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Shabby and bullying approach to town



by **John Steele**
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the Horsham
Society

decided to sell the green for £1 to Saxon Weald for housing it failed to show any interest in, or respect for, local residents.

Even when their plans were thrown out by their colleagues the ruling administration fought on to try to prevent the land being registered as a town green.

Were it not for the tenacity of Ruth Garner and her fellow residents there is little doubt that the council would have come back with a new set of proposals to cover the green with concrete.

Why else would they have tried so hard to stop registration? Why else would a council that is so hard up it has to shed jobs have wasted public money in this way?

For many years The Horsham

Society has encouraged residents to apply for the many local greens to be registered but until recently it has been a difficult and complex process.

However since a change in the law in 2006, owners of greens, including local councils, can apply for voluntarily registration. It is a simple process.

At the rights of way meeting last week an application from Worthing Borough Council for the voluntary registration of a large area of Goring's Greensward was also approved.

Almost three months ago the society wrote to the chief executive asking HDC to voluntarily register all the open spaces it owns in the town. We are still waiting for a reply.

The process is simple; the

outcome would be permanent protection from development. It seems such an obviously sensible thing to do that the lack of response can only mean the council has its eyes on our green lungs for more development schemes.

Liz Kitchen will shortly stand down as leader of the council. She leaves at a time when the council's reputation in the eyes of the town's residents is pretty tattered.

But there is still time for her to leave a lasting positive legacy for which she would be remembered with gratitude for years ahead.

She should announce publicly that HDC will apply for voluntary registration of all the green spaces which it owns in the town over a period of, say,

two years.

We still refer to the Belisha beacons at pedestrian crossings, named after Hore-Belisha, the minister who introduced them in 1934. For many years teachers' training days were known as Baker days after the secretary of state responsible.

It would be nice to think we might be referring with pride in years to come of our Kitchen greens.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the town's past, present and future and seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.

For more information and details on how to join visit our website

www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 272814.

LAST week saw the successful conclusion of a long fight to protect the community green in Ramsey Close, Horsham, from development when the county council rights of way committee agreed it should be registered as a town green and protected in perpetuity.

This is a story that typifies Horsham District Council's shabby and bullying approach to the town and local people.

Right from the start when it