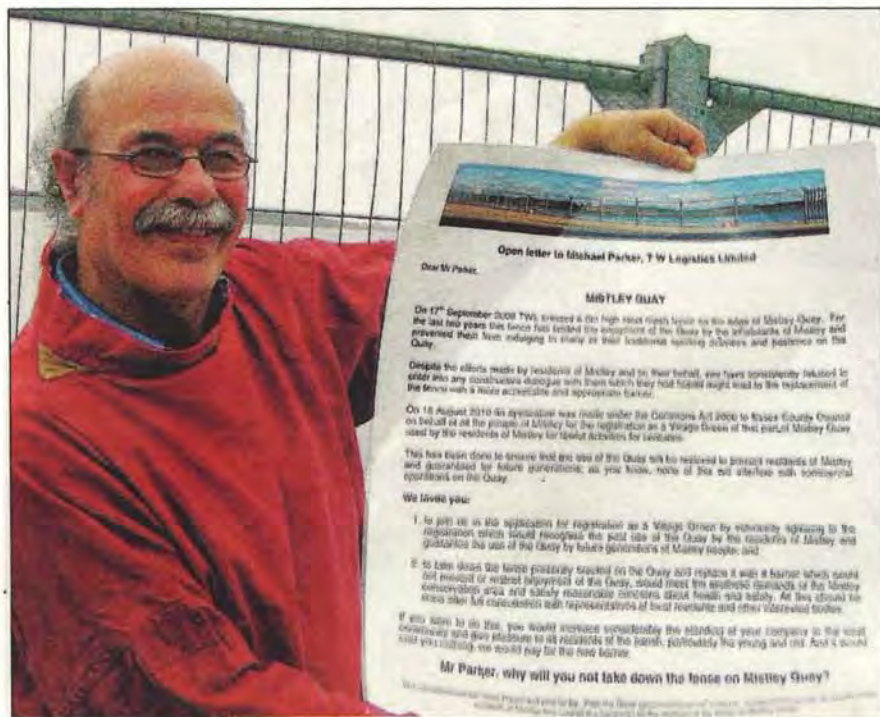


Going green: new move to win back quay access

Campaign group advised to apply to change site's legal status



■ In writing – resident Ian Tucker with the letter sent to Mistley Quay owners TWL Logistics.

A PROTEST group has launched a fresh attempt to get public access to Mistley Quay restored.

It is two years since a two-metre-high steel fence was put up on the historic quay which overlooks the River Stour.

The fence, put up by quay owners TWL Logistics, attracted a storm of controversy as residents argued they had a right to access the waterside.

Last October, the row intensified when a rescue attempt by coastguards to help four sailors from the water was hampered by the fence blocking access.

Protest group Free the Quay is now applying for the quay to become a village green under the 2006 Commons Act.

This would mean the fence would have to come down, but could be replaced with a smaller barrier, allowing the public legal access to the water.

Campaigners are hopeful the move could score them a victory within six months.

Group chairman Simon Bullimore said: "It does not have to be a green space at all, as long as it has been used by the residents for leisure pursuits and pastimes for more than 20 years.

"Once that has been established, then under the Act if there have been restrictions on that in two years before the application is made, then these restrictions will have to be moved."

by Andrea Collitt
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The application has been made to Essex County Council for the village green status by Mistley resident Ian Tucker.

Mr Bullimore said the council had indicated an inquiry into the application would be fast-tracked if the group paid the costs – and that it has asked the authority to do this within six months.

He added: "Thanks to the overwhelming generosity and support of local people over the past two years, Free the Quay has been able to obtain the best legal advice on the several legal courses open to us.

"Registration as a village green will give the quickest and least-costly result. We are confident that we will succeed."

The news comes after the group published an open letter to TWL Logistics asking it to join in the application and take the fence down.

Free the Quay offered to pay for a suitable alternative barrier, such as one comprising of posts and chains, if necessary.

TWL Logistics is yet to respond to the offer.

A spokesman for the firm declined to comment when contacted by the County Standard.

Families will gather at Mistley Quay tomorrow at 10am to mark the second anniversary by demonstrating their legal use of the quay for leisure pastimes.