

**From:** Matthew Bell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 January 2023 23:10  
**To:** Section 62A Applications <section62a@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Proposed development at Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden

Dear Sir / Madam

As volunteer at Saffron Walden Community Football club I stand by the letter written below by our club secretary, Matt Clare.

Sporting facilities are vital to the mobility and mental health of our children. Sport bring communities together. We all understand the need for new housing but you must start putting in recreational facilities to go alongside the new housing stock.

Please, our future well being depends on it. We must keep our children active but we are now having to turn new children away as we do not have the resources to accommodate them.

Thank you for reading.

Matt Bell

Dad and football coach to both girls and boys football.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I represent nearly 800 young children and adults in Saffron Walden and the surrounding villages in my capacity as Secretary of Saffron Walden Community Youth Football Club, a Registered Charity. I wish to record our objection to the above Planning Application, in the strongest possible terms.

Saffron Walden Town has expanded almost exponentially in the last 15 years, and the 2020 population estimate was over 17,000 people (excluding the villages). Several consents have been issued since then and many more houses have been constructed or are soon to be constructed. In that time, Sports facilities in the town have actually been REDUCED – quite significantly.

In football terms, we have permanently lost football pitches at

- Bell College - replaced by a small and very low quality pitch at Crabtrees which is not fit for purpose.
- “Ridgeons” where a pitch was built upon and has been replaced by nothing at all, despite objections from Sport England and ourselves.
- Friends (Walden) School where multiple pitches, used by ourselves, Saffron Walden Rugby Club and several others have been lost, with no replacement.

A new “multi sports” pitch was consented at Carver Barracks and a £500,000 grant was given by Uttlesford District Council towards the construction of a running track and the pitch, a few miles out of Saffron Walden. The running track is built but has not been made available for public use, and the “multi sports” artificial grass pitch in the centre has not been built.

The potential addition of so many new homes in this application is simply a step too far – we already cannot provide for the occupants of the Town as it is; we have to use multiple facilities in our neighbouring villages to even get close to meeting existing demand. We have waiting lists for children we cannot accommodate because of the lack of facilities. The problem worsens every week.

150 + new houses cannot be consented without proper facilities. The Public Open Space proposed in the application is sub-standard and does not meet the requirements of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005, Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan, or indeed National Planning Policy Framework. The UDC Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2019 clearly sets out a chronic shortfall in sporting facilities in the Town – not just for football.

We would therefore expect an application of this scale to either include sports facilities within it, or at the very least a propose a significant Community Infrastructure Levy or S106 Agreement to implement sports related schemes and provide new pitches in other viable locations in the Town.

This cannot go on any longer – we need more facilities of the correct quality, and we need them BEFORE any new development is consented.

Yours sincerely

**Matt Clare**  
Club Secretary  
Saffron Walden Community FC  
