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Mr. G. Langsdon,  
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Dear Geoff,

Wivenhoe Town Football Club

Further to our recent conversations I understand that Colchester Borough Council wish to be advised of the benefits that the University will obtain from its donation of £10,000 to Wivenhoe Town Football Club to assist with its acquisition of the Broad Lane ground, complete with site buildings and fixtures and fittings.

As you are aware the University has been very supportive of the attempts to purchase the ground as this is viewed as a very important leisure asset for Wivenhoe and the surrounding areas. The University community draws heavily on Wivenhoe, where many University staff have made their homes and which provides accommodation for a great many University students. Although the University is endeavouring to provide more on campus accommodation to support the planned expansion in student numbers, it is inevitable that many students will continue to live in Wivenhoe and, of course, that the town will continue to be very attractive to staff. For this reason alone the University is very committed to any scheme which will provide facilities for local people, particularly young people, and which will supplement those that already exist on campus. The provision of further leisure facilities in Wivenhoe supplements the many facilities that the University already provides for the local community who are not part of the University itself. Most specifically the University wishes to use the Broad Lane football ground to stage some of the more prestigious UAU football matches, which are played on Wednesday afternoons, as well as some internal University cup finals. Obviously the use of Broad Lane for the latter games would provide the opportunity for students to play in surroundings that are of a much better standard than they would normally achieve. The University sees such joint ventures as a further way of establishing better relationships with the local community.

In the longer term the University would wish to see further sports facilities established at Broad Lane in line with the plan already outlined. Demand for the University's all-weather tennis courts, for example, is already outstripping the times available and this is reducing the letting time available to non-University users. In addition, University students resident in Wivenhoe do not always wish to return to campus to play sport and might wish to take advantage of a more local facility. Particularly so, if they received a preferential rate for using the facilities at less popular times. Furthermore the support of the University for the provision of further sports facilities at Broad Lane may well be useful in attracting external grants to facilitate the necessary construction works.

With the establishment of the Wivenhoe and District Sporting Facilities Trust to manage and develop the Broad Lane site the University would expect to have representation on the Management Committee of the Trust. Again, as the University is a registered charity, there may be opportunities for co-operative ventures and a pooling of shared knowledge.

Members of the University community have already made use of the football club bar for social functions and this is something we see continuing and probably increasing. There are opportunities for the University to use such space at times when demand would otherwise be low and we are already exploring a number of options. During the summer vacations the University hosts a number of conferences, some of which are sport related. Last year the World Frisbee championships were held at Wivenhoe Park, which attracted a great deal of publicity around the world. This event put a considerable strain on the University's resources and there is no reason why, in the future, similar events should not make use of the Broad Lane site to supplement the facilities that exist on campus.

From the foregoing you will understand the University's desire to support any attempt to acquire the Broad Lane site for permanent sporting use for the community, and that the University is prepared to support such aims with the donation proposed. We are being encouraged by central Government to explore numerous joint ventures in order to provide facilities for our students and we see this as one very positive way forward.

Yours sincerely,



A. F. Woodburn

Copy: Mr. Graham White, Director of Administration, Colchester Borough Council.

AFW/ARN/JVS