

[REDACTED]  
Swaffham  
Norfolk  
PE32 7EX

[REDACTED]  
Swaffham Town Council,

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

For the attention of the town clerk.

Dear Sir,

With reference to Swaffham Recreation Ground, mainly in the area of the foot ball arena and relating to antisocial behaviour, this includes over and above the thudding of the foot ball noise, loud music shouting and abusive language.

I personally witnessed a gang of youths, male and female while I was sitting on a bench in the recreation ground, who tried to intimidate me by riding a bicycle in circles around me and drinking from a bottle of wine and a boom box on his back pack blaring out loud rave music and passing the bottle of wine around to his friends who were with him, he then threw the empty bottle over his shoulder and missed me by inches. Also on another occasion two youngsters aged about 14 years old sitting near the football arena inhaling which appeared to be nitrous oxide from small balloons. These unacceptable events and noise levels often

occur at unsociable hours, such as 6am in the morning and can continue to 10 or 11 pm in the evening, parents taking young children to the play area which is next to the football arena, and people just enjoying or passing through the recreation ground feel intimidated by all this.

The intolerable situation affects both residents in Greenhoe Place and Southlands, causing great distress to people who live there. Residents at times have to retreat to the opposite side of their houses and shut doors and windows, even on a very hot day, it also makes sitting in our gardens impossible because of the volume of noise. One couple who are residents in Greenhoe Place were forced to put their bed in the lounge which is located at the front of their house, due to the wife's serious health condition and could not cope with the intolerable noise level, soon after sadly this poor lady passed away, her husband was considering moving home, but as you now have to declare on The Law Society form when you sell a property, any noise nuisance that is in close proximity, the chances of getting a buyer is almost nil and is devalued by this. Surely the valuation department must now take this into account regarding rateable

value of these properties unless something is done about this situation. One resident has already decided to sell up who's property backs close to the football arena. Residents in this area are sufficiently intimidated to not pursue this with the council or police.

The council's planning department having granted planning permission for the development of residential properties to be built adjacent to the recreation ground should maintain some form of law and order over the facilities on the recreation ground.

A possible solution could be for the football arena area to be kept locked between certain times to avoid use in unsociable hours and the best possible service pursued by both the council and Police.

The recreation ground has always been a great amenity for the town, but it is now over shadowed by events and as my husband was born and brought up on the market place in Swaffham many years ago and now back living in Greenhoe Place having retired, its of great sadness that this intolerable situation has blighted this otherwise pleasant place to live for us and other residents.


[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

Since writing this letter, on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 we had to phone the police to inform them of unnoicable noise levels, including loud music, bad language, shouting, on top of all the thudding at the football arena, these incidents also occurred on Friday evening until 9 pm 31<sup>st</sup> July and Saturday afternoon the 1<sup>st</sup> August.

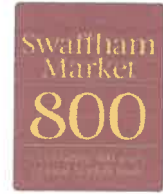
The police arrived at our property at 5.30 pm unannounced and we were not happy with that, and we were told (that the council owned the recreation ground and they put the activities close to residential properties and should have been put in another area and its not the police's problem, its the council's responsibility and not to phone the police get them to sort it out) to us and the residents its completely unacceptable.





# Swaffham Town Council

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[www.swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)



**PLEASE REPLY TO:** Richard Bishop, Town Clerk **E-mail:** [townclerk@swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

6<sup>th</sup> August 2020

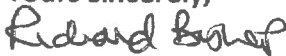
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Swaffham,  
Norfolk, PE37 7EY

Dear [REDACTED]

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August relating to the recent anti-social behaviour at the Haspall's Road Recreation Ground. First of all let me assure you that Swaffham Town Council take all complaints very seriously indeed and they will look closely at all of the issues you have raised, many of which are civil disorder or criminal acts, that are for the Police to deal with, despite what you have reported to me. The Town Council fully sympathise with all of the issues that you have outlined and will give full consideration to some of your suggestions.

I am particularly concerned at your statement in relation to how the Police have responded to your plea for help, I will take up this matter with the Police direct as this is unacceptable. As a Local Authority Swaffham Town Council manage the public open spaces and the facilities that fall within these boundaries, we do not have the powers of arrest or the resources to deal with anti-social behaviour, that appears to have degenerated into civil disorder and criminal activity. The actions you have described are not that of a normal law bidding citizen and we do have a large number of people that do fall into this category, that use the public facilities and appreciate what we have. We take responsibility for providing facilities that the general public want to use and in general the Haspall's Road Recreation Ground, is largely a well-used and popular area. Unfortunately, this past three or four months, since the lockdown period has come into play for the global pandemic Covid-19, we have experienced a high level of this type of behaviour. The petty vandalism is currently off the scale, unprecedented. It is wasting the time of my Groundstaff on a daily basis, who have to clear up the debris of broken glass and repair broken equipment, it is a grave attack on our community, our society. It is not just at the Rec, it is in all public areas of the Town, our public toilets in the Town Centre is another prime target.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Town Council, we will take responsibility for what is managed by the Town Council and we will look at these issues very closely in the coming weeks. What I cannot promise is to change or influence the areas which are not our responsibility, we do not have a valuation office, we cannot enforce the law and we are not the planning authority. That said, we will do what we can to address these issues with the relevant authorities.

Yours sincerely,  
  
Richard Bishop  
**Town Clerk**