



**Jill Scott MBE**  
President, Fields in Trust

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Chief Executive, Fields in Trust

## **OPEN LETTER**

We are deeply concerned that proposed planning reforms could remove the statutory protections that help safeguard England's playing fields and sports facilities. These spaces are not just playing fields – they are vital infrastructure for health and wellbeing, community sport, and children's play.

Playing fields are irreplaceable. Once built on, they are gone forever, and Sport England's statutory consultee role is an important line of defence. Weakening this protection risks accelerating the loss of the very spaces that make grassroots sport and physical activity possible, at a time when participation is growing and demand has never been higher.

Data from Fields in Trust, which provides the UK's only proven legal model to safeguard parks, playgrounds, and green spaces forever, has found that almost half of Britain already lives more than a 10-minute walk from a playing field, with the poorest areas continuing to lose most green spaces to development or closure. Since it was established in 1925, the organisation has helped protect nearly 3,000 green spaces in perpetuity, and as it enters its second centenary, this mission remains critical.

We therefore call on policymakers to ensure that any planning reforms retain a meaningful mechanism to protect playing fields and sports facilities for future generations.

This is about social justice. The people who need green space the most often have the least access. Without these protections, the health and wellbeing of communities will suffer.

Sincerely,

**Jill Scott MBE**

*Former footballer, 2022 Women's Euros Winner and Fields in Trust President*

**Helen Griffiths FRSA**

*Chief Executive of Fields in Trust*

*Signed:*

**Alex Yee MBE**, Triathlete and Olympic Champion

**Ama Agbeze MBE**, Former netballer and Commonwealth Champion

**Clare Bishop**, Former triathlete and Paralympic Champion

**Danny Crates**, Former sprinter and Paralympic Champion

**David Wheeler**, Former footballer

**Ed Clancy OBE**, Former cyclist and Olympic Champion

**Eilish McColgan**, Middle- and long-distance runner, Commonwealth Champion and Olympian

**Jason Leonard OBE**, Former rugby player and 2003 Rugby World Cup Winner

**Matthew Fleming**, Former England cricketer and former President of the MCC

**Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE**, Former rower, Olympic Champion and SportsAid Trustee

**Sir Mo Farah CBE**, Former long-distance runner, Olympic Champion and YST Ambassador

**Tessa Sanderson CBE**, Former javelin-thrower, Olympic Champion and President of Women in Sport

**Tom Bosworth MBE**, Former race walker, Commonwealth Champion and Olympian

**Thurstan Bannister**, son of Roger Bannister  
**Paul Critchley**, CEO of **Active Cornwall**  
**Matt Evans**, CEO of **Active Devon**  
**Jason Fergus**, Director of **Active Essex**  
**Kirsty Dunleavy-Harris**, CEO of **Active Gloucestershire**  
**David Gent**, CEO of **Active Humber**  
**Liz Davidson-Kennett**, Partnerships Director of **Active Kent and Medway**  
**Eve Dewsnap**, Director of **Active Norfolk**  
**Andy Taylor**, CEO of **Active Partnerships**  
**Adam Blaze**, CEO of **Activity Alliance**  
**Jamie Cook**, CEO of **Angling Trust**  
**Dr Amanda Gummer**, Chair of **Association of Play Industries (API)**  
**Sue Storey**, CEO of **Badminton England**  
**Chad Ehlertsen**, CEO of **British American Football**  
**Jon Dutton OBE**, CEO of **British Cycling**  
**Jim Eyre**, CEO of **British Equestrian Federation**  
**Kathy Morris**, National Lead of **British Inline Puck Hockey**  
**Andy Gratwick**, Managing Director of **British Kite Sports**  
**Peter Brooke**, CEO of **British Orienteering**  
**Sarah Finney**, Director of **British Roller Sports Federation**  
**Diana Hunter**, Chair of **British Rowing**  
**Ruth Daniels**, CEO of **British Triathlon**  
**Justine Baynes**, CEO of **British Wheelchair Basketball**  
**Craig Anthony**, CEO of **British Wrestling**  
**Andy Dalby-Welsh**, CEO of **Croquet England**  
**Richard Gould**, CEO of **England and Wales Cricket Board**  
**Chris Jones**, CEO of **England Athletics**  
**Mike Bain**, CEO of **England Handball**  
**Rich Beer**, CEO of **England Hockey**  
**Fran Connolly**, CEO of **England Netball**  
**Baroness Sue Campbell**, Chair of **England Netball and former Chair of UK Sport**  
**Mark Williams**, CEO of **England Squash**  
**Victoria Gosling OBE**, CEO of **GB Snowsport**  
**Brett Nicholls**, CEO of **Get Berkshire Active**  
**Jason Brisbane**, CEO of **Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby**  
**Hayley Lever** CEO of **Greater Manchester Moving**  
**Geoff Webb**, CEO of **Grounds Maintenance Association**  
**Graham Duxbury**, CEO of **Groundwork**  
**John D. O'Callaghan**, Partnerships Director of **Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership**  
**Carolin Göhler**, President of **Landscape Institute**  
**Nick Bitel**, CEO of **London Marathon Group**  
**Alex Welsh**, CEO of **London Playing Fields Foundation**  
**Emily Robinson**, CEO of **London Sport**  
**Scott Lloyd**, CEO of **Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)**  
**Justine Blomley**, CEO of **Merseyside Sport**  
**Chris Holmes**, CEO of **Northamptonshire Sport**  
**Calum Osborne**, CEO of the **Nottingham Forest Community Trust**  
**Ashley Metcalfe**, CEO of **Paddle UK**  
**Elizabeth Duggan**, CEO of **Parkrun**  
**Eugene Minogue**, CEO of **Play England**  
**Robert Udwin**, Council member and former President of **The RFU**  
**Sir James Wates**, Chair of **The RFU**  
**Clare Morley**, CEO of **Rise North East**  
**Sara Sutcliffe MBE**, CEO of **Royal Yachting Association**  
**Abi Ekoku**, interim CEO of **Rugby Football League**  
**James Hope-Gill**, CEO of **Skateboard GB**

*Jane Knowles, CEO of **Somerset Active and Sports Partnership***  
*Lisa Wainwright MBE, CEO of **Sport and Recreation Alliance***  
*Annette Hufton, Chair of **Movement and Dance Division Sport and Recreation Alliance***  
*Mike Chamberlain, CEO of **Sport Birmingham***  
*Richard Shaw, CEO of **Sports & Play Construction Association***  
*Tim Lawler MBE, CEO of **SportsAid***  
*Mark Lawrie OBE, CEO of **StreetGames***  
*Andy Salmon, CEO of **Swim England***  
*Paul Ratcliffe, CEO of **The British Mountaineering Council***  
*Debbie Hewitt MBE, Chair of **The FA***  
*Fiona Howie, CEO of **Town and Country Planning Association***  
*Huw Edwards, CEO of **ukactive***  
*Jack Buckner, CEO of **UK Athletics***  
*Stephanie Hilborne OBE, CEO of **Women in Sport***  
*Carl Hawkes, CEO of **Yorkshire Sport Foundation***  
*Ali Oliver MBE, CEO of **Youth Sport Trust***

## **87 signatories**