



1 December 2010

Regarding the proposed skateboard area

Opinion remains divided about this issue, therefore Paul and I feel that as joint chair of Friends of Telegraph Hill Park, it would be misleading and wrong of us to come down in full support of the plan.

What we can say is that the working party was managed responsibly and a great deal of thought and good faith went into achieving the best possible compromise in locating the site within the Lower Park next to the baseball court – though those local residents who felt it was wrong to install a skateboard area at all were disappointed that, in their view, not enough energy was put into searching for an alternative site altogether.

Under our chairship, Friends of Telegraph Hill Park has sought to encourage local initiative, especially amongst young people, and to promote a sense of local ownership of this shared space. In this respect we have welcomed the work the boys have put into the project, and would be pleased to see a positive outcome. At the same time, we have been dismayed that feelings have run so high that occasionally the debate has broken down into a slanging match, which has threatened to permanently divide our community.

The unresolved fears of some of the local community remain speculative, and therefore impossible to completely dispel.

- Will the skateboard area attract anti social behaviour?
- Will the noise level disturb local residents?
- Will it be an incitement to youths to illegally enter the park at night and disrupt the peace?
- Will the facility, as restricted as this space is, fall into disuse once the current generation has moved on?

It seems to us that because no one can reasonably predict the answers to these questions, the only way to allay these fears would be for the Skatepark Action Group to raise a further small contingency fund which could in effect restore the area to plain tarmac in the future should the community's worst fears be proved right.

It is almost universally agreed that the park works very well as it is. However given that there are funds available for an added facility in these straitened times, when it is unlikely that this kind of money will be available for the foreseeable future, it is important that a responsible decision is made to benefit the widest number of the community.

Yours sincerely,

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