

# 'Money-spinning bowling club flats plan is criminal'

## Councillors unanimously vote against build scheme

by Tom Marshall

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A controversial plan to redevelop a bowling club's land was branded "criminal" and nothing but a money-spinner by councillors who voted unanimously to reject the scheme.

The proposal to build on the Mansfield Bowling Club site in Croftdown Road, Dartmouth Park, was denied planning permission by Camden Council's development control committee last Thursday.

The club, a private company, wanted to build eight luxury homes along with a leisure centre and indoor bowling arena, which would have led to the loss of the outdoor bowling green and two clay tennis courts.

They claimed the homes were necessary as an "enabling" development to raise money for the rest of the scheme.

### Disingenuous

Cllr Sally Gimson, who represents Highgate ward, said: "I think it's disingenuous to say that the driver for this is anything else but money.

"This is a money-making scheme that will make millions and millions of pounds and I don't see at all that it's any kind of enabling scheme for the club.

"Having this luxury development, you will lose all that open space, you will lose tennis



■ Paul Barker, front, and members of Mansfield Neighbours Group

courts and a bowling club, and that is space which has been in community use for 140 years. To lose that would be totally criminal."

Kenlyn Lawn Tennis Club, in Croftdown Road, founded in 1919, would have also lost use of the two clay tennis courts, placing its future in jeopardy.

The land has been designated an "asset of community value" by the council.

The decision was met with jubilation by many who have campaigned to protect the open space, including author Julian Barnes.

But Paul Barker, chairman of Mansfield Neighbours Group, acknowledged the battle may not be over. He said: "It was a famous victory and democracy

in action. It's very important that pieces of open greenery in London should be protected and kept.

"They should be maintained and if they fall out of use, they should be given another use, but we should not build houses on them."

Bowling club director Adrian Pruss accused the town hall of getting "in the way of community benefit".

He said: "The members of Mansfield Bowling Club and many of its immediate neighbours are obviously very disappointed at this decision.

"The financial situation of the club has not changed and we are now considering our position regarding the future of the site."