

Dear Pirton Parish Council,

### **Proposed change to access to Pirton Pavilion and Recreation Ground**

Thank you for your recent letter inviting the residents of Cotman End to share our views on the possible changes to access to Pirton Pavilion and the Recreation Ground. We appreciate the opportunity to have our opinions heard and hope that this can form part of a constructive discussion with the Parish Council and the other parties involved.

Having discussed the proposal collectively, the residents of Cotman End are unanimously opposed to the use of Cotman End as a vehicular access route to the Pavilion and Recreation Ground.

Our first concern is the effect that the proposal would have on residents' ability to access their own properties. Residents have established rights of access along Cotman End, but the significant and highly concentrated increase in traffic associated with football matches, weekend activities and other events such as the Summer fair, Fireworks night and Beer festival could materially interfere with the practical exercise of those rights.

Past experience has shown that visitors to the Recreation Ground have sometimes parked along Cotman End. Because the road is relatively narrow, even a small number of parked vehicles can quickly make it difficult or impossible to pass. With support from PSSC, we started putting a "no parking" sign out at weekends and this helped to mostly solve the problem. But if traffic were to be officially routed through Cotman End in future, we anticipate some cars would inevitably end up parking on the road, which would create a real risk of residents being unable to enter or leave the road freely, as well as potentially obstructing access for deliveries, service vehicles and the emergency services.

We also have serious safety concerns. A number of young children and pets live in Cotman End, and one of the attractions of living here is that it is a quiet residential road on which children can play outside with a reasonable degree of safety. A large increase in traffic, particularly during busy periods on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the football and cricket season, would fundamentally change the character of the road and remove an important aspect of the residents' enjoyment of their homes.

Cotman End is also a private, unadopted road. The residents pay wholly for the upkeep of the road itself, together with the services, and surrounding grassed areas. We do not believe it would be reasonable for residents to continue bearing those costs without a substantially different arrangement if the road were used by many times its current volume of traffic for the benefit of users of the Recreation Ground. The additional traffic would inevitably increase wear, maintenance requirements and associated costs as would the potential 50 new houses (100+ cars) that you refer to in your letter.

We would also like to note that our objection is not simply a matter of preference or amenity. Each property on Cotman End benefits from a registered legal right of way over the road, granted at the time of purchase, for the purpose of accessing our own homes “at all times and for all reasonable purposes” . We are advised that materially increasing the volume and character of traffic using that access, to accommodate an unrelated use by third parties visiting the Recreation Ground, goes beyond what those rights were intended to cover, and raises genuine legal concerns for both the developer, as owner of the road, and the residents, whose rights depend on its character being maintained. We raise this not to be adversarial, but so that any decision on the proposal is made with a full and accurate understanding of the legal position, alongside the practical and safety concerns already set out above.

We also note that planning permission for the new Pavilion was granted by the relevant planning authority in the knowledge of the existing access arrangements and their limitations. We therefore assume that the access was considered acceptable when that application was approved. As far as we are aware, there has been no material change to the physical access arrangements since then that would justify transferring recreation-ground traffic onto Cotman End.

We understand that a separate planning application is being considered for four houses on land adjacent to the existing access road, together with a proposal to widen and improve the existing track currently used to access the Recreation Ground. In our view, it would be far more sensible to explore whether the proposed improvement of that existing access could also provide a long-term solution for Pavilion and Recreation Ground traffic. This would improve the established route rather than introducing substantial through-traffic onto a quiet private residential road.

We recognise that the Parish Council is seeking to address a genuine concern about the suitability of the existing access, and we would be pleased to participate constructively in discussions about alternative solutions. However, for the reasons set out above, the residents are firmly of the view that Cotman End should remain a residential access road and should not be used as the principal vehicular route to the Pavilion or Recreation Ground.

We would be grateful if our unanimous position could be formally recorded and taken into account in any discussions with North Hertfordshire District Council, the developer and other interested parties.

Yours faithfully,

The residents of Cotman End, July 2026