

# 'Better to have no pool than build on The Green'

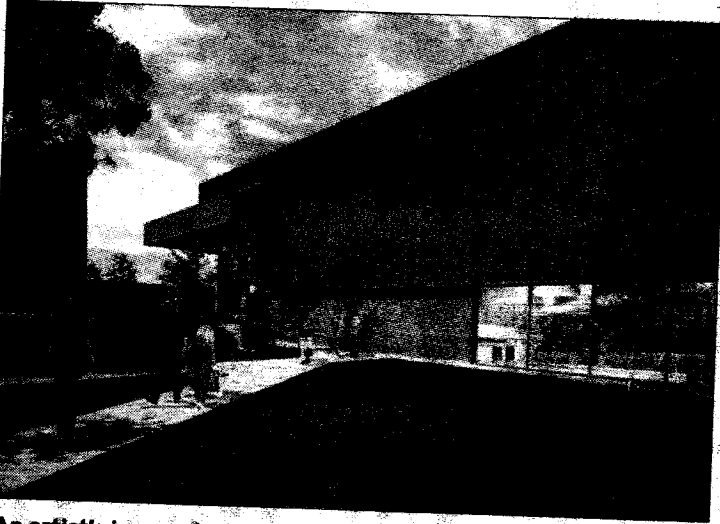
**Matt Leclere**  
leclere@thekmgroup.co.uk  
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swimming pool in Hythe 18 months while a new leisure centre is built at Nickolls Quarry would be a better option in developing on The Green, according to a campaigner. David Plumstead, from the Hythe Green Preservation Society this week told the Express he did not understand why there had to be "a rush" to make a decision.

Protesters are preparing to bathe out at a Hythe Town Council meeting at 6.45pm on Monday to discuss Shepway District Council's planning application to build a new leisure centre on The Green.

Town councillors could ratify proposals by Shepway council to transfer ownership over to the district council on a 125-year lease paving the way for SDC to build a brand new leisure centre. If the plans are rejected by the Town Council, SDC says it will revert to building on the highly controversial Princes Parade site but even with delays to the Nickolls Quarry development, Mr Plumstead said it would be a "small price to pay" to protect The Green.

He said: "Let's say that Hythe had to close at the end of the year. The Nickolls Quarry development where there's land



An artist's impression of a new pool and leisure centre for Princes Parade, Hythe; David Plumstead wants the new leisure to be built at Nickolls Quarry

and money set aside already and backing from Sport England which they won't give to anything other than Nickolls Quarry.

"You might not have a pool for 18 months but at the end you will have a huge leisure facility for Hythe and the district."

He said: "There's overwhelming evidence that people don't want what's being proposed."

Opponents packed into the town hall on Friday evening for a meeting organised by the society outlining their position and plan of attack before Monday's meeting.

Residents from all over the town attended and not just

those whose houses back on to The Green.

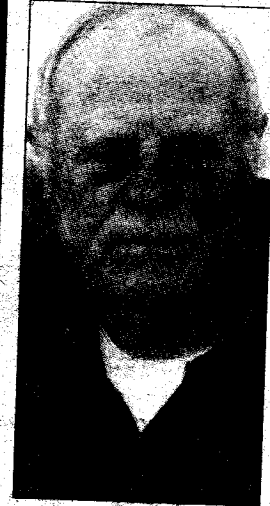
Mr Plumstead blasted councillors who vote to transfer the land to Shepway as "reneging on an agreement" who "will be regarded frankly as dishonest".

He added: "They have the responsibility which they are going to bear for good or ill for what happens to Hythe Green for future generations. They've got to be made aware they bear

the responsibility for the future of The Green and the value of the agreement."

The group is already preparing for a legal challenge if Hythe councillors support the planning application.

■ **What do you think? Write to Folkestone & Hythe Express, 34-36 North Street, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8JR or email folkestoneexpress@thekmgroup.co.uk**



## Trust could maintain green

An agreement on the land which has been left in Hythe council's care for more than 150 years after it was donated to residents by three benefactors in 1862, the proviso it would never be built on, remains under threat.

Shepway council says the spiralling maintenance costs of keeping open the current pool in South Road mean it needs to build a new one quickly.

The Express revealed last July that more than £1 million was needed over the next five years to keep it open.

If Hythe councillors support the planning application submitted by Shepway District Council, building work could start later this year.

A direct descendant of Joseph Horton, one of the benefactors, is expected to speak at the meeting and propose that the town council hand over the care of the land to a charitable trust made up of residents.

Mr Plumstead said he was confident forming a trust could work as an option rather than them painting it off to Shepway District Council.

"I'm sure we wouldn't have any difficulty in raising the money to set us up. There's no financial disadvantage [to the council]."