

**From:** Lesley Gill <REDACTED>

**Sent:** 29 April 2022 22:20

**To:** Commercial Property <Commercial.Property@edinburgh.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Ravelston Park EH4

I am writing to you about the proposed sale of a plot of land in Ravelston Park to Blackhall Nursery. I have had 2 grandchildren who have benefitted from the fantastic nursery and nursery staff at Blackhall, and I'm about to have a third grandchild start there in August this year. Once again I know that he will have a great experience and make lots of new friends. I fully support the ethos of Blackhall nursery and agree that there needs to be bigger and better facilities for the children it provides an excellent service for. However I believe that the Council has short changed the children of Blackhall over the years by not providing them, and their parents, with a Council run nursery which, I'm led to believe, every other primary school in Edinburgh has. If the Council had provided a nursery, beside Blackhall Primary for example, for the growing numbers of children aged 3yrs and 4yrs living in Blackhall there would not now be this dilemma of Ravelston Park having its Common Good Status rescinded in order to provide extra land for an extension to the current Blackhall nursery. Perhaps it is time for COE Council to redress this situation. This has become a divisive issue within the community and while I believe that the vast majority of people, like me, would agree that there needs to be a larger, better and fit for purpose nursery building, for both the sake of the children and the staff, I also know that many residents are concerned that taking away the Common Good Status, from this section of Ravelston Park, could be the thin end of the wedge. They are concerned, as I am, that once a precedent is set it would then be easier to repeat the process in other areas if the park, at the expense of the already limited recreational space in Blackhall. Ravelston Park is currently protected by Field's in Trust, in perpetuity, and they have commented that once an area like Ravelston Park has gone, it's gone forever. That would be a travesty for the local children and adults, as well as visitors to the area, who use the park for a wide variety of individual and group recreational activities every day of the week. So, while I have every sympathy for the dilemma faced by the nursery I don't agree with selling any of the land to any constituted community groups, now or in the future, as I believe the park should be protected now, and for generations to come. At the moment Blackhall nursery uses an enclosed fenced off area of Blackhall park for the children to play in, which I don't think they 'own', so why couldn't this happen once a new nursery was built? Could a section of the park be fenced off giving a new area of grass for outdoor activities, without them requiring to own that area of land? Why do the council feel the land needs to be sold to the nursery and not leased? If it was leased, the Common Good Status may not then need to be rescinded and this may appease residents who are opposed to the sale of the land. I appreciate the arguments of the people who do want this much needed project to progress but, if it is approved, I feel it is the Council's responsibility to provide legal assurances to the local community that this will be a one off situation and no more land will be sold off now or in the future.

Lesley Gill

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Sent from my iPhone