



**DARREN JONES MP**  
Member of Parliament for Bristol North West

18<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Dear Constituents,

### **Stoke Lodge Playing Fields**

I write further to my letter in June in respect of the ongoing dispute between Cotham School and residents in and around Stoke Bishop (the Community) regarding the proposed installation of a perimeter fence at Stoke Lodge Playing Fields.

Following the conclusion of an initial village green application, I undertook to bring together the relevant parties to try and mediate a solution that worked for everyone involved.

In our first meeting, we agreed that both parties wanted to find a solution that allowed use of the playing fields by both Cotham School and the Community. It was agreed that, over the Summer, both parties would consider alternatives to an internal lockable perimeter fence as had been originally suggested by Cotham School.

Our second meeting, which took place last Friday, was intended to be a discussion around alternative solutions.

I welcomed the suggestion from Cotham School that a new specification could be agreed, which included the use of some of the existing perimeter structures (instead of an entirely internal secondary fence). Cotham School suggested that that specification could be agreed via a "sounding board" which it would run, by invitation to relevant stakeholders.

However, it was noted that the community groups represented at the meeting would only be invited to that sounding board if they agreed to (i) stop all campaigning, including in respect of Freedom of Information Requests; and (ii) delete the "We [love] Stoke Lodge" Facebook group.

Whilst I appreciate that this ongoing dispute has caused tensions to run high, I was disappointed that these requirements were attached to an invitation to further the conversation on specification of the fence. Indeed, the tone from Cotham School (via a certain Governor who attended the meeting) appeared to be more focussed on power play instead of conciliation.

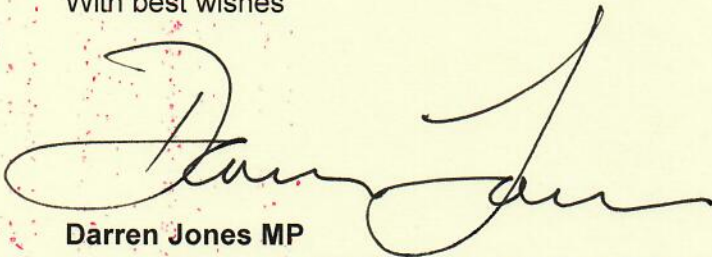
I have since been informed that the community has lodged a new village green application, no doubt in fear that any subsequent meetings would be in vain and perhaps without an invitation to the community groups being made at all.

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
0117 959 6545 | [www.darren-jones.co.uk](http://www.darren-jones.co.uk)  
[darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk)  
[facebook.com/darrenjonesmp](https://facebook.com/darrenjonesmp) | [@darrenpjones](https://twitter.com/darrenpjones)

This is clearly disappointing. Given that the new village green application has been submitted, it is right that I now step back from this dispute until the conclusion of that application.

This dispute is now costing both parties significant amounts of money and time and I sincerely hope that a solution can be found, that allows pupils at Cotham School to use the playing fields in an appropriately safe environment whilst also protecting a public amenity enjoyed by my constituents for many generations.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Jones', written in a cursive style.

**Darren Jones MP**  
**Labour Member of Parliament, Bristol North West**  
*Your Voice in Parliament. Your Champion in Bristol.*

cc. Cotham School  
Bristol City Council  
Thangam Debbonaire MP  
Cllr John Goulandris  
Cllr Peter Abraham