

Mark Saccoccio

From: Steve Owen <stevehmowen@gmail.com>
Sent: 23 October 2019 16:04
To: Mark Saccoccio
Subject: Memorial Playing Field and Garden of Remembrance, Mentmore Road, Linslade
Attachments: Memorial Playing Field, Mentmore Road, Linslade - title.docx

Dear Mark

Further to our meeting this morning I am pasting below a message I have sent to all LLTC councillors, which includes the link to the Historic England publication I mentioned this morning. I am also attaching the spreadsheet attachment which I showed you this morning.

23 October 2019
Dear colleague LLTC councillor

At the Council's Annual Meeting in May I drew attention to the incorrect titling of "Mentmore Park" in Council papers to describe the Council's green space in Mentmore Road, Linslade. Council papers have nevertheless continued to use this description, and accelerated the error rate: so for example, an officers paper to the recent Personnel Sub meeting used "Mentmore Park" twice and the even shorter abbreviation "Mentmore" three times. I complained again at the Council meeting on 30 September and was told by officers "It's in the deeds", causing some amusement at my expense.

I am now attaching a spreadsheet that gives chapter and verse on the correct titling of this land, which is the subject-header of this email, and was used correctly by successive Linslade and Leighton Buzzard councils between 1950 and 2013. The reference by officers to "the deeds" relates to the Council's incorrect titling of the land when applying to Fields in Trust in 2016 for the land to be designated - doubtless arising from an incorrect officers report. The spreadsheet results from about 4 days work at the White House, the library, the Archives in Bedford and the National Archives in Kew. In other words, you can rely on it.

Does all this matter? Yes it does. The land was purchased in response to public demand, and with money raised from the public, to commemorate those who died. It represents a sacred trust with towards those Linslade people whose lives were cut short. Trendy abbreviations disrespect those lost lives. You might want to reflect on the words of the Linslade UDC Chairman reported in the Leighton Buzzard Observer on 4 July 1950, included on the spreadsheet. I hope you agree that this is a bit more than a laughing matter.

So it is time to cut out the multifarious abbreviations and misnomers and revert to the designated title which was solemnly given to this space. I have met the Town Clerk and said to him that if officers wish to suggest, beyond formally reaffirming the correct title of this space, some shorter working reference for Council internal use only, they should come to councillors for formal approval. Any such working abbreviation must in my view include the word "Memorial" and avoid any use of the word "Mentmore" unless the word "Road" is coupled with it.

I am tabling a paper on this matter for the Grounds and Environment Cttee meeting on 2 December. Meantime, anyone wishing to delve into the origins of the post-WW2 national Memorial Playing Fields initiative will find the link <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-war-memorial-parks-gardens/> useful.

Thanks for reading this.
Best wishes
Cllr Steve Owen

I would like to formally request that this matter, titled as per my subject heading above, be included as an agenda item for Grounds and Environmental Services Cttee on 2 December. **I should like this message together with the attachment spreadsheet, to be included as an information paper** against the agenda item.

What I would like the Committee to consider doing is

1. Formally reaffirm the full title of our inherited asset as the "Memorial Playing Field and Garden of Remembrance, Mentmore Road, Linslade".
2. Consider any suggestions from officers for a shorter internal-only working title - if so, my own preference is as stated in the pasted message, i.e. the inclusion of the word "Memorial", and, if officers want the name "Mentmore" to be used, the word "Road" to accompany it.
3. Formally agree to notify Fields in Trust of the corrected title of the site.
4. Agree to the replacement of a Town Council notice board at the site which gives the full title and mentions its origins, e.g. "Provided by public subscription in 1950 in remembrance of those Linslade men and women who died in the two World Wars" or similar.
5. Ask officers to consistently observe the full title and any agreed abbreviation.
6. Consider advice from officers as to any formal corrections needed to be made to Council legal or quasi-legal documents, eg bye-laws.
7. Ask officers to rectify incorrect signage at the site as part of normal maintenance replacement.