

Appendix 2

Against

Loss of opportunity to visit a place of remembrance/reflection

A swimming pool would be a preferred amenity

Why can this not be done as part of a new build estate?

Residents would be vulnerable – buildings (particularly in the care village) are too easily accessible by non-residents

Worries about increased litter in the area, some concerns that bins are already not emptied enough

Concerns about the safety of children in regards to county lines drug operations

Noise from skaters and their accessories (e.g. speakers for music)

Paper copies of the survey were not received by residents

There are no nearby public conveniences for skaters to use

Concerns about lighting- will there be too much/will there be enough, the lighting will ruin the view for residents

Police presence in the area is already not enough to deal with anti-social behaviour

It feels as though Centenary Field is becoming a dumping ground

Centenary Field and its surroundings is an area for over 55's only

The questions included on the survey were flawed and the survey did not reach all residents. The survey should be done again.

The interests of one age group should not override the interests of another age group

The skate park is a great idea but not in this location

The results of the survey weren't fairly advertised

Centenary fields already has problems at night time, particularly ASB, this would make that worse

Residents should be co-opted on to the working group

There is not an Oakham Town Councillor who represents this ward

Users of the skate park would travel by car increasing parking problems in the area

A skatepark is too specific and would have a limited number of users

Concerns about the ongoing costs of maintaining a skatepark

Concerns about the health and safety of an unsupervised facility

Too little open space will be left

There should be a public consultation in line with the terms of the lease between OTC and the tresham institute

What will the structure look like in 10 years? How will it be maintained

Skatepark Working Group Feedback Report Appendix 2

200 residents have been surveyed by a fellow resident and 75% were opposed to skate park being added to Centenary Field

There are better locations, specifically Royce. An individual said he had checked the land registry and Royce playing field is larger than Centenary field.

There are health and safety concerns at Centenary field in relation to the pond

There is amenity and value in open space

It is not just elderly people against this, younger residents also do not want a skate park on Centenary Field as they are concerned they would have to pay for any damage to their own properties

Residents want the skate park to be included in a new build estate so that anyone buying a house there already know there will be a skate park

It would have a financial impact on the surrounding houses

It would become a hub for teens to meet

Who would remove unwanted graffiti

Teenagers all want to do different things so you have to provide a wealth of different things

PROTECT THE CENTENARY FIELD

Neighbouring residents are strongly against the location for a Skatepark on the Centenary Field in Oakham with over 90% opposed: over 200 in number. The Field currently provides a green open space for the public of all ages to enjoy. It is bounded by Residential Housing, Care Village and Retirement Appartments,

The resident reasons for the opposition are numerous but include:

- Loss of open green space and damage to the environment
- Downgrades memorial status; designated a Centenary Field to commemorate WW1
- Increased criminal activity, drugs and anti-social behavior. Police cannot cope with the current problems
 - Increased child vulnerability
 - Increased litter, vandalism and graffiti
- Detrimental noise impact
- Reduced public usage of the field
- Proposal breaches lease agreement set by Tresham Institute, owners of the field
- No post build maintenance: no security
- Concerns funds better used towards other public amenities: e.g. Swimming Pool

Note our action group is not against the concept of a Skatepark but strongly opposed to the proposed location

The Town Council and Working Party have behaved in a disrespectful and disreputable way towards the residents:

- Failed to recognize and respond to residents views and concerns- wall of silence
- Their survey is biased in design, poorly distributed and the results misleading.
- Aimed to fast track project through seeing the Centenary Field as an easy win
Have not undertaken a thorough investigation into more suitable and appropriate locations
- Have not acted in a manner required of a publically elected organization; this has been reported to the Rutland County Council Monitoring Officer.
- Town Council and Working Party are being steered and influenced by people with vested interests in this project
- Aggressive and dismissive attitude to residents' concerns by Skatepark facebook group.
- Arranged public 'pop-in' sessions which are premature and inappropriate at this time. (Recently changed to 'Consultation sessions'!)

In Summary the Town Council and Working Party have no credible Mandate for a Skatepark in the Centenary Field:

- The proposed location proposal should be withdrawn
- The current Town Council Working Party should resign; the way they have conducted themselves is unacceptable and is 'not fit for purpose'
- If a new Skatepark build can be justified a new Working Party should be set up with credible leadership and be seen to be working closely with the residents and public.
- It should properly investigate suitable locations and not go for a quick win at the expense of residents.

Centenary Field Opposition Action Group
(Prince George Ave Dev; Rutland Care Village; Lonsdale Park Appartments)

Skatepark Working Group Feedback Report Appendix 2

I attended the open meeting last evening and made clear my support for a skatepark, although I do not believe that Centenary Field is the best location for it. At the meeting I attempted to make clear that I believe the Working Party has been misled with regard to the size and available space at Royce's Recreation Ground. The point that I was making, which was instantly dismissed as false by Jon Dixon, is that Royce's Recreation Field is in fact larger than Centenary Field. That is evidenced both by my visiting both sites and according to the Town Council's list of assets which it owns or leases and which is filed with the Land Registry.

Let's be clear, skateparks and residential areas do not mix. This is particularly true for the residents living around Centenary Field (CF), many of whom are disabled, elderly and vulnerable. So how is it that Oakham Town Council (OTC) / Skatepark Working Group (SWG) even considered CF, let alone proposed it as the site for a skatepark? We are not against the idea of a new second skateboard per se, but Centenary Field is definitely the wrong place to put this. Feelings amongst the CF residents are running high because of what is perceived as the biased and underhand way in which OTC/SWG have acted to date. Two "public meetings" have just served to confirm that OTC/SWG is not interested in listening to CF residents and their legitimate concerns and is, instead, intent on trying to force the skatepark on residents against their wishes and without their consent. Now we come to the infamous "survey" and "survey" process. The "survey" form was clearly biased and designed to encourage a "yes" outcome. The "survey" form was only selectively distributed amongst CF residents and, being available online, could presumably have been completed by anyone without having to live in Oakham or even in Rutland. Without any age or identity verification, presumably people/children could have completed the survey multiple times using multiple devices/broadband. In fact, the whole thing was an exercise in opposition suppression and self-serving denial of local democracy. If this had been handled properly, people may have been more receptive and the current "temperature" may be a little lower.

We are writing to ask you to seriously consider the negative impact a skatepark on Centenary Field would have on the nearby residents, on current users of the area and the beauty of this idyllic spot. The working party has done nothing to allay the fears of nearby residents and have failed to listen and address those fears. It is left then to appeal to each councillor to think well on this matter. All entries to the town are welcoming and attractive. The siting on Centenary Field with the noise, litter, ash and graffiti that skateparks attract would certainly spoil the current beautiful look of this area. Other sites have been dismissed out of hand by the working party under the influence of Jon Dixon (who has stated on social media that he is only interested in that site and no other). A skatepark caters only for a small section of the community. If funds are to be raised why not for something that caters for a wider group of society. We already have a skatepark and if it's dangerous (as claimed by this group) - where is the proof of this? Why has it not been condemned and dismantled? Is it just that the current one in Oakham is not big enough or daring enough for the older skaters? We understand larger skateparks are easily accessible at Melton and Uppingham - does Oakham really need two? Whilst not against a skatepark per se, we feel it is not something to drop into a residential area and specially one that houses a majority of older residents. Please give this very serious consideration as once the ambience and presentation of this lovely town is spoiled it will be spoiled forever and then be like a hundred other little market towns that have been urbanised.

As neighbouring residents of the Centenary Field we are writing to you to raise serious concerns regarding the organisation and conduct at the Skatepark Working Party public meeting on the 1st November 2022. The issues included:

- The room itself was clearly insufficient in size and not set up to cater for the number of attendees. After the first meeting on the 15th October when next to no one supporting the Skatepark Group attended it was obvious that more of their supporters would turn up and the large number of children present was clearly known before hand. Consequently a number of neighbouring residents wanting to attend could not gain access into the room. A number of elderly residents inside the room could not get seating whilst many were left squeezed in at the back of the room.
- The intimidating atmosphere created was clearly designed to make the residents feel uncomfortable and a number decided not to speak as they considered they would be shouted down and some left early in dismay.
- None of the neighbouring residents' valid objections and concerns raised were properly considered and responded to by the Working Party and no real effort was made to engage the residents on an impartial and constructive basis.
- The theme of the meeting quickly became 'criticise and label the residents as old and anti-young' which was shocking but unfortunately this has been a transparent theme put out by the Skatepark Project Facebook Group
- The Working Party members present did not demonstrate that they were impartial but came across as biased towards the Centenary Field location and dismissive against the neighbouring residents.
- That such a meeting could be held on Town Council premises is shocking and unfortunately helps to bring the Council into disrepute.

It should be no surprise to you that the leader of the Skatepark Project Group, who is a member of the Working Party, continues to strengthen and galvanise the neighbouring residents opposition to the Centenary Field Skatepark proposal by his appalling, obsessive behaviour, intimidating attitude and offensive language on his project facebook site. He continually distorts the facts and dismisses the views and concerns of decent rate paying residents including young families. What is disturbing and very worrying is that by association he continues to discredit the Town Council which is in partnership with his Project Group.

I am writing to support the skate park but to object to the proposed location on Centenary Field.

I object to the location for the following reasons:

1. Green field site: I would support a structure made out of natural materials but I cannot support concrete and metal which will be detrimental to the wildlife/green space.
2. Danger: the proposed site is opposite a busy junction. I have already witnessed school children crossing there, this would happen more frequently. There would also need to be provision for skateboards out of control near the road. The way around this would be a higher, fuller fence but that again would lead to the destruction of green space so I do not support that.

3. Facilities: there are no public parking or toilet facilities near the site.
4. Congestion: there are two further housing estates being built in the near future, with just a few council owned green spaces we need to protect this field and the others.
5. Loss of purpose: The above are my "head" reasons, now my heart: this is the only substantial public owned green space that my husband, our two young children and I can practice rugby and not get in the way of others or trespass on private land. We need a big space to practice drop kicks, penalty kicks and running drills. There is no other green space big enough in town to support this that doesn't interfere with football, basketball, close by residents or fenced parks. My family is not the only family that uses this green space for practice and play, I have seen fitness bootcamps, dog training, football matches, cricket, and golf played on this land.

As this issue is divisive (as demonstrated in the heated informal meetings) is there a different process that we could follow? Could we ask Oakham residents to vote on whether they would prefer a multipurpose green space or a skate park on Centenary Field or other OTC owned/managed land? Was this covered in the Future Rutland survey at all?

Please can you include this view and my voting proposal in your report to the full council.

I am emailing you further to the meeting which I attended on Tuesday evening relating to the proposed build of a skatepark on centenary fields and to again raise my concerns. Firstly I must say the meeting was incredibly hostile and not an environment I would have felt comfortable having my children at (which was encouraged), I definitely did not feel it was a meeting where freedom of speech was welcomed (or it was welcomed, however you would have been subject to a barrage of abuse if you were offering anything but support for the project). I felt that the panel sat at the front was incredibly biased, correct me if I am wrong but family members of councillor Neelson, another ex-councillor and the skate park organiser were clearly there to rally support only, or so it seemed. Surely a meeting of such importance should hold an impartial panel? Secondly the Facebook group which has been set up in support of this project should not be classed as a clear indication of support or need for such a facility in Oakham. There are 395 members of the Facebook group, at the last published count Oakham holds a population of 11000+ residents (ever growing i know). How is a project so small being pushed through and taking up so much of your vaulable time when there are so many more issues that need addressing? Other issues which would support so many more people of all ages and abilities? I agree that the facilities for children on Oakham are limited and a skate park would occupy some children/teens and adults however there are many more things that could be addressed which would be relevant and used by a much larger proportion of the population! Thirdly I really don't think the local residents' views have been taken into consideration. I intended to bring this up in the meeting myself however I attended on my own and felt very intimidated at times by members of the meeting, I also very quickly categorised myself as a "Nimby". Therefore, I would most definitely have been overlooked! Fourthly there is no access to the site without crossing the field, are you proposing to install pathways? if so, this will most certainly increase the overall space taken up from the quoted 2%! One access point into the field is across a private road

(Ellingworth close) at what point will the Town Council take on the cost of maintaining that road because of the increased foot traffic? Another would be through the gap in the fence opposite the care home and the final place would be off the zebra crossing on Barleythorpe Road which again is merely a gap in a hedge unless the foot traffic is going to access through the estate and past residential property. Two of these access points would not be 30 meters away from houses! Whilst I appreciate everyone has differing views, surely the residents should have been the first people you contacted before opening it up to the Facebook group! Doing this has already created a massive social divide within the community which is very unprofessional and unnecessary! The residents at the meeting were being classed as youth opposed, old fashioned, selfish, antisocial and generally against any provision for children. This is NOT the case, the majority of the residents have children or grandchildren, myself included, one of teenage years and one of primary age. There is a wonderful community which is welcoming and thoughtful. We value our properties and their position; we value the safety of our children and we value Oakham as a town, plonking a great big lump of concrete in a green space (which let's be honest are few and far between) will for sure, change the outlook for many, change the approach to Oakham and surely will be going against Rutland's environmental plans. I am not against Skaters, my children have scooters, I do not automatically associate any person with a skateboard or scooter with anti-social behaviour. I'm fairly confident most people are of the same opinion. What I would associate with antisocial behaviour is a hang out, off the town centre. The area on centenary fields already attracts some undesirable people (i know it's not the only area). I'm fairly confident that if you were to spend some time up here over the weekend, there will be teenagers and young adults drinking, smoking cannabis and setting off fireworks at several points during the evening. Allowing a meet up point to be built in this area will no doubt bring more occurrences of such behaviour.

I am writing in relation to the proposed Oakham Skatepark, of which I have a **strong objection to its proposed location**. It is proposed that the skatepark is located on the Centenary Field, Barleythorpe Road, Oakham, LE15 6QH.

Background

As you will be aware the proposed location of the skatepark is at Centenary Field and is bordered by the busy Barleythorpe Road, Catmose College, three developments devoted to care of the elderly, and residential dwellings.

The Centenary Field is leased to Oakham Town Council by Tresham College, of which the lease remaining is circa. 95yrs. At the end of the lease, the land is expected to be returned to Tresham College in the manner in which it was leased, green, open space. All equipment built on the field during this time will need to be removed at this time.

Centenary Field - Current Usage

- The Centenary Field, has recently become home to a lovely, environmentally friendly trim trail.
- The green open space is regularly used by:
 - Walkers
 - Families
 - Students
 - Local sports teams for ad-hoc team training
 - A bootcamp fitness session,
 - football training
 - dog training sessions

- Harrington and Catmose College students also regularly use the field during the summer months during school hours.

The current levels of field usage are for spacious activities attracting a wide ranging demographic.

Given the success of the trim trail, have OTC thought about the idea of adding an outdoor gym – like the one at Rutland water, Sykes Lane where there is an adult outdoor gym area.

However, some of this usage does unfortunately already generate some antisocial behaviour including:

- Vandalism
 - The new Centenary benches have been vandalised with graffiti
 - Bins have been pushed over with force out of their concrete bases
 - Tree damage – see attached photo
- Drug use
 - Needles and other signs of drug abuse are regularly found along the wooded area
- Attracts groups of youths which causes intimidation to locals
 - The staff from Catmose/Harrington schools are regularly around the wooded border the Centenary Field to try and mitigate against this intimidating behaviour to support both local community and their own student population
- Litter
 - Ongoing issues as bins are simply not used
 - Bins that do exist are vandalised, pushed over and often overflowing.

My objections relate to the following areas of concern.

Proposed Location

I do not believe that the Centenary Field is the best location for the skatepark and urge that OTC work with other areas of Rutland CC to find alternative locations – there are many locations in Barleythorpe that could meet the criteria and a holistic view of all locations should be looked into.

With this in mind I have made Barleythorpe Parish Council aware of this proposal and hope that you can work together to find a more suitable location.

I note several locations in Barleythorpe that could be utilised and that Barleythorpe (rightly or wrongly) is already subject to several large residential developments, of which plans for a skatepark could be incorporated into.

I would like to see a feasibility study that looks into several locations across Barleythorpe and Oakham Town Council and valid reasoning for and against each location.

The location of the proposed skatepark, as noted above, is on a busy road – this also leads to distraction for road users as it is proposed to be cited close to the busy road and a very busy junction – see attached photo for reference.

Noise

The location of the skatepark is close to residential dwellings, including three separate developments for elderly care.

A recent example of where noise is an issue from a newly developed skatepark is in Cholsey, South Gloucestershire (link below).

https://uk.news.yahoo.com/anti-social-behaviour-noise-skate-150000271.html?guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlMmNvLnVrLw&guce_referrer_sig=AQA-AAI8N_g7x93GRW8vLcKQ0kAXPFCNeFIYJlClyXYtL4VC9d0OPORqHFA6-pAgkFKIKbAeZIAj8855ewu068d3XpMRYgYpFwqGHSwWzPZFQatj_yz0X46_WR5SmPW21_4MgEKb_I51oKcQuVHYO_ulm39a9AKzU0GqWzjsIX10--flq&guccounter=1

In this case, plans had been approved for the skatepark in 2020, despite noise concerns raised. The skateboards sound are created as tricks and jumps are performed, leaving a loud smack on the ground each time.

During the lighter summer months, this will be an ongoing issue and whilst the park is busy, you can imagine the sound that this is going to create at all times of the day and evening. Whilst I do appreciate sounds barriers could be built to combat this issue, the sounds barriers are often developed through tree and hedge planting, however, as you will see from the attached photo, it appears that the Centenary Field is also a place where vandalism has been carried out and newly planted tree have been snapped and broken – this photo shows it is not due to storm/weather damage, this is a clear break/snap of the tree.

Anti-Social Behaviour

As you will be aware the proposed location of the skatepark is bordered by Barleythorpe Road, Catmose College, three developments devoted to care of the elderly, and residential dwellings.

As noted above, there is already issues of anti-social behaviour and intimidation, but let me draw your attention to just one of the many instance of the anti-social behaviour a skate park can cause.

<https://www.theblackmorevale.co.uk/2021/07/05/scared-to-play-frightened-away/>

The link above details incidences of children being too intimidated to skate at a local skatepark as they feel frightened and intimidated. Of course this means **additional policing is required, and requirements to ensure CCTV is added – bringing extra costs and maintenance to the proposed skatepark**. Costs that during the lifecycle of the skatepark may not always be funded.

Again, let me draw your attention to several instances where CCTV is now required to be installed at already developed skateparks in a bid to mitigate antisocial behaviour at skateparks.

I am writing to offer my objection to the proposed location for the Oakham Skate Park, I attended the meeting last night 1st November. There are many valid points on both sides of the proposal, but from the meeting I felt that the overwhelming feeling was the improvement of provision for the under 18's is actually the issue. A skatepark would only cater for a small portion of this group, it won't provide for non-skaters or children with mobility or SEN conditions. There isn't data being presented showing the target age group is asking for a skatepark or if it will solve the. The lack of available land would also mean if a skate park were to be built, then there wouldn't be many options for providing additional for the wider age groups. Oakham does already have a skate park, this proposal is for a similar facility catering for a subset of the age group, so it would not be providing a solution to the issue being raised last night. There was some very emotive points raised last night, but due to the lack of location options it became a discussion about a skate park location opposition vs not providing any facilities for the younger generation. If the skatepark is successful it will only be contributing a small solution to a much wider issue. I am a resident on Prince George Avenue and ASB and litter are an issue that exists currently, sadly its something that is tolerated at low levels so there isn't the statistical data to back up the experiences. Surely the time, community effort and money would be better spent on a program which would offer provisions for a wider

portion of the age group and could include the views of the target users, something which wasn't present last night.

For

Centenary field is deemed to be a perfect location for a structure of this size by those heavily involved in building skate parks around the country

The proposed size of the skate park would use 2% of the space at Centenary field and no existing equipment would be lost

The positive community around skaters would actually drive away anti-social behaviour

Centenary field is not an area for over 55's only, it is a public space right next to a school and is for all ages, children already encouraged to use it

The interests of one age group should not override the interests of another age group

Centenary field is not a memorial – it is an open public space

Feedback from residents surrounding skate parks in other areas is that they thought it would be awful but that it is not.

The proposed skatepark would be at least 30m from the nearest residents

Skating is a growing sport that encompasses skateboards, scooters, bmx and Rollerblades and appeals to all ages

Skateparks are positive environments with supportive communities and excellent etiquette

There is growing research that skateboarding and associated activities actually reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

Skate parks are seen as safe spaces by their users, supporting their mental health and ability to form positive social relationships

Guidance says that skateparks should be overlooked and accessible, Centenary field meets these criteria

The recommended distance between skatepark and the nearest housing is 30m, this easily achievable at Centenary field

Centenary field was only named in 2018. It has no relevant connection to world war 1 or soldiers that died. It was selected as an open space to place a plaque and bench. Adding a skate park would not remove or detract from the name, the plaque or bench. This space would still be present and respected.

There are older people who would welcome the interaction with young people

The Concerns that are being raised are concerns that would be valid wherever a skate park is located, by using Centenary field OTC are directly addressing those concerns

It was suggested that lighting could be provided on a token scheme similar to that used at Greetham Community Centre skate park, this would mean there would only be light when the skate park is in use which should address people's concerns about light pollution and spoilt views

We need to embrace our youth and stop assuming they are all 'naughty'

Skatepark Working Group Feedback Report Appendix 2

The PCSO in attendance said she has a lot of engagement with teenagers in Oakham and feels that a skate park would be positive, it would be an opportunity to know where Young people are in order to reach out to them

It was suggested that teenager be encouraged to add approved graffiti to a specific part of the park, this is known to encourage groups to take ownership of caring for the site and prevents unwanted graffiti appearing

Not personally worried about ASB but can understand why others may be, however what is most important is to rally round as a community to support young people

There was a working group of young people who were so passionate but they were let down and that was a massive blow to them, if we could get this approved that passion can come back

Centenary field is listed as a park, not just green space

ASB in Oakham is remarkably low but amplified by things like Facebook

Skate parks do not bring ASB, that can already be found in various sites around Oakham

Young people who want to skate are putting a tremendous amount of effort in showing determination and resilience

If young people don't have access to a car they can not skate anywhere, not even Greetham community centre

OTC already listen to residents and respond, when bins in Centenary field are overflowing one phone call and they are emptied

If children are going to the skate park after school it could reduce the traffic problems in that area at that time

Dog mess on the field is more of a problem than litter caused by children using the area

Children should get a say in if this is wanted

There are lots of opportunities for youth in Oakham but they are all adult led and require a fee to attend. A skate park would enable self led play in a safe space.

Green space is important but children being a part of that green space is also important

Children feel they are always being told to get off their electronics and get outside, this would give them a reason to get outside

Children said they have been watching others do tricks etc in videos and an Oakham skate park would mean they could actually go out and learn these for themselves

A skate park will not detract from the green open space, it will enable users to be part of nature.

Dear council, can we please have a skatepark because I love my scooter and we have to go far away to use it. If we don't get one I will ask father Christmas for one. I'm a 7 year old boy who loves scooting. Thank you from Ted.

Dear Council
Can we please
have a skate park
because I love
my scooter and
we have to go
far away to use
it. If we don't

Get a
I
will ask for
Christmas for
one.
I am a 7 year old
boy who loves
skating
thank you
From ted dalbu

I am sending this email on behalf of my family. Our family age range is from 65 down to 12. All of whom enjoy skating and scootering. I must add not myself but I do enjoy watching them all. They have many many friends who are also keen for this project to be completed. We as a family have been to all of the 4 parks to see for ourselves where it would/could be. Centenary field is by far the best place for the new Skatepark. It is spacious and would have very little impact of the space needed. It is central to Oakham - far safer than on the outskirts by the by pass. I do not believe it will have the anti social problems that some residents fear. In Oakham we are very lucky as there is very little crime as such. The younger residents desperately need things to focus on - a meeting place to socialise with each other.

I was delighted to hear that The Oakham Skatepark Project might be able to offer Rutland's youth a space where they can go to get fit, practice discipline and learn a new hobby. After the success that Great Britain and young Sky Brown saw in the Olympic Skateboarding categories, I imagined a few more hobbyists and athletes might be inspired.

We have 3 boys who scooter, I skate and my husband BMX's. Young people absolutely need this, and the majority would enjoy and appreciate it. We're in total support.

I honestly do not understand what the problem is with this site, other than a case of severe NIMBY, there is a major lack of facilities for children 6+ in Oakham, correct me if I am wrong but didn't the UK get medals in skateboarding and BMX in the Olympics? Our current/future generations need facilities like this, and this site is perfect.

Honestly from building these things around the U.K this (Centenary Fields) is the most practical place in Oakham to have one for many reasons. The fears raised by those objecting are all shown to be irrational through many case studies from all over the world. For people to object to the sounds of others playing and doing sport whilst living next to a main road and just a few hundred yards from the train line is absolutely beyond me.

The "skate park" behind the castle is so small and poorly designed it's almost impossible to use it for its intended purpose. It's mainly used by young kids and scooters when their parents take them to the park. As a keen skater it would be great to have a safe space to skate and exercise as well as have somewhere children and other adults can learn a new sport. A skatepark opens up a place for many sports not just skateboarding. There's roller skating, roller blading, skateboarding and scooters as well as BMXs. It's very common on most skate parks to grow a community of friends and have people of all ages teaching others how to improve techniques and look after their skate and riding equipment. That's something that hasn't been able to happen in Oakham as the experienced skaters have to travel to Leicester City centre to have a big enough and safe enough skate area. I myself am fed up of having to use the train and busses to get somewhere I can exercise and skate and would 100% use and be more than happy to give advice

and tips to new skaters and younger people if they were interested in starting a new sport

There are many reasons that myself and my scooter mad 12 Yr old son support the Skatepark project. This will be a much-needed positive social space, where children of all ages (and adults) can meet to have fun, learn new skills, exercise and enjoy a sense of community. Young people are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour if they have somewhere, they see as a home from home, where they can make friends and be a part of the skatepark family, whilst benefitting their health and improving social skills, learning about risks and building confidence. We would be 100% in favour of a new skatepark, a much-needed designated place for all to enjoy.

There has never been a decent Skatepark in Oakham and it's about time there was. Stamford has had Skateparks for years, as have Melton and Uppingham – all well supported and used. They are really good and not rubbish – all having fantastic facilities for our youngsters and they keep them off the streets and give them a passion to pursue as they grow.

Melton, Uppingham, Stamford and even Greetham all have excellent Skateboarding facilities.... Oakham has been left behind. It needs something decent so that future Olympians are able to practice their sport.

After living in Oakham for 26 years bringing up our children here and now having our Grandchildren living in Oakham it concerns me that we still have so little leisure facilities for the youngsters. I attended the recent meeting at OTC and was very impressed with the responses from the many youngsters who attended to give their support for a skatepark. Even most of the residents who lived nearby were in support but just didn't want it "in my back yard". I remember that area before they built all the new houses on it, so it could be said they have actually taken away an area for the young. I've been looking closely at the proposed site for the skatepark and feel it is sufficiently far enough away from the houses and the Care Village (where one of my relatives is actually accommodated) that it would not interfere with their lives. We must not forget; these young people are the future of Oakham and we must not make them feel unwanted.

As the grandmother of two teenage boys, I am concerned about the lack of facilities in Oakham for informal recreational activities for teenagers.

So far as I am aware, there is only one accessible space locally for e.g., ad hoc ball games but nothing else. There are no tennis courts other than at membership clubs, no swimming pool the only local public swimming pool having closed as it was unsafe, only one youth club which has only one weekly session, no cinemas and no other place for teenagers to meet for healthy recreational activities.

I am aware that local parents are working hard to persuade the local authority to set aside land for the creation of a new purpose-built skate park as although there is a small skate park at Cutts Close it is totally inadequate for what I understand to be a very popular activity for young people. In the circumstances I support the efforts of local parents and would urge the Council to set aside land to enable a new skate park to be accommodated.

Having moved to Oakham when I was 14, I can sympathise with the youth of today, as they actually have less to do now than we did 27 years ago! I now have children myself and also a close relative in the Care Village who I have spoken to about the challenges you are facing. We cannot see how the Skate park would have any impact on those residents in the Care Village. As for the houses in close proximity, they were built and purchased knowing that there was a park and playing field on their doorstep. I cannot see how an additional facility on this area would have any impact on anti social behaviour. I wish you all the luck in achieving your goal and hope that when the vote occurs the Town Council remember that they are representing all age groups in our town!

I would like to express my favour for the provision of a skate park in Oakham. As the parent of two young children I worry about the desperate lack of facilities for the teenagers of our community.

Having lived in Oakham for over 10 years now, worked at a local school for 5 years and being the mother of 3 young boys, I would like to voice my support for the proposed skatepark. More facilities and activities are desperately needed for younger people in the area, especially with the growing population. A skatepark is an ideal way of getting young people outdoors and active – away from their phones and games consoles. This will have huge benefits for their wellbeing.

I wholeheartedly support the development of a larger and more challenging skate park in Oakham. I see ones in other towns when travelling for my son and see space for all ages of users, including adults to be there together in an active and vibrant setting where many different groups come to enjoy numerous activities including stunt scooters, boards and bmx.

I would like to write to propose my support for the Skate park in Oakham, in particular on the Centenary fields park.

As a mother, I have 2 teenage boys. Whilst we live in a beautiful, peaceful and crime free area, the downside to Rutland is there is no facilities or places for young people to go. If you have a sport mad child and can afford the club fees, yes a young person could do everything there is to do with sport – gymnastics, sailing, athletics, rugby, football, tennis, cricket to name but a few. There is also guides and scouts. However, most clubs and activities come with a cost; financial and time. As a parent if you can afford to pay for the clubs and do not have other commitments such as childcare and work in order to take your child to them, clubs in Rutland are achievable. More and more many families are not in such a positive position and therefore most activities for young people are out of reach. In today's times of austerity, cost of living and poverty rocketing, for many this is unachievable. As a parent in such a situation I can imagine the heartache of explaining to your child that you cannot afford the activities on offer.

Covid has brought many more problems for our community and young people in particular. As a mother of a child struggling with social anxiety as a result in part to the lockdowns, I spend much of my time working to pay for my child to attend many activities as well as counselling to help my child overcome his barriers to his mental health. My child is lucky because I can afford it, I work full time and I make time to dedicate to his well-being. Others are not so fortunate.

Furthermore, I am Group Scout Leader and run scouts in Oakham, providing scouting for all ages. We support around 100 young people and wish we could support more. Every week I get numerous emails from parents requesting their children to join. Every week I have to turn most people down as we do not have the adult volunteers to set up new meetings. It breaks my heart that I cannot help more. We offer free membership and activities to those who cannot afford it. It is hard work with everything else I do, but I do it because I am passionate that every young person should have a voice; every young person should have a safe space, a place to be who they are and a place to discover who they are where they are not judged. Sadly in Rutland and Oakham, I feel young people do not have a voice. I quote a gentleman at one of the sessions OTC ran about the skate park who stated when the young people finally plucked up the courage at the end to speak 'oh they are getting the young people to talk for the sympathy vote'. When you have people objecting to others who give their spare time and energy to create vibrant and exciting opportunities for our young people, it makes me incredible sad. A lot of young people overheard that comment!

Through my volunteering I have been so fortunate to watch young people develop and grow and yes, give back to the community and leaders/ volunteers who give them opportunities to thrive, grown and shine. I have been in tears listening to parents open up about their struggles with their children who have additional needs and listening to their stories when they come home after a scout meeting or camp. It is a privilege. More people like Jon and hopefully you OTC need to know what huge impact this has on our younger generation.

A skate park would provide those amazing young people who attended the meetings a voice, a space to call their own, a space where hopefully they wont be judged. Listening to the negative labelling of our young people in Rutland is sad. Yes there are pockets of young people who cause concern, likewise with adults. Often those young people come from troubled homes, they don't feel happy or comfortable in their homes and they don't have a safe space to go once school or college is closed. Those young people probably feel they have no-one or no-where to go and so roam around, sometimes getting into mischief, but not always.

I would like to address some of the concerns raised by the objectors at the meeting and on line. As a Community Safety Officer with 13 years' experience of working in Rutland as well as 3 years as a Probation Officer covering, amongst other areas Rutland, I feel my comments are justified and qualified;

1. People do not buy the right to a view. If you buy a house overlooking a park, there is a certain expectation that that park will change over time but also that people will go there for recreation. There will be a certain noise level not found if you buy a house on a road with no open spaces, the same way as you would expect an increased noise level if you live in a flat as opposed to a detached house. The lady who stated the skate park would bring more people, groups and noise to the area, well yes it will. It is a park, that is what is intended for – fun, noise, laughter and families enjoying time outside.
2. People can only object if it is to do with access, or light affecting their house and if the skate park is built to guidelines in terms of distance from houses etc, there is little objectors can do should a planning application go ahead.

3. Planning can overcome concerns such as littering, lighting, CCTV for alleged ASB hotspot. If you take Greetham as an excellent example- their all weather pitch is floodlight but can only be used during a set time and people who want the lights pay for a token and it reduces the tax payers burden on funding the project. Greetham is an amazing example of how the community has come together to provide facilities for their young people. What a great parish council they have.

So finally, what is there currently for our younger people? Well a youth club once a week that is free and.... Well nothing else, nothing else at all. For a market county town I find that appalling! No cinema, no other youth groups, no youth cafes, no youth drop in centres anymore (thanks RCC!) , an ageing community who misjudge and mislabel our young people and have no understanding whatsoever of the impact this will cause them! If you are told constantly you are trouble, you kids cause ASB, go somewhere else we don't want you... over time this can have long-standing psychological and emotional impact. Community hub – gone; Jules – gone; swimming pool - gone. It really is about time as a town council you buck this trend and start investing in our young people, because at the end of the day if we don't, what have they got to anchor themselves to Rutland with, to feel wanted and to feel like a Rutlander who in time will invest their energy, their time in making Rutland a fantastic place to live.

I would like to express my support for the building of a skate park at Centenary Fields in Oakham. The town has expanded significantly over the last two decades and new family homes continue to be built, but facilities for those families are not keeping up with development and are woefully lacking.

Having read through the objections there is a significant undertone of nimbyism, with comments such as a lack of baby change facilities showing how desperately difficult it is to come up with a reasonable objection. The suggested site is ideally located close to the outstanding secondary school and six form college, children already go past the site to and from school and it is unlikely to be occupied at night since it is rather difficult to skate in the dark. Giving children and young people somewhere to safely socialise in a open site with excellent visibility all round is highly likely to deter anti social behaviour, not cause it (I'm sure our police service can verify this).

I am writing this email in favour of a skate park in Oakham at centenary fields.

Firstly, I want to start by saying that I have been sending emails raising my worries that there are no basic amenities for young people in Oakham since 2020. Upon finding the skate park project I have found great respect for Jon Dixon and thank him from the bottom of my heart for taking on the challenge of getting the voices of young people heard. I worry that without him and his knowledge the skate park project will fail and that saddens me. Me, my partner and 3 young children attended the meeting at Long Row and believe the majority of the room were actually in favour of a skatepark in Oakham, the problem was just the location. I guess neighbours are scared of the unknown and that's understandable. The main points against the skate park were worries of Anti-social behaviour, which neighbours of Centenary Fields stated is already happening there.. so, my answer to this is - if it's already happening, what difference will a skate park make? I for one will be attending the skatepark with my children, so I

believe a greater adult Presence will deter this behaviour. Litter was another point raised, which actually is one of the reasons why I'm very passionate about the skate park being built on oakham town council land! I walk through centenary fields twice a day 3 times a week.. and i have complained around 6 times to the council that the bins are full - the bins were emptied each time I told them! Couldn't be happier. So yes, litter will potentially be a problem (it is already!) But Oakham town council do a great job of policing this !Another point raised was that the road the skate park is near is too dangerous - most of the unsupervised audience of the skate park walk along that road twice a day to get to school. Younger children, I would expect would have an adult with them?! Also, there is a pelican and zebra crossing very close so ample crossing opportunities! Another point was the noise - however, the people against this location were telling us until they were blue in the face the park was FULL of teenagers until gone 11pm - so, my point is again - what difference would it make ? And the local beat officer stated if this was a problem, they would be sure to intervene. We are never going please everyone no matter what we do. However, we can't just not put a skate park in oakham "incase anti-social behaviour increases" or "because litter will be a bigger problem" that's like saying let's not live our lives incase we die - which is ludicrous!! Let's make a difference! Let's wake up and see the basic needs of our children are not being met! Let's wake up our sleepy town and give our children an opportunity to take risks, to make friendships, to learn empathy and to learn a new skill! Centenary fields will make a great location! Thanks for taking the time to read my points.

Here Is my statement in favour of the Skatepark at Centenary Fields:

There has been a great deal of back and forth about the skatepark, concerns, and why we should provide the skatepark – just 'not in our backyard', as it seems. So I shall cut to the chase. The skatepark appears to fill all of the requirements to be placed in Centenary Fields, it is much longed for, and will be the beginning of something wonderful for the youth of Oakham.

Skateparks drive out antisocial behaviour

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261562566_Dispelling_Stereotypes_Skate_Parks_as_a_Setting_for_Pro-Social_Behavior_among_Young_People

Anti social behaviour will not be coming from the proactive kids, so failing to provide a skatepark will simply punish the 'good' kids

They offer opportunity for fitness and socialising

This socialising develops empathy (something that appears lacking in those who do not want the skatepark in their 'backyard')

The area proposed Is a space for ALL

The retirement village is not made more vulnerable by the skatepark, as has been implied, and if accessing it is a problem, then why will the skatepark change that?

The pond Is of little risk as far as I see it – it is so shallow?! Also, if it is a risk, then so are roads, rivers, the weather, stairs, etc. Risk comes with life and is something that is minimised when kids are taught to think proactively – something that a skatepark can encourage!

The meeting showed that the children who want the park are polite (more so than many adults in attendance) and kind and will not cause issues, but bring a sense of community – something else that seems to be lacking in the area from some!

It appears to me, that the benefits much outweigh the ‘maybes’ and ‘what ifs’ put forward by those in opposition.

One thing is for sure: Sky Brown would not have won an Olympic medal were she not given the chance to try. While she is an anomaly, for some children, they will win when they are given the chance to thrive and are not made to feel like second class citizens in their own home town. This is as valuable as an olympic medal, as chance and opportunity are absolutely crucial to provide a strong foundation for the youth to springboard themselves into society as strong, well rounded individuals.

This is the future I want for Oakham, and steps like these are, I believe, how we get that ball rolling.

I fail to see any reasonable reason why this project should not go ahead immediately. I attended a meeting on 1st November, where I patiently listened to every argument. It was the biggest example of NIMBYism I have ever witnessed.

The children and teens of Oakham need and deserve our support to help them to flourish, they cannot be held responsible for those who will always choose to partake in antisocial behaviour. It makes me feel incredibly sad that there are a few who apparently wish to quash the spirit of some amazing young people. Let’s give them what they deserve.

I am excited to hear Oakham is interested in building a skatepark for the community. I have been a keen skateboarder for 22 years. For me skateboarding provided me with a safe place to build on my self confidence and make life long friends. To this day we still meet up and use skateparks as a foundation for our life long friendship, sometimes with our children in toe. Skateparks can be seen as a playground, a gym, a creative laboratory and a community center all in one. Having this as an opportunity for Oakham I would recommend it 100%

Could I please make the following submission in support of the proposal currently under scrutiny for a Skatepark to be installed at the Centenary Field site in Oakham.

I wholeheartedly support this welcome initiative for the following six reasons.

- Generally speaking, Oakham is not well provided for in terms of amenities for children and teenagers especially since the cinema project was abandoned despite very strong support from the community and we have now also lost Oakham Swimming Pool – a further blow.
- Skating, scootering and skateboarding are all healthy outside exercise activities which teach motor coordination skills as well as promote teamwork – highly preferential to children and teenagers being stuck inside on their PCs or phones.
- Skateparks have been shown to reduce the incidence of youth anti-social behaviour with Skaters unwilling to allow a small element to ruin the facility for all – in that way they are, I believe, self-policing.

- The proposed location at Centenary Field is a very visible location, in itself acting as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and optimal for the police to keep an eye on when driving past.
- The nearest alternative facilities are in Greetham, Melton Mowbray and Stamford and this coupled with the relatively poor bus services that Rutland has means children have to be driven back and forth on up to 30 mile trips putting pressure on parents and hardly supporting RCC's climate change initiative.
- Skateboarding was recognised internationally by becoming an Olympic sport at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Perhaps, in the not too distant future, we'll be watching some of our own, home-grown Skaters performing in Paris or Los Angeles – A source of pride for Oakham and Rutland too.

Dear Committee,

Over the past weeks and months I have been taken by the very proactive, balanced and engaging debate around a new skatepark for Oakham. My involvement has been practical (walking the ground and engaging in the debate) but also as a trustee of a large sports club based in Oakham listening, with increasing delight around the very passionate narratives from children between the age of 6 and 18 who will use the facility.

In my view, this opportunity is one where the community can take real pride in enabling a sporting facility that straddles generations but also, caters for a wide range of individuals who could not take part in this activity if it were to be placed in a remote location. Never before, have I witnessed such detailed examination, public enthusiasm for a project, police support, business support, Councillor support and community positivity.

Recognising also, that there are some who oppose the location but not the idea, there should be balance across the view that such a project does not recognise the position of the elderly people who live nearby. The truth however, is that elderly people do not want to be isolated from their community (a ban or absence of young people) and across Rutland, there are examples of children meeting regularly with elderly people as part of the health and well-being partnerships that keep communities together.

The proposed skatepark is much, much more than a small footprint of concrete – indeed, it is a beacon of hope for children who are not able to play football, rugby or cricket; it is a place of safety for the wider community and it is a centre of engagement across age groups as they meet, forge friendships and challenge themselves in an exciting and physically demanding sports environment. As we reach out for inclusion across our community, let's not lose another opportunity to focus on our children and young people – they have a voice, we need to listen.

The rear-view mirror is small for a reason – we're not going there.

Please, on this occasion.....listen to the voice of the child and support their dreams for an accessible, safe place for them.

Many thanks

Dear Oakham Town Council ,

I am writing to show my full support for Jon and his Skatepark project.

As Rutland foster carers , we have looked after many children who have benefited from adults and peers advocating for what is important to them and I feel it is the duty of us all to consider youngsters needs within our community.

The recent new John Lewis advert about fostering really hit home for us as we have had many children and young people arrive at our door with little or no belonging , or just a black bag.

When a young person arrives and the one and only important item to them is a skateboard, a scooter or a bike, the first thing we would do would be to head to a skatepark.

My husband, also a big supporter of a skatepark being built in Oakham, is a bmx rider, both our boys ride scooters and skateboards and I'm a roller derby player and junior coach.

To us, this provision would prove invaluable as it would allow us all to do something together and just have fun with our young people.

Part of our responsibility to young people in our care is to ensure their physical, emotional and mental needs are met. Young people spend too much time indoors and on devices, especially those who are vulnerable and isolated through their previous experiences.

If young people interested in outdoor sports, have this to go to, I believe it would improve their social, physical and emotional well-being.

We hope the council can share so many supporters views on how important a project this is for all young people.