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Dear Ralph,

Selside Village Green

Many thanks for coming along to Selside the other day to have a look at the Green. I was a bit concerned when you rang me later that day and mentioned that it looked as if there was no sign of use. That is exactly what Mr Morphet wants others to believe.

Nobody had ever encountered difficulties using the Village Green for recreational purposes before Horton Parish Council applied for registration (before I became a member of the Parish Council) as long as such activities would not obstruct the use by others. However, when Mr Morphet decided to sell the house adjacent to it the whole situation changed. The estate agent's description of the property included the Village Green as front garden. Horton P.C. acted immediately and wrote to Mr Morphet's solicitor pointing out that Mr Morphet did not own the Green and could therefore not sell it. The Parish Council also proceeded with its application for registration of the Green.

Ever since then the use of the Village Green has become a matter of confrontation. For example, when Mr Lambert of Selside Farm restored the so-called "Shant" next to the Green with the help of a grant from the Park his contractors had to use the Green for some of the heavier equipment. When Mr Morphet saw them using the Village Green (with full permission of all other Selside residents including Mr Lambert) he was so rude to them that the contractors came in person to a meeting of the Parish Council to complain.

When you spoke to me after the meeting of the subcommittee deciding this matter and mentioned that one could not see much evidence of use Selside residents decided to have a barbecue on the Green the following Sunday. We invited everybody and made no secret of it. We have always used the Green openly. However, the next day Mr Morphet placed more rusty equipment on the Green: an old slurry spreader, a tractor and a trailer. The day after (Saturday) we decided to have drinks on the Green rather than wait for the barbecue on Sunday. A number of people from Horton joined us. One of them was able to drive away the tractor from the Green because his tractor key fitted! We arranged the other items in such a way that we could have our party.

When Mr Morphet discovered that the equipment had been moved he called the police and claimed that his tyres were let down. We don't do such things and told PC Andy Watson our version of events. Two days later everything was back on the Green.

As you can see the situation is far from pleasant. I have written to Fiona Chalmers in the hope that the Park can remove these items in the way they dealt with the unsightly vehicles at Stonehouse north of Selside. That matter came before the Committee last January, I believe.

Consultation about registration is being drawn to an end in the hope that a decision can be made next time you meet (in September). By then Helen Sergeant, Clerk to Horton P.C., and I will put together various documents about the Village Green and send them to you. This way we feel that the matter will get a fair hearing. I know how busy you are and I am sorry that we are troubling you with this matter. It is important for the peace of the hamlet that the Green gets registered. If it is not registered residents will continue to use it as they have done. That can only lead to more confrontation.

With best wishes,



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