

Ralston Community Council
Kelburne Hockey Club CAT Meeting
Tuesday 31 May 2022
7.00-9.00pm
St Marks Church

Introduction

- Allan Thompson, Chairman of Ralston Community Council (RCC) welcomed everyone to the meeting to discuss Kelburne Hockey Club (KHC) Community Asset Transfer (CAT).
- CAT is now live and we have until 1 July to submit formal responses.
- Initial feedback is that the Community is against the proposals.
- Business Plan is part of the application and is available online. It has been updated but doesn't appear to have changed much.
- KHC have arranged a public meeting for Monday 6 June 2022 at Ralston Community Centre.
- Raffle tickets available for those wishing to ask a question.

Councillor Neill Graham, Scottish Conservative and Unionist – Paisley Northeast and Ralston

Representation is one per household. Name and address is required but will be redacted when published.

Looked at Business Plan:

- 50 year lease
- £600k public funds to upgrade pitch
- No rates payable
- States local schools can use facility free of charge which is expected.
- Will there be free parking for Ralston School Staff and Parents? Will there be charges?
- Hockey back to Renfrewshire – detriment to other Hockey Clubs
- Café – subsidized by Council – impact on local shops
- Are there any members of the Hockey Club living in the Ralston area?
- Russell Findlay, MSP and Neil are against the CAT and have been from the very start.

Councillor David McGonigle, Scottish Conservative and Unionist - Houston, Crosslee and Linwood

Stated he has a keen interest in this proposal as it impacts his own constituency.

Councillor Graeme Clark, Scottish Labour – Paisley Northeast and Ralston

- Spent time talking to users after Ralston Skills day.
- Visited 79 households on Balfron Road and Dunchurch Road yesterday.
- 64 against, 3 for, 10 unsure and 2 not heard.
- Ralston Community Sports Centre should remain in public ownership, developed and opened up.
- Councillor Jennifer Adam, Scottish National Party who was elected by the Community not willing to participate. Encouraged everyone to write to her to tell her what you think at the following e-mail: Cllr.Jennifer.Adam@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Neil Bibby, MSP Scottish Labour

- His son Samuel (6) used Ralston Skills.
- Thanked RCC for arranging meeting and engaging with the local community.
- Lack of communication and consultation from KHC is enough reason to reject the proposal.
- Renfrewshire Council should work with KHC to find them a new home in an alternative location.
- Community Asset Transfer – ‘Community’ is in the name.
- If people support it then it will happen. If they don’t, then it shouldn’t happen.
- Nothing in legislation preventing Councillors taking part in consultation. Disappointing that nobody in attendance from the SNP.
- Believes facility should stay in public ownership.
- Paid tribute to Norrie Murray who run Ralston Skills for 25 years.
- Over 1,000 young people play football at the facility. Facility being used.
- Further 80% opposed after discussions with residents.
- Valuable green space for children to play and for dog walkers.
- Facility should be public and not private.
- Equipment should be upgraded in the centre and more classes should be made available.
- Renfrewshire Council (RC) should be looking at this.
- Residents pay council tax – RC should invest.
- Express your view tonight or through the process.
- Community should reject the proposal.

Allan Thompson informed the meeting that RCC met with OneRen on two occasions. Original idea about increasing classes came from that. Encouraged everyone to fill out A5 form for classes which would be available as everyone leaves.

Russell Findlay, MSP – Scottish Conservative and Unionist

- Neill Graham has pretty much led the way in trying to keep this facility in public hands.
- Can’t blame KHC for looking for a location.
- Deal appears to be done. Using COVID as a lever.
- Bankrolled by public funds.
- Would leave no community greenspace.
- Billy Davies at Ralston Skills 25th Anniversary event spoke passionately about keeping the facility in public ownership.
- SNP should be challenged and questioned why they weren’t present at the meeting.
- Keep facility and get investment.

Q. What is the purpose of the form being passed around?

A. Petition – advised to sign and pass on.

Q. I’d like some money for my garden and rebate on my council tax. This application is a waste of public money.

Q. OneRen are supporting this! £600k available to KHC.

A. Neill Graham said money taken from Onyx project and that Anchor Hockey Club who play at Linwood would lose out.

President from Anchor Hockey Club was present but stated he wasn't a resident of Ralston. He stated that £1m was available to develop the pitch at Onyx. They found out that KHC managed to divert £600k to this CAT. He stated that Hockey has been in Renfrewshire for 100 years so challenged KHC statement that they are bringing Hockey back to Renfrewshire. KHC told them that they could use their facility if CAT went through. Anchor President said there was no hope in hell of that happening. This was just an exercise for KHC to get their own facility. Current facility at the Onyx would go to the dogs if this CAT was successful.

Q. Open and transparency when majority is football.

Raymond Nelson, President of Kelburne Hockey Club

- Billy Anderson was told he wasn't allowed to attend the meeting this evening.
- Should have been a joint meeting.
- Labour and SNP failed for over 20 years to provide Hockey an international standard pitch.
- Spend around £20k per annum playing in Glasgow.
- Majority of members from east end of Paisley.
- Our space is open to the public – walking, picnics, etc.. Ralston will be the same.
- Revitalise Penilee facility.
- Football juniors use their facility during the day and ROAR use their Clubhouse.
- Same would apply to Penilee.
- Ralston Skills – tremendous job – will get their allocation.

Residents started to get angry. Mr Nelson reminded that facility in Ralston and not Penilee. Annoyed that they are taking facility away from Ralston. Mr Nelson responded saying they wanted to be an inclusive club.

Steven Harrigan, Resident

- House backs onto facility.
- Raised petition. Not about KHC but about kids using the facility.
- Facility willingly neglected for the last 5 years.
- Some clubs have moved away because of its condition.
- Should be at the heart of the community.
- RC should spend money on our facility.
- KHC have no record of running a facility.
- Should not be selling off especially after losing ground to St Mirren.
- Don't want people waiting on taxis at night.
- Saw equipment being moved out of the centre recently.
- It is for the community
- Has asked for FOI for KHC CAT.

Norrie Murray, Chairman of Ralston Skills

- Local resident.
- After 1 July, KHC will have time to respond.
- OneRen run the centre. Renfrewshire Council own it.
- 8 SNP Councillors and 7 other Councillors will decide. Councillor Jennifer Adam will have the deciding vote.
- 25 years, 1,000 children and spanning 3 generations.
- Always based there. Very first users of the centre.
- Kelburne first offer – play on the grass. That would take them back 12 years – flooding and unplayable in poor weather.
- Next offer after chasing Billy Anderson twice – can use at 5.30pm on a Friday and half Astro pitch on a Saturday. Not suitable for skills coaches and too late on a Friday as lots of kids in P1 and P2.
- 9/10 months later – KHC offered part of the Astro pitch on a Saturday morning.
- Kids within ½ mile of the facility.
- Question should have been ‘what do you want?’
- Ignore social media.
- Billy told to stop using Ralston Skills name. Very disappointed to now find their name in KHC Business Plan.
- Zoom meeting with Billy – Norrie asked for budget and constitution info. This was rejected.
- Another zoom meeting – told that Active Communities Susan MacDonald was onboard. Norrie called Susan who said she had very brief discussions with Billy of KHC but nothing agreed.
- Another zoom meeting – gave impression that Ralston Primary School supported the CAT. Someone in the meeting who is on the Parents Council called him out as they weren’t aware of that.
- KHC are spreading misinformation.
- If CAT goes ahead, Ralston Skills will close.
- High quality Hockey pitch is not suitable for football.
- Constitution – only adult members have voting rights. Associate members, groups, etc.... have no voting rights.
- KHC will run the facility. Not inclusive. No voting rights.
- Not all money in place. If CAT approved, they will approach Sport Scotland for funding.
- What due diligence by Council was carried out? Is there a budget required, etc... to approve the CAT?
- No detail around schools and how they get to the facility.
- I would support KHC finding a facility – Onyx is available.
- Met Billy with Allan Thompson and Stuart O’Connell. Billy said they were offered Onyx but turned it down. Iain Nicolson can also confirm.
- Doesn’t make sense to rip up both pitches – Ralston and Onyx. There is no public money.
- Norrie asked everyone to build evidence.
- People are seeing what is happening with misinformation from KHC.
- Seedhill and Linwood opportunities if Ralston bid fails.
- We lost Allanton to St Mirren. We don’t want to lose Ralston.
- It is a going concern.
- Simple solution – Onyx.

Billy Hassan, Glennifer Thistle

- Six grass football pitches available.
- Every pitch is fully utilized.
- 1,000 kids will be displaced from Ralston.
- Renfrewshire Council have run down the facility deliberately.
- Fitness class numbers down.
- Current and previous administration run it down.
- Users could be forced to Inverclyde.
- Impacts Paisley District League.
- League would end up leaving Renfrewshire of facility removed.

Q. Sounds like a done deal. Project is alive at Onyx.

Q. Terry Jones - On committee (Pollok) and former ground convenor at Pollok. It will take £0.5m to upgrade grass pitch at Ralston. Drainage an issue. Maintenance £2-3k a time and required 3-4 times a year. Has experience of a CAT at Nethercraigs. Some land sold off to a developer. Not allowed to use facility. Complained and then allowed back in. KHC can do what they like once the CAT goes through. Developers dying to get their hands on this land. They don't need the grass. They are only interested in Astro pitch and centre. Councils are a public trust. We pay more council tax than most areas. Where does this go?

Q. Agreement with council? Is it the infrastructure committee?

A. Yes. Direct e-mail to SNP and in particular Jennifer Adam.

Q. Facility used by Skills. Who plays Hockey? Grounds belong to the community. We should decide what happens to it. Will be objecting. KHC undemocratic. We risk losing control if they get it. Allanton is proof. 1000 children loose out.

Q. Only a few shops here. People bought in the area knowing this so accepted. Not all information is in business case. Is there a process that the case needs checked for accuracy?

A. Allan Thompson said the Community Council will find out.

Q. Gave up Allanton. Trade off was Ralston Community Sports Centre.

Q. Technical point. Football heavily used. Losing young and adult footballers. Rugby and other such as new American football could use the facility.

Q. St Mirren at Allanton Avenue a nightmare. Floodlights, vandalism to bowling club and bad language. Only facility left in Ralston. Other sport played including shot put, football, etc.. KHC should build their own clubhouse at the Onyx.

Q. General grass area used by RCC for annual games and well received by the community. KHC said they will support. Not 100% confident this will happen.

Q. 200 people. Pass on message to ensure larger representation. Encourage others to submit their objection.

A. Sample letters available. Postbox will be available at Cornershop for anyone who isn't online. Class leaflets also at the door when leaving to complete. Ensure you e-mail address on CAT and your local councillor and also include Ralston Community Council admin@ralstoncommunitycouncil.org

Q. Is it only residents from Ralston who can respond?

A. No, any user of the facility can respond.

A. Worth spreading word to other clubs to ensure larger response.

Q. People might think that there is enough people responding so might not bother. Encourage everyone to respond. The higher the numbers the better. St Mirren made so many promises – lighting failing local community. SNP have an agenda. Don't be afraid. Show them strength of feeling.

Neil Bibby

- Not a done deal.
- Fill out objection form.
- If you are for then support.
- Users from different areas can object.
- Model text – add your own text to make it personal.

Q. Is there a location on the website?

A. Norrie will post on Ralston Skills Facebook page. Ralston Community Council will share.

Neill Graham

- Not a done deal.
- Jennifer Adam holds the key to Ralston Community Sports Centre.
- She hasn't answered questions.

Dionne, Cornershop

- Met Billy Anderson of KHC about shop.
- She asked why they didn't go to Linwood (Onyx). He said they weren't offered it.
- Billy told her they are considering franchising out the café if the CAT is successful and asked if she would be interested in running it.