[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Wolverhampton City Council

DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT
30 JAN 2015
WOLVERHAMPTON

PUBLIC PETITION

(For official use only) PUBLIC PETITION NO.	140-15

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Petitions Committee please refer to the guidance leaflet Petitions and E-Petitions Scheme and the Guidance Notes at the back of this form.

1. NAME OF PRINCIPAL PETITIONER
(If applicable, please specify the name of the organisation on whose behalf the petition is raised)

Dukes Park Neighbourhood Watch.

2. PETITION TITLE

Remove The Park From the Dukes Park Estate.

3. PETITION TEXT

The above mentioned wish for the council to remove the park from the Dukes Park Estate, Bilston due to it being a hot spot for Anti Social Behaviour and Criminal Activity

4. ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE ISSUES OF CONCERN BEFORE SUBMITTING THE PETITION

Residents have worked with Police, numerous Nor, Crime ASB numbers have been given however the problem is still ongoing. Residents have liased with both Sandwells and Wolverhampton Council however neither party will take responsibility.

5. PETITION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)	
Name	Matthew Williams
Address	11 Cranstock Gardens Bilston WV14 8GL
Telephone nos.	**Home:** **Mobile:**
E-mail address	
No. of petition signatures	85

STATEMENT TO THE COMMITTEE:

Should the Committee consider it necessary, in order to broaden its understanding of the petition, it may invite a petitioner to appear before and give an oral presentation and answer question. Would you wish, if invited, to appear?

YES	NO

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL PETITIONER:

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Petitions and E-Petitions Scheme, the principal petitioner should sign and date below.

Signature ....

Date ...19/11/2014.....

Completed forms should be returned to—

Democratic Support
Governance Services
Delivery Directorate
Wolverhampton City Council
St Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1SH

Email: democratic.support@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Tel: 01902 550181

5. Petition Background Information

The factual background and information as to why the removal of the park is necessary is as follows:

The park in question was constructed early in 2014. Since before it was made open to the public and whilst still surrounded by Harris fencing it became an area which attracted antisocial behaviour and acts of criminality, namely extensive damage to the fencing surrounding the park. These matters were all reported to the police, however the incidents of antisocial behaviour and criminality increased throughout the year both in frequency and severity.

Throughout the year residents of Dukes Park have had to endure the following:

1) Criminal damage caused to the park, this has included the protective flooring being ripped up and having to be replaced, youths smashing play equipment with a golf club, extensive graffiti and most disturbingly sexual imagery drawn over the play equipment and fencing. This is still to be removed even though it has been reported to police. All these matters have been reported to the police and have been constant throughout the year. Photographic evidence available.
2) Arson, youths have been reported setting fire to trees on the walkway by the park. Also the bin on the play area has been set on fire on several occasions.
3) Further criminal damage to signage which have been ripped from the ground and was found next to the park. Also criminal damage to the benches that have recently been fitted.
4) Pornographic imagery in the form of drawings on the pathway leading to the park. Residents went out and cleaned this away due to its nature.
5) Theft, a sales sign was stolen from a property. Youths were then encountered with said sign over the park after been observed by residents hitting each other with it.
6) The park has become a meeting ground for large groups which causes harassment, alarm and distress to residents due to the screaming, swearing and behaviour of these youths. This constitutes a criminal offence under the public order act. The youths have also been on the park as late as 02.30 am, taking into consideration that family housing is only a few metres away from the park makes this completely unacceptable.
7) Public place violence, groups of youths have been reported fighting over the park.
8) Public place underage drinking, the park has become a meeting ground for youths drinking alcohol. Smashed alcohol bottles along with empty cider and vodka bottles and empty beer cans have all been found in and around the play area.
9) The park has also become a meeting ground for youths on scrambler and quad bikes, these have been observed by residents racing around the park area when young children and toddlers were using the park, again this matter was reported to police. Photographs of these offenders have been posted on the neighbourhood watch Facebook page.
10) A number of cars and mopeds have driven onto the park to deposit friends at the play area. Recently a moped has driven onto the park with no lights almost knocking over one of the residents and their daughter.
11) A car has been driven onto the park area and set on fire. Details have been provided to the police and council as yet this car has not been removed. Youths have since been spotted jumping up and down on the burnt out vehicle.

Other issues of note are as follows:

1) Numerous residents both of Dukes Park and the neighbouring estate will state that they were informed by sales representatives of Barratt homes that there would only be one or

two pieces of toddler only equipment. Most notably were told there would be "one or two springy chickens....." This was a lie.

2) Plans were not made readily available to residents. Therefore residents were not given an opportunity to make any lawful objections to the structure and its site, therefore leaving residents to question the legality of the process.
3) The park has equipment in it which has actively attracted youths gathering, swearing and acting in antisocial manner. Most notably a large bucket swing, residents have regularly reported to the police, large groups all on this piece of equipment screaming and swearing loudly. This piece of equipment has already been damaged and broken once, instead of replacing it with an actual piece of toddler equipment a new bucket swing was fitted in spite of residents making both Wolverhampton council and Barratt homes aware of the issues and its distressing effect on residents.
4) On liaising with residents on the neighbouring estate, we have been informed that a play area had to be removed from their estate due to antisocial behaviour. It is therefore baffling as to why a park was built on Dukes Park.
5) Residents have made numerous attempts and pleas with both Wolverhampton council and Barratt homes regarding the issue of the park and have received no assistance. Wolverhampton council's response has always been that it is unadopted land and not their responsibility. However, Barratt homes have stated that the park was built on Wolverhampton council's insistence and that planning permission approval depended on the park being built. If this is true then the council must take responsibility for the distress caused to residents.

The facts of the matter are simply the park has attracted criminality and antisocial behaviour which were not present prior to its construction.

The park is noted to be for toddlers however the simple fact is it is not used by toddlers as residents are too intimidated to take young children over there. It is controlled by youths, a group of whom commit criminal and antisocial acts which is evidenced through photographs and will be attested to by residents.

Residents have liaised with the local Neighbourhood Police who have now installed a dome hawk CCTV camera however this has not acted as a deterrent to the youths and a number of the incidents noted above have occurred since the camera was fitted. Unfortunately we have also been informed that the quality of picture from the dome hawk camera is poor therefore it has not assisted in identifying the people who are involved in the incidents. The police do not have sufficient resources to patrol the park constantly.

The only relief residents have is when the weather deters these groups from congregating.

Due to the above the 85 residents who have signed the attached petition demand the park is removed with immediate effect. There is, in our opinion no justification for the council to insist it remain after all the harassment it has caused.