



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Telegraph
111 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 0DT

Our Ref: PK09207

29 October 2025

Dear The Telegraph

Re: Telegraph article on HoL Amendment and the AELTC

Dear Sir

In response to Simon Briggs' piece (Wimbledon shrugs off Lib Dem conflict of interest claims in expansion row - October 28), Lord Banner's amendment to the Planning & Environment Bill (Amendment 250, Clause 108) which has been sponsored by Lord O'Donnell would remove vested public rights by retrospective legislation in favour of private landowners. It sweeps away 150 years of Parliamentary protection of publicly owned open space and is not about 'holding the country back in achieving the economic growth we need'.

Neither I, nor Save Wimbledon Park (SWP), are trying to stop development. The Wimbledon Tennis Championships are a critical part of the local community's life and a very significant national sporting event and we are keen for it continuing to grow and prosper. At present, however, the current plans are simply too extensive, which is why I look forward to sitting down shortly with Deborah Jevans, Chair AELTC, to discuss how we reach a compromise that works for both for her Board and the local community.

Although Lord O'Donnell might well not have broken the strict letter of any parliamentary rules, the fact remains he, by dint of his position on the board of AELTC, has a significant (non-financial) interest in what is a private development on public land which developers all around the country will be watching with avaricious interest.

It is worth noting this amendment was not tabled in the House of Commons but first introduced at Committee Stage in the House of Lords with little or no notice on 15 September 2025. It was then withdrawn when Baroness Taylor of Stevenage promised on behalf of the government to hold a full consultation on this difficult issue. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the amendment has returned without any public consultation, nor further debate nor any meaningful scrutiny.

Can I also point out that it is somewhat disingenuous for the club to suggest they are 'good faith purchasers' as this ignores the fact they gave a solemn legally binding undertaking, when they bought the land in 1993, that they would never build on it. Those covenants are something about which the current board of the AELTC is fully aware and the reason why they paid a much reduced price to buy the land but not the legal right to build upon it.

Yours sincerely

