

Appendix 15

Blantyre Soccer Academy

Appeals response

Blantyre Soccer Academy is an organisation dedicated to the eradication of poverty: financial, health, lack of opportunity and physical and mental well-being. It is evident that the Jock Stein Sports Facility has been neglected by South Lanarkshire Council and the Leisure Trust. Furthermore, we have provided written documentation that South Lanarkshire will only provide a repairs service at Jock Stein.

We have constructed a social, sporting and financial plan to stop the closure and further eradication of service provision at the Jock Stein Sports Facility.

We have written Development Plan, Community Use Agreement, Business Plan which clearly shows that the Hub will stay open, the football facility will be improved and the users and the local community will have direct access to the Jock Stein Sports Facility.

It is extremely disappointing to view the negativity of some sporting organisations, who perceive that the Soccer Academy is some sort of enemy without having any serious consideration of the current owners of the site, the lack of management scrutiny and the run down of the facility over the last number of years.

We believe that any anger should be directed at the decision makers and not a community organisation who has invested significant resources trying to resolve the historical underfunding, mismanagement and under resourcing of the working-class communities within South Lanarkshire.

It is evident that there are a number of organisations/people who believe that the Jock Stein Sports Facility should remain within the ownership of South Lanarkshire regardless of historical underfunding and the knowledge that the situation will not change. They have not provided one notion, positive comment, credible thought on how to keep the Jock Stein Sports Facility open.

We do not accept this position, we believe that the improvements at the Jock Stein Sports Facility can be the catalyst for the renewal of the local community: a launching pad against insecurity, hunger, lack of opportunity and physical fitness.

Summary

The Strategic Board and the Community Use Agreement will ensure that fairness and proper decision making will be at the heart of the new facility. So, if you have a team which e.g. trained on the facility, for 20+ years, the booking would be honoured.

The council tax payers throughout South Lanarkshire are subsidising a facility, on figures provided by South Lanarkshire council, is 62% closed and had lost £500,000 in the last three years. This financial crisis and lack of use as well as the historical underinvestment initiated the closure programme by South Lanarkshire.

We are also proud of the Jock Stein Sports Facility, and that is why we are determined to raise the standard of the facility, campaign for better facilities and to improve the quality of life of everyone.

A local resident has advised that the Soccer Academy should look at other facilities and leave the Jock Stein Sports Facility within the ownership of South Lanarkshire Council. We have used the Jock Stein Sports Facility for many years, and we treasure the facility just as much as any other organisation. It is the lack of funding and the run down by South Lanarkshire which caused our intervention. Our first objective is to keep it open.

We also support the sentiments raised by another local resident, who demanded that we would not be in this position if South Lanarkshire had invested in the facility.

There appears to be a standard letter from a particular source, which appears to be quite happy to reject the application by the Soccer Academy but has provided no alternative.

There is a comment about a play barn in East Kilbride, which appears to be subject to a transfer and now sits empty. We have absolutely no knowledge of this matter. It may be prudent for the sender to raise the matter directly with South Lanarkshire Council.

There is a comment about the transfer will lead to anti-social behaviour. This comment comes from the core of the objectors. Unlike this person, we trust the local community. Investment, improved facilities and a new future for the younger ones will never lead to anti-social behaviour.

A person connected with a football club had advised the soccer academy that we should go for Stonefield or the Priory Parks. It is not an ideological refusal; it is just the Jock Stein Sports Facility (stay out of Hillhouse message to Blantyre)

A local resident has commented that they want the Jock Stein Sports Facility to remain part of the Hillhouse community. It is, currently, the same as every other council facility, owned by South Lanarkshire. The asset transfer will bring the ownership closer to the local community. run by Strategic Board and with the Community Use Agreement.

A resident from central Hamilton has described the Soccer Academy as an elitist organisation but didn't manage to read any of the documentation provided by the Soccer Academy. We recommend that he reads the Community Use Agreement, which for the first time provides a guarantee of use and not reliant on the letting system of South Lanarkshire.

One local resident associated with a football team has made scurrilous allegation of the soccer academy telling lies. We will not be commenting on any part of the contribution by this person.

We support a significant part of the contribution from Blantyre Celtic. The council should be doing more to engage with the local community, the schools, sporting groups. We do not believe that South Lanarkshire has the wherewithal, skill, determination or commitment to change its philosophy. South Lanarkshire has been in existence since 1996, and had not managed to engage so far.

A resident has commented that the facility would be removed from public use. We reaffirm that the asset transfer will bring the ownership closer to the local community. run by Strategic Board and with the Community Use Agreement.

A resident has complained that the Soccer academy is run as an efficient and competent organisation. We reaffirm that the asset transfer will bring the ownership closer to the local community. run by Strategic Board and with the Community Use Agreement.

A local resident has commented that the sports hub will close and that the facility would only be used as a football venue. we recommend that the resident read the documentation provided.

A resident has commented that the facility should stay in council ownership despite the fact there is a recognition there will be no investment in the facility. We reject this notion. We want a brilliant facility.

We believe that the local community will gain an asset with the asset transfer: not controlled by politicians, senior officials and trust. A resident commented that the community would lose the facility.

There is a scurrilous comment that a member of the soccer academy is an employee of south Lanarkshire. We never comment on the personal employment of other people.

A comment from football team states that the asset transfer is only to benefit one team. we recommend that the person should read the documentation. It is evident that he has not done so.

A resident does not want any community asset transfers and believes that South Lanarkshire should keep all the facilities. We would have some sympathy with this comment if South Lanarkshire has a proper investment strategy and looked after the facility.

We also support that the public should have access to public facilities. the lack of funding has led to the crisis at the Jock Stein Sports Facility.

A resident with a Parkhead postcode has commented that they travel to train/play with a team at the Jock Stein Sports Facility and would oppose the asset transfer as the child would need to find a new base. The community agreement is very clear: we want the current teams to stay at the Jock Stein Sports Facility. There is no need for this team to change location.

This resident wants Blantyre teams not to use facility, apparently.

There is a major conspiracy theory contribution which appears to suggest that there is an ulterior motive with regard to the asset transfer.

pitch availability – the community use agreement covers this matter.

strategic board – provides the management and overview

finance – the improvements are fully costed

funding – the information is within business plan, (did you read the business plan?)

A number of clubs who claim to use the facility are not recorded by South Lanarkshire on documentation provided to us.

Conclusion

We have provided a social, sporting and financial model. We have provided a future of investment, high standards and a positive impact on the local community. we reject the current situation and we believe that the policies of disinvestment can be reversed. we have faith in local people, especially those who have been disenfranchised by poverty, health inequalities and lack of opportunity. It is time for a radical change,

social

sporting

financial

