with the demands of their jobs and families and the diversions introduced by Cotham and BCC the fundraising did not keep pace with the requirement to pay Andrew Sharland KC and as a consequence, they were obliged to self-fund the barrister more than once. I'm sure you will agree with me that is dreadfully unfair.

The current situation is that the Inspector, Mr Petchey, is now in receipt of all the information he has requested (instructed) all parties to provide to enable him to formulate his report and make a recommendation on whether or not to award Stoke Lodge TVG status.

From We Love Stoke Lodge this includes 6 lever arch files of evidence, a file of arguments and legal submissions setting out the case for recommending TVG status making reference to relevant evidence contained in the evidence files and additionally a file of counter arguments to the arguments raised by the objectors (Cotham and BCC) in response to the applicant's submission.

We do not know when the Inspector will issue his report and recommendation but we anticipate it could be any time between Feb to end of May. The process is that he will issue a confidential draft of his findings "for comments" prior to the formal issue for consideration by the Public Rights of Way and Green Committee.



The issue that we face is that Helen and Emma anticipate that should the Inspector recommend registration as a TVG, which they consider highly likely, then the objectors, in particular Cotham, may seek to introduce new arguments or challenge the Inspectors rationale or reasons for recommending registration.

The problem is that this will all happen very quickly and responses will be required at very short notice. This problem is compounded by the fact that KCs in general and Andrew Sharland KC in particular require payment up front before they start work.

Helen and Emma estimate that the cost of Andrew Sharland's input could be up to £10,000.00 (Ten thousand pounds) in enhancing and/or preparing and submitting any counter arguments.

Whilst this is a hypothetical problem, should it come to pass, there will not be time for Helen and Emma to raise the funds, whilst preparing the response, before the need to instruct the barrister.

Hence this note is to alert members of the community to this potential problem and request those who can to make a "pledge" to provide a donation, of a certain amount of their choice, at a later date, should the need arise.

We are proposing this solution as contingency planning to enable Helen and Emma to concentrate on their response to any objection raised by Cotham or Bristol City Council. For the avoidance of doubt we are not asking for any cash now and the "pledge" is not legally binding. We will make a register of the pledges and only contact those included should the need arise.

Hopefully, the Inspector will recommend registration, certainly Helen and Emma are very confident that the weight of evidence they have submitted provides a compelling argument to all the concerns previously raised by the Inspector and the objectors. Following Registration, that dreadful fence can be removed and future generations can enjoy the field as we did previously.

As I mentioned earlier, we anticipate that the Inspector will issue his draft Report and Recommendation some time within the next four months i.e., February to May 2023 and we anticipate legal costs to counter a fresh objection from Cotham or BCC could be up to £10,000.00 (Ten thousand pounds). We recognise that there may be financial constraints, but if you can make a pledge, it could make all the difference. If you would like any further information please call us on the numbers below, or send a message to the e-mail addresses below.

Yours sincerely



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