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3rd December 2021

Dear Stuart, Cllr Cross, Cllr Bigmore,

Re: Public Toilets Provision Review

Further to various emails between Stuart and our Clerk, we wish to advise you that we believe the loos on Ripley Green merit a special case. As you are undoubtedly aware, Ripley Green has always been an attraction to many visitors from within the borough and the wider county, who utilise the beautiful open space for walking, exercising dogs, visiting the children's playground, and enjoying and participating in sporting pursuits.

This has been magnified hugely during the Covid pandemic and we have welcomed many more visitors to our Village Green. This open space has provided an invaluable resource, in particular for people's mental health and physical wellbeing.

We are a small village of around 900 dwellings and our precept is already significantly higher than many other villages, mainly as a result of the huge costs of maintaining The Green and its environment. These costs include insurance, tree surveys and works, fencing, providing dog 'gloves', unauthorised encampments, general upkeep, playground maintenance, and biodiversity objectives.

To give some perspective, our annual precept has been under £70,000 per annum, whilst expenditure specific to The Green over the past three financial years is as follows:

Year	Precept	The Green expenditure
2020-21	£67,099	£45,702
2019-20	£65,159	£38,262
2018-19	£64,636	£32,997

We want to make it clear that Ripley Parish Council and its residents have always been prepared to finance the upkeep of The Green even though it represents a significant proportion of our precept income, for the benefit of not only our residents but the wider borough and county community.


However, the proposed closure of the public lavatories is an issue that has wide ranging consequences, not least for the less able-bodied visitors who enjoy Ripley Green specifically because it offers disabled parking, disabled access lavatories, and is a huge, flat and accessible open space.

Ripley Parish Council simply cannot afford an additional £6,270 per annum to fund these loos, in addition to the £40k per annum that we already spend on The Green itself. Essentially, we need some help and we are looking to GBC to keep these loos open as part of a very valued resource within the borough.

We know that you have to make cost savings for your 2022-23 budget, but we would urge you to reconsider this proposed closure and keep Ripley loos open for the benefit of all.

If you are in any doubt as to the value of this asset, we would welcome a visit and we will gladly show you The Green and why it is so important to keep these loos open.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzie Powell-Cullingford'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Cllr Suzie Powell-Cullingford

Vice-Chairman, Ripley Parish Council