

How About This For A Sports Centre?

C.T. September 14, 1962

A SCHEME for using Christchurch Airfield as a sports and recreational centre, including a swimming pool, football pitches, tennis courts and a youth hostel, while retaining flying in one part of the 192-acre site, has been devised by a number of local residents.

Behind the scheme are Mr. C. R. Walker, of Cameron Road and Mr. Peter Kirkham, of Lingwood Avenue. They have produced a plan of what they would like to see on the airfield instead of houses.

"The development of this valuable piece of land should be considered more in relation to the community as a whole rather than simply as an advantageous proposition to a small number of speculators, who would have it built on for residential purposes and lost to the community for all time", says a statement signed by a dozen. This dozen have the support of about 150 others at the moment, and are hoping for more public opinion in their favour.

"Could not the planners think in a more public-spirited way, and not look upon Christchurch and Mundeford as merely a spare space on the map?" they ask.

"Flying facilities which exist on the southern side of the airfield should continue to be available. The other space could be developed into an extensive sports centre with facilities for numerous activities, plus an open space, which could be used for public events from time to time".

COUNCIL UNDERTAKING

Mr. Walker, an aircraft fitter at Vickers, thought that the centre should be a Council undertaking, and done with the help of local organisations. He said they were trying to get an estimate of the cost of the whole thing. "I have no idea how much it would cost yet".

He thought the runway would be of benefit to any firm that took over the de Havilland factory, as well as the Aero Club, the Gliding School and the A.T.C. who used it at present.

As for the youth hostel, Mr. Walker said it could be used by foreign students, who would then be able to take a greater interest in the town's activities, as many of them would be on the doorstep.

On the site of the present Aero Club buildings, there would be space for parking 5,000 cars and the Club would move nearer the runway.

Those who put their names to the statement are: Messrs. C. R. Walker, P. Kirkham, J. Staddon, E. G. Shelton, W. H. Jeffery, C. P. Walker, W. J. Hobbins, A. Cooper, J. Cuff, E. Ford, B. Stacey, F. Goodwin and M. A. R. de Crespigny.

