

**WEST AUCKLAND: FLEECE & NURSERY**

**APPENDIX 8**

**Correspondence from the local MP and Lord Foster**



## HELEN GOODMAN MP

*Standing up for all in the Bishop Auckland Constituency*



Laura Renaudon  
Planning & Development  
Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UL

11 February 2014

Dear Ms Renaudon

I am writing in support of the application for village green status for land in West Auckland known locally as 'The Nursery'.

The land in question is undoubtedly a community asset and as such should be afforded the status of a village green.

I have met with Parish Councillors from West Auckland and it is clear that there is widespread local support for this application which will allow a much loved part of the village to be brought back into a fitting condition and give back rightful public access.

Not only is it a very nice spot it has been completely spoilt in recent years by some residents who have illegally occupied it and used it for business and other activities. Since 2006, 23 incidents of anti-social behaviour have been recorded here. Indeed on one occasion the armed response unit of the police had to be called out.

This is why I think the criticism made by the "independent panel" that it hadn't been in continuous use was completely unreasonable. No-one in their right mind would let their children play where they might be at risk or in danger. Moreover I think it's important that the council support law abiding members of the community and do not inadvertently incentivise anti-social activities.

Yours sincerely

Helen Goodman  
Member of Parliament for Bishop Auckland  
Shadow Minister for Culture, Creative Industries and Communication



Councillor Geraldine Bleasdale  
Chairman of Highways Committee  
Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UL  
5<sup>th</sup>. February 2014

Dear Councillor Bleasdale

**PROPOSED REGISTRATION OF THE FLEECE AND NURSERY LAND,  
WEST AUCKLAND AS VILLAGE GREEN**

I am writing to lend my support to West Auckland Parish Council in their application to register the Fleece and Nursery land as village green.

This area of open land has been, until recently, in constant use for decades as a recreational space for local residents. Regrettably over the past eight years the actions of a minority seeking to take ownership of this land have so blighted the land that such communal use has been severely restricted, and it was this decline in use that clearly influenced the Inquiry inspector in her recommendation.

It seems quite obvious that to deny registration simply rewards those who have sought to extinguish the community use of the land. The Parish Council are keen to establish registration and have funds reserved to undertake a community-based restoration of the land. I welcome their initiative and perseverance in this matter, and would urge your committee to support registration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Foster".

The Rt. Hon the Lord Foster of Bishop Auckland DL

**COPIES TO:**

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