

Solihull Ratepayers Association
PO Box 12020 Solihull B90 2WP

Proof of Evidence

**Presentation to Public Inquiry into Footpath U26
Haslucks Green Road Shirley (No 2) Public Path
Stopping Up Order 2007 by the Solihull Metropolitan
Borough Council**

Thursday 8th May 2008 at Civic Suite Solihull

1. Presentation by Trevor Eames Secretary of Solihull Ratepayers Association
2. The association was founded in 1974 as a membership organisation to represent community interests in the Solihull area but has a particular interest in environmental and planning issues. We monitor the weekly planning lists and follow up items that we consider to be of concern or items drawn to our attention by our members.
3. The association lodged objection to the SMBC formal notice of Stopping Up Order Proposal U26 by letter dated 29th August 2007.
4. The existing footpath has been established many years. It is lined and overhung by an ancient substantial hedgerow with many mature trees screening it and the adjacent parkland from much of the existing commercial and retail development including car parking along the western side of the Stratford Road of Central Shirley.
5. Local people have used this pathway and associated parkland in excess of fifty years as a convenient and pedestrian access for lawful sports and pastimes in Shirley Park as of right.
6. In addition the pathway has pleasant mature trees and patches of shrubbery breaking up the visual amenity of the parkland itself, which lends to the established character and attractive appearance of the footpath.

7. The area of parkland behind the Saracens Head Public House being requisitioned by the local authority requiring the Stopping Off Order is for the purpose of implementing a development of apartments for private sale. This is not integral or essential for the overall regeneration scheme in Central Shirley such as to warrant the loss of this amenity.
8. The proposed alternative footpath line on the order plan shows no imaginative design or planning features and implies the provision of merely a bland tarmac footpath that would change entirely the nature and character of this walkway.
9. It is our contention that this Stopping Up Order is not in the interests or supported in any way by the Local Shirley Community for whose benefit and permanent convenience the footpath and adjacent parkland were originally provided.
10. It is also our contention that the Council have failed to bring forward a detailed proposal (for public consultation) on the alternative footpath that went some way to reasonably replacing the attractive features that would be lost if this Stopping Off Order were approved.
11. We feel that our constructive objections should be considered in line with the Council's stated objective of maintaining and improving high standards within Shirley Park as an integral part of the proposals for Regeneration and the Shirley Parkgate scheme.

3rd April 2008

Ref. JTE/1005/D10