

The Pork-BOLTER



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FREE/DONATION

Council and club conspire to steal a precious public space Access unauthorised

RESIDENTS on the Maybridge estate are being **barred** by Worthing Borough Council from using a much-loved local green that has been used as a **public space** for half a century.

The Porkbolter has seen letters to a local resident telling him that access onto the field behind his former Durrington council house is now "unauthorised", with the council putting up a fence and planting a hedge to stop people entering the space from their back gardens, as they have been doing for decades.

This theft of public space is all part of a scheme to redevelop the *Maybridge Keystone Club*, formerly Maybridge Boys' Club. While residents have no objection with the current plans, they fear more building work may be planned for the future, permanently taking away the open space.

The alarm has been raised by local artist Dan Thompson, who grew up in a house in Raleigh Way backing onto the field and whose father Nigel still lives there. Dan recalled: "It was a fantastic place to play as a child. In the summer you'd walk out onto the field and there was always someone playing football or cricket or whatever."

The first signs of trouble came a few years back when police started talking about security concerns and the threat of crime from the field and encouraged people to close off the access from their back gardens – despite no evidence of any real danger.

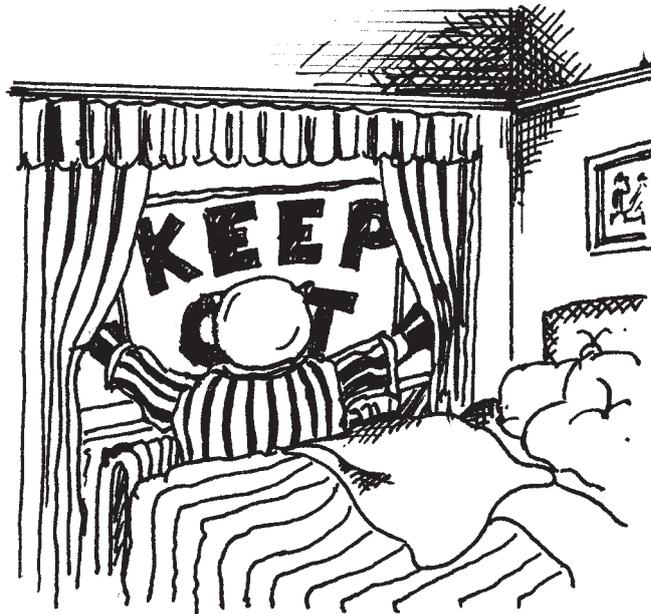
Then suddenly in 2008, with no warning or explanation, a fence was put up all around the perimeter of the field, at the back of people's gardens, and planting of a hedgerow was begun.

Needless to say, some residents, including *Nigel Thompson*, were not happy to go along with this and continued to use their back entrance onto the field.

On July 3 2008 Mr Thompson received a letter from *Bob Cliff*, Estates Officer at Worthing Borough Council, which stated: "It is noted that there is a gap in the rear boundary hedge to your property that is providing **unauthorised access** on to the land and recent planting and fencing to block this gap has been removed.

"The council is in the process of granting a lease of this grassed area in connection with the Maybridge Keystone Club, which is due to be extended and refurbished. Accordingly I should be grateful if you would refrain from using this gap for access in the future and I will make the arrangements to reinstate the hedge and close the gap."

A further letter on November 4 acknowledged that Mr Thompson had lived there for many years, but insisted that "without any for-



Another Maybridge day is dawning,

And, moving gently stretching, yawning,

Young Porkie Pie gets out of bed,

To let the daylight air his head,

But - oh my! - how he is surprised,

To find outdoors unauthorised!

What's the connection between the plans for Maybridge Keystone Club and the notorious town wardens? And why is there a potential conflict of interest for two local councillors? Turn over to read more.

mal consent for access" a right of way could only be obtained on a "long user" basis.

Added Mr Cliff: "For this a claimant needs to prove continuous of an access for at least 20 years. However, in connection with establishing a claim for long user, a tenant cannot acquire rights over land belonging to his landlord. Therefore, any claim for longer user in this particular case could only commence when the Council disposed of the property in 1998."

The main point that leaps out here is that there surely was formal consent for access, right from the moment the houses went up. You can still see the identical corporation gateposts lead-

ing on to the field from residents' back gardens - you don't get much more solid or formal than that! And Dan recalls that the council used to stage playdays in the fields, which children would naturally attend by using the now "unauthorised" access via the backs of their homes.

Also the "landlord" in question was the borough of Worthing - which is supposed to be owned by and to represent the people of Worthing, including those that happen to live next to its field. For it to invoke property law to deny any Worthing resident rights over land that we collectively own simply beggars belief!

Mr Cliff's letter stressed again that "all unauthorised accesses on to the land must therefore be prevented in order to aid the management and security of the land and premises" and he wrote again on January 12 and May 5 warning Mr Thompson against using the gate at the end of his garden to get on to the field.

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Post-war vision of a better life

DURRINGTON'S Maybridge estate was built after the Second World War, between 1948 and 1956. Designed by Charles Cowles-Voysey, it was considered to be at the cutting edge of town planning and featured in an exhibition in London. Flats and family homes were mixed together to create a more rounded community feel and, importantly, plenty of open space was left, with small 'village greens' interspersed generously among the buildings. This is the same approach that is currently behind the likes of the Prince of Wales backed Poundbury scheme. Many of Maybridge's greens still remain, but others have gradually disappeared over the years.

A field full of coincidences...

THE last time we mentioned the **theft of public space** in the Porkbolter it was to do with the *Business Improvement District* imposed on the town centre, which aims to turn it into a private outdoors shopping mall, policed by the **town wardens**, who famously told a group of campaigners it was illegal to take photographs in Montague Street.

In our August 2008 edition we named *Nick Brewer* and his chum *Mike O'Hagan* as directors of *Max Security*, the firm behind these highly controversial wardens.

In researching this issue's front page story, we found an informative article in the the Summer 2008 issue of the council's *Worthing Vibe* magazine referring to the Maybridge Keystone Club redevelopment, naming one local kickboxing instructor attached to the club as being a key player in the scheme and quoting him as saying: "I have been involved in trying to get the centre modernised from the start."

And who is this character? Why, none other than the very same **Nick Brewer of Max Security** fame! What a marvellous coincidence!

Meanwhile, Lib Dem councillor *Bob Smytherman* (Tarring) was outraged when Dan Thompson outlined the situation at Raleigh Way to him, via Facebook. Wrote Mr Smytherman: "This sounds like a scandal [sic] and I would very much like to know more."

He could certainly find out more by asking his borough council Lib

Keystone connections

"KEYSTONE" is a funny name for a young people's club, but it turns out to be an international network of organisations, based in the good ole US of A. Website www.boysandgirlsclub.com headlines its summary of the Keystone Clubs with the odd phrase "Keeping Every Youth Strongly Toned On a National Excellence". It then explains: "Keystone has been part of the Boys & Girls Club movement since 1960. Since 1995, 'keystoning' has had generous support of the Taco Bell Foundation" (*the global Tex-Mex restaurant chain*).

The six Keystone "core program areas" are: Service to Club and Community, Education and Career, Social Recreation, Unity, Leadership Development and....err... **Free Enterprise**.

Access unauthorised!

From front page

Said Mr Thompson: "**They want places for children to play and now they're taking them away.** What do they think I'm going to do if I've got access to it? Do they think I'm going to vandalise it?"

Dan is concerned about what will happen if the Keystone Club decides it wants to redevelop further and some of the field is earmarked. He stressed that he has always been a great supporter of the club and added: "They can build something bigger but they don't need to take away the field." He added: "**I absolutely love this estate. To see it being pissed away by a council who just don't care is just a betrayal of everything the people who built it intended.**"

All aboard the gravy train!

WITH all the focus on MPs' expenses, our West Sussex county councillors avoided much in the way of scrutiny in the run-up to the recent elections. But figures obtained under the *Freedom of Information Act* by a former councillor and passed to *The Porkbolter* show that Gravy Train definitely stops at all stations on its way to Chichester.

For instance, our old friend *John Livermore* (Con, Worthing West) received £18,370 in allowances in 2007 (not including travel and subsistence). The documents also reveal he attended a grand total of 15 various council meetings in 2007-08. Our maths isn't great but we reckon he is getting more than £1,000 for each meeting he deigns to attend!

Mr Livermore also manages to combine his role on the county council with being a borough councillor (for Heene). The borough website reveals that in 2008/09 he received a Basic Allowance of £3,897 plus a Special Responsibility Allowance of £3,309 per annum for his role as chairman of the Development Control Committee. So that's another £7,200 a year in the Livermore piggy bank. We don't know how many gruelling meetings at the town hall he has to sit through to earn that little bonus, but we're sure he is worth every single penny of his **£25k a year part-time hobby** generously funded by the tax-payers of Worthing and West Sussex.

www.eco-action.org/porkbolter

Dem Deputy group leader *Hazel Thorpe* (Tarring) and her other half, *Robin Rogers* (Lib Dem, Castle) - the couple are both heavily involved with Maybridge Keystone Club and have had to declare personal interests when its affairs have been discussed at the council. It will be interesting to see if Mr Smytherman retains his interest in the 'scandal' after speaking to them!

Pork-scratchings

POLICE surveillance of peaceful protesters has been ruled unlawful in an important test case. Reported *The Guardian* on May 22: "Judges ruled that specialist surveillance units from the Metropolitan police had breached the human rights of Andrew Wood, an arms trade campaigner, when they photographed him and stored the pictures on a police database." Campaigners to save *Titnore Woods* in Durrington will be wishing this ruling had been made before May 2002, when police started the mass surveillance of Titnore protests that was clearly intended primarily to intimidate residents and put them off attending events which, through being the focus of so much police activity, were effectively labelled 'extreme' and 'criminal'. We suspect though, that it will take more than one court case to persuade the state to lay down one of its main weapons in its ongoing war against democracy.

TALKING about *Titnore*, at the time of writing there is still no date for the planning application to be heard on the 875-home estate and the deadline for objections has been pushed back - so if you haven't got round to it yet, it still isn't too late. Go to www.protectourwoodland.co.uk for more information on the application and on the camp, which is still going strong after an amazing three years of 24/7 front line protest!

THE ORIGINS of the word "**Porkbolter**", the age-old nickname for Worthing people after which our newsletter is named, have always remained obscure. We have mentioned before that it may reflect a superstitious fear of pigs on the part of the fishing community that once constituted the population, but have little more info than that. Now some more light is shed on the matter, from the unlikely source of the Summer 2009 issue of *Taste West Sussex*, a magazine given away free by Waitrose supermarkets. In a section called Fish Tales it states: "Like the theatrical superstition of never saying 'Good Luck' to an actor backstage, **fishermen never said the words 'pig, sow or swine' when the nets were lowered. If they did, they risked their catch being lost.**" We still don't know, of course, why the pigs were singled out for this superstition - anybody out there got a theory?

TWO events are coming up that may well be of interest to anyone interested in securing the future survival of the planet, tiny peculiar minority though they are. From August 18 to 24 the annual *Earth First! Summer Gathering* is being held. Billed as "Ecological Direct Action without Compromise in Beautiful Cumbria" it offers five days of workshops, skill sharing and planning action, plus low-impact living without leaders. "**Meet people, learn skills, take action.**" For more info go to www.earthfirst.org.uk or email summergathering@earthfirst.org.uk. And then, just a few days later, is the *2009 Climate Camp*, from August 27 to September 3. This year it is heading for "a green space somewhere on the outskirts of London, focusing on the **City of London, the financial system, and all those responsible for the economic and ecological crises**". More info at www.climatecamp.org.uk. For regular updates on events, as well as back issues and links to other sites, check out our website at www.eco-action.org/porkbolter

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THE PORKBOLTER is an independent Worthing newsletter that prefers public good to private enterprise. We are not connected to any political party or American restaurant chain. To get the next six issues through the post send a donation of £3 or more payable to The Porkbolter at PO Box 4144, Worthing BN14 7NZ. You can also pick up a copy at 'Green' at 63 Victoria Road, Worthing (near the station). Or read it at www.eco-action.org/porkbolter, which also includes a regularly updated events section. We also run an email list, which you can join for free via porkbolter@eco-action.org.

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