



Chorleywood Youth Football Club has been refused permission to expand.

Picture 42C2705: PIPPA DOUGLAS

Club furious at 'farcical' decision

by NEIL SKINNER

A THRIVING youth football club has seen its plans to expand scuppered by councillors, who ruled "rare" flowers and grasses more important than three new pitches.

Chorleywood Youth Football Club, based in the idyllic grounds of the Chorleywood House Estate, says the pitches are necessary to accommodate its growing flock of talented youngsters.

Three Rivers District Council, however, claim the plans pose a threat to the "biodiversity" of the area and threw the plans out at a meeting on Thursday night - despite vocal protests from the more than 100 players who thronged the council's offices.

The youngsters, many clad in the club's distinctive strip, listened intently as their Chairman, Clifton Melvin, urged councillors to back the plans.

Mr Melvin, who has been involved in the club for more than 12 years, accused the committee of failing his young members.

He said: "The message that we are sending out to these kids is 'go and play on your PlayStations; go and hang around on the streets; go and get fat.' Is that really the message that we should be giving them? We need this facility. All we are asking for is six acres of a 170 acre site."

The committee, however, was unmoved.

Council planning officers, who recommended

that the plans be rejected, claim the proposals - which include increased car parking provision - would damage rare grasses and flowers and a tree around the site.

Concerns have also been raised about the "urbanising effect" on the scheme, an increase in traffic and a rise in noise levels.

Council Leader Ann Shaw said she sympathised with the club's predicament but argued the countryside had to be preserved. But she promised to "do all she could" to find an alternative location for the pitches.

Furious parents and club officials, however, accused members of betraying their commitment to youth sports. When it eventually came, their decision was greeted by loud jeers, heckles, and angry questions.

Speaking after the meeting, a furious Mr Melvin said the club would appeal the decision.

He added: "This whole process has been a farce. The council has acted quite disgracefully.

"All this talk about finding us somewhere else to play in nonsense.

"If there was somewhere else don't you think we would have found it by now?"



Is the council right or should the club be allowed to expand? Tell us your thoughts online

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