

Thank you all for coming this evening. It is really important that all parties concerned hear the information at the same time to ensure that everyone understands what is going on.

The Parish Council is currently undertaking a voluntary first registration of its land.

Westhall is already registered and the cemetery is uncomplicated and the registration process is progressing.

When reviewing the documents held by the Parish Council, it became clear that registering the land on the playing field site was not going to be straight forward.

MAP 1 - The land in this area has been conveyed many times to many different organisations.

1953 the first section of the site was purchased from Mr Copping. This includes the area of the surgery, bowling green, community centre and car park.

1965 a section of land was sold to the Village Hall Trust

1972 land was swapped with East Suffolk Council.

1977 land was conveyed to the Parish Council from Mr Cooper – first section of the playing field.

1990 the land for the sports pavilion was conveyed to the community centre.

1990 more land was obtained from Mr Cooper to further extend the playing field and to enable the leisure centre to be built.

All of the transactions, bar one, are easy to trace with full documentation that will allow first registration of the land.

The information that has come to light and the purpose of this briefing session is the land swap in 1972.

MAP 2 – this map shows the land that was swapped between the Parish Council and the East Suffolk Council. The yellow being given for the fire station in return for the blue which became the tennis courts.

MAP 3 - shows the area a little more clearly. This map is taken from land registry as the fire station and land are registered to Suffolk County Council.

The difficulty with this matter is that the land swapped by the Parish Council in 1972 had already been conveyed by the Parish Council to the Village Hall Trust in 1965. This matter is confirmed with the following extract of the Parish Council minutes of 14th April 1969: *“The factor emerged from these deliberations were that the land the County Council required had already been designated to the Village Hall Committee.”* This is further supported by a letter dated 12th February 1970 from the Parish Council’s solicitor Dawson, Butters & Rubery: *“According to the Deeds a piece of land at the north eastern corner was sold off to the Trustees of the Stradbroke Village Hall on the 1st March 1965.”*

Go back to MAP 2 The maps attached to the conveyance documents are not large but it can be clearly seen that the northern boundary does not change and the reading room is the only point of reference.

(MAP 3) Reference to the piece of land to be sold to the Village Hall Trust is made in the Parish Council minutes of 4th December 1961 which state the following: *“The Council had met on the Playing Field and discussed the proposed plot of ground that was going to be allocated for the site of the proposed Village Hall. This site was a straight line from the southern gate post to the southern tennis court boundary.”* The tennis courts at this time being situated somewhere on the carpark/sports pavilion land.

As there is no evidence in the Parish Council records that the land was conveyed back to the Parish Council, the Council’s legal adviser has indicated that they are therefore unable to register the land in the Parish Council’s name. If the Parish Council does not own the land, then the lease with the Tennis Club is not valid.

The proposal from the legal adviser is as follows.

MAP 4 - the land highlighted in yellow can be registered to the Parish Council as ownership can be legally established.

The recommendation is that the Stradbroke Sports and Community Centre undertakes a voluntary first registration of the land they own on the site **MAP 5**.

The main purpose of this briefing meeting is to advise all concerned of the information that has come to light and to ask whether any group can find evidence in their records of the land sold to the Village Hall Trust in 1965 ever being legally conveyed back to the Parish Council before the swap was undertaken in 1972.

If no such documentation can be found, then the advice is that the Parish Council swapped land that it was not entitled to, as it did not own it. The swap should have been between the Village Hall Trust and East Suffolk Council, therefore the land shown on **MAP 6**, should be in the ownership of the Stradbroke Sports and Community Centre as the legal successor to the Village Hall Trust.

However, there is a conveyance document from East Suffolk Council in which they convey the tennis court land to the Parish Council. The advice is that the easiest way to resolve the issue – if no other documents can be found – is for the Parish Council to convey the land back to Stradbroke Sports and Community Centre. This conveyance would also trigger the registration of the land and it would be sensible for all the Community Centre land (and lease with the PC for the play park) to be registered at the same time.