

President: Rt.Hon. the Lord Randall of Uxbridge Kt.PC.

Julia Thompson
Development and Disposal Surveyor
Property & Estates
Civic Centre
High Street
Uxbridge
UB8 1UW



6th February 2024

Dear Ms Thompson

Re: Disposal of Uxbridge Golf Course and Haste Hill Golf Course

I note the Council proposes applications to the Secretary of State to dispose of Uxbridge Golf Course in two separate landholdings. This site is located within the Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) and has provided public benefit as green space since it was acquired into public ownership in the 1940's.

I note that Council states it is making an annual loss, there is a reduction in demand for golf courses and there are a lot of other golf courses locally that can meet local need. Therefore, consideration should be given to opportunities beyond golf for how land might be used e.g. rewilding, creating a buffer/extension to the adjacent nature reserves and using biodiversity credits to generate income. This, or similar, landscape, access or biodiversity opportunities will have strong community support.

I urge the council to consider wider opportunities, such as the above. However, if the Council continues plans to dispose on a long term lease, please act on the points below.

The notices state that "land is being sold for use as a golf course". This statement is welcome as that is in line with the purposes of the Green Belt but it offers no guarantee at all that land will be managed for public benefit in perpetuity. Please can you confirm exactly what legal means, restrictive covenants or other tools are being used to ensure the land use and management stays in line with Green Belt purposes and the Councils requirements under NPPF para 150¹ in perpetuity?

If the Council is given approval by the Secretary of State for disposal we would need to see reassurance (beyond current planning policy) that the land will be safeguarded in perpetuity as green space in line with the original intentions behind its acquisition into public ownership and that action is taken by the council now whilst the land is still in public ownership to ensure long term community benefit of the land. This could include path creation, as outlined below.

¹ Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

Colne Valley Park Trust
Charity Registration Number: 1181303
Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company
A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England. Company No. 08131867

Registered Office: c/o Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre, Denham Court Drive, Denham,
Buckinghamshire, UB9 5PG
www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

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Public right of way U50 through the golf course links to Harvil Road. To avoid this dangerous stretch of road many people for decades have walked past the club house to join the public footpath to Frays Valley Local Nature Reserve. There is also another path that is well used by local communities from Uxbridge Roundabout which provides another way through to the nature reserve and the canal and many people use this as a larger circular walk along the canal and then back through Uxbridge Alderlade.

See the attached map. Prior to sale, provision should be made to incorporate these additions into the Rights of Way network. Buckinghamshire did this at Kingcup Farm, Denham before disposal, we request that Hillingdon do the same here. If, for whatever reason, the Council is unable to designate as Public Rights of Way please establish long-term status as Permissive Paths and ensure this is included in the lease terms.

The Golf Course occupies the Valley sides immediately adjacent to Frays Farm Meadows SSSI, Frays Valley Local Nature Reserve, Harefield Place Nature Reserve and the Frays River. Therefore, unsympathetic site management or potential future development has a high potential to negatively impact on these protected sites, part of a regionally and nationally valuable network of wetland habitats running throughout the valley. Please clarify what measures the Council will be taking in terms of caveats and conditions to the lease to ensure that:

- there is a suitable buffer to these wildlife sites, that is protected and managed sympathetically for wildlife in perpetuity, in line with the Council's biodiversity duties under the Environment Act 2021.
- potentially damaging and polluting operations are not undertaken on the valley sides.
- opportunities are taken to expand areas of land managed specifically for wildlife which can be accessible to the public, given the objectives for the Colne Valley Regional Park.

The Colne Valley Regional Park is willing to be involved in discussions about the role it could perform on external fundraising to cover capital costs and maintenance.

One of these holdings, comprising 6 hectares, is linked to the 1938 Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act. All proceeds from any sale should be allocated to improve the remaining local Green Belt as provided for in section 25 of the 1938 Act. Use of proceeds can be informed by the Colne Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy including provision of active travel, biodiversity and landscape enhancement, a countryside management service and possibly even purchase of land that can achieve strategically important connectivity for the above.

Similar points apply to the proposed sale of Haste Hill Golf Course next to Ruislip Woods NNR and Poors Field.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Pomeroy
Managing Agent

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