

Girton Parish Council

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The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge CB3 0FH

Minutes of Sport and Recreation Committee Strategic Planning meeting of 8th July 2009 in the Cotton Hall

Present: Cllrs M Wilson (Chairman); S Clift (PC Vice Chair); V Godby; J. Thorrold; L.Sparling, and C. Starling. Co-opted members: CMR Wilson, & L.Miller
In attendance: Robert Stone

| Item | Agenda | Action |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| 09/56 | Apologies Cllr de Lacey and Graham Clare | |
| 09/57 | Members declaration of interest for items on the agenda None. | |
| 09/58 | Public session on items on the agenda, and items of mutual interest No members of the public were present. | |
| 09/59 | To receive a paper concerning the meeting of the Chairman with the Principal of the Cambridge Academy of English The paper at Appendix A reporting on the use of the Recreation Ground's facilities by CAE was received and discussed. Cllr Wilson said that the fee for CAE should now be driven by a formula based on session charges as was the case for other groups. This would ensure rates are equitably across all user groups and that increases in subsequent years would be driven by the session rate. A proposal will be included in the fees for 2010/11. CAE had a current arrangement whereby they booked the tennis courts for their exclusive use between 3.30 to 5pm for every day except Friday when they had 1.30 to 4pm. (The tennis club has priority in the mornings, and the public between 1 and 3pm except Friday.) | |
| 09/60 | To receive Strategic Planning and Fees Risk Assessment documents and to discuss the priorities, goals and objectives of the Committee for the current year, for the 2010/11 budget year and subsequent years. i) <u>Strategic Planning paper (Appendix B)</u> Cllr Wilson raised a number of detailed issues, which were discussed as follows: Para 2 - It was not clear whether the S&R Committee or Environment Committee had overall responsibility for the Pavilion car park especially in relation to Health and Safety and maintenance. As recent emergency maintenance had been financed from the S&R budget this suggested the S&R Committee should be in the lead but clarification was required. Para 3 – Finances. The Chairman estimated the balances of the allocated Sport and | |

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| <p>Recreation reserves should be: Pavilion fabric £69,839; Play equipment £25,750; and Games surfaces £39,132. It was noted that these figures were subject to confirmation. It would be helpful if these figures and expenses against reserves for the Council's reserves were visible in the monthly profit and loss finance reports. Concern was also expressed that the annual allocations to these allocated reserves, especially Pavilion fabric be returned to their historical levels.</p> <p>Para 6.1 – Running costs of The Pavilion. There was a need to separate the budget for clearly annual routine operational and maintenance of the Pavilion and car park from that of Pavilion Fabric reserve which should be used only for major projects.</p> <p>Para 6.2 - Health & Safety – The CCTV system needed to be upgraded. Quotes are to be obtained.</p> <p>Para 6.3 – Improvements to facilities. Requests were made by users/clubs but expenditure needed to be balanced against ongoing ownership and maintenance by the Council, and the fact that user clubs may cease to exist. Proposals should be brought within a forward planning process and clubs made aware of the need for longer term planning.</p> <p>Para 7 – Fees & bookings. The fee structure was discussed. Following the freeze on most fees last year it was agreed that increases for 2010/11 should at least reflect inflation over two years. The consumer price index can be used as the basis of price increases. Proposed rates will be considered at the September meeting.</p> <p>Weighting of charges to recoup additional income from users in the winter months who are presumed to be responsible for a greater percentage of increased utilities costs was not considered appropriate at this time. The policy of not charging for cancelled and un-rescheduled games also needed to be reconsidered in the fees structure.</p> <p>The free use of the recreation ground by Girton Glebe School and Cottontails Pre School for their Sports Days, and Girton Colts for their Presentation Day also needed to be reviewed. At least formal bookings were needed for these one off events.</p> <p>A new fee formula would be prepared for the Cambridge Academy of English as noted above.</p> <p>The Council needed to adopt a stricter policy as regards block bookings and charging. Designing a new multiple booking form would help guarantee payments.</p> <p>Storage charges (in new cupboards or other stores) for regular users will be incorporated into the fees proposals to be considered in September.</p> <p>It was noted that there were legal restrictions on the total amount of the recreation ground that could be set aside for sport pitches to ensure that the needs of other uses were met. The current availability of St Johns Field meant that we were able to comply with this requirement.</p> <p>Para 8 – Underspend for 2008/09. As detailed in Appendix B there were underspends on: grasscutting; cricket maintenance; building maintenance; CCTV; cleaning and booking administrator wages. The utilities budget was overspent by some £2000.</p> | <p>PFO</p> <p>Clerk/ LM</p> <p>Clerk</p> |
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Para 10 – Meetings/Committee structure. The two month meeting cycle had proved insufficient for business needs. Moving to a one monthly cycle and appointing a Vice Chairman would improve matters. The present pattern of twice a year dedicated open users meetings was considered sufficient.

If Feast Week became a regular feature of village life it was thought a S&R committee member on the FW steering group would help to ensure that our interests were covered.

Para 11 – The Pavilion. The refurbishment and improvement of The Pavilion, including bringing the loft space into use and installing a lift, were established goals. The Clerk had recently gained a costing of £20,000 to bring the loft space into use as a community room. (*The cost of the lift was not included in this estimate but expected to be broadly the same figure.*) Proposals for further extension of the building towards the Tennis Courts were noted but proceeding with the provision of a lift and the loft conversion were thought to be the first priority, possibly as the first phase of such a redevelopment. In looking how this project would best be taken forward the possibility was raised that a new sub-committee of the Council (perhaps evolving from the Wellbrook Committee) should consider these proposals in concert with other proposed community facilities.

The lack of cycle parking at the Pavilion was also noted as a serious omission.

The Recreation Ground and St John’s Field. Funding for improvements to the boundary with Girton Wood and between the St John’s Field and the Recreation Ground in autumn 2009 appears to have become available via Northstowe access monies allocated by Cambridgeshire County Council’s Rights of Way Officer.

The Parish Council has agreed to the Committee’s proposals for the St Johns Field to become a dog running area.

The Council is also investigating the possibility of the transfer of the ownership of the Council’s open spaces under a Fields in Trust scheme to protect them from development for future generations.

An agreed schedule/timetable of work on ditches and hedges (including work not required every year) which affect the playing fields and the users of the Recreation Ground should be agreed and sufficient funds allocated the appropriate (either Environment Committee or Sport and Recreation) budget lines.

Equipped areas of play. The Parish Council was to consider the proposal to install a new fence on the recreation ground to protect the play area from the carpark and access by dogs as recommended by this Committee. As part of the budgeting process funds should be earmarked to cover an ongoing programme of play equipment painting and maintenance

It was noted that the equipment and fencing in the play area at Weavers Field needed upgrading and that the planning application for the new play area at Wellbrook Way was still under consideration by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Youth. The Committee would welcome the new youth leader to its meetings and to feed into its planning process.

Para 12 – Safety. Despite progress during the year in setting up a schedule of Inspections the regime was still actively being reviewed. It was felt necessary to add a quarterly or monthly mechanical inspection of play equipment in addition to the weekly visual checks.

Para 13 – Goals from previous year. Progress to date was detailed at Appendix B. Goals for this year (and beyond) will be proposed at the September meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.35pm.

Appendix A

Report on use of facilities by CAE

Earlier this year I met with John Barnett the Principal of CAE to discuss the use of the Recreation Ground and courts by language school students.

I began by explaining the new tiered scale of user fees and the Committee's move to replace large annual one off lump sum payments with a fee that is related through a formula to a standard fixed session fee. I gave the example of the Tennis Club whose charge is now linked to the base charge of a MUGA session. The logic behind the change was to show that users were treated equitably and that when after review increases in fees were introduced any increase could be related to those imposed across the board. I assured him that the Committee had now adopted a policy of annually reviewing fees in order to link modest increases to annual inflation rates and avoid infrequent large incremental increases.

It was agreed that fitting the CAE charges into such a framework would be acceptable. A fixed charge of £400 per year has been paid since the new Pavilion was built. An increase to £500 (later reduced to £450) was made by the Committee for the year 2007/08, this was followed by another £50 increase to £500 for 2008/09. The Committee had not changed this fee rate for 2009/10.

The Principal explained that unexpected large increases such as the proposed 25% increase originally announced in 2007 would be problematic as the Academy's publicity over what it offers is distributed so far in advance and further increases of this magnitude would lead to the Academy reviewing how and if the CAE could continue to use the Recreation Ground.

It was agreed that any contributions to original building projects were one off contributions to a fund raising project and should not affect setting of ongoing user fees.

Introduction of a partial billing schedule (the CAE presently pays one amount at the end of the year) in line with that used for other user groups was not seen as a problem.

We continued by discussing patterns of CAE use. It was noted:

- (a) Although the availability of courts was advertised to students actual levels of take-up varied considerably depending on the interests or inclinations of each intake.
- (b) When courts were used the sessions were organised and supervised by CAE staff.
- (c) That John Barnett on his own initiative regularly litter picks the main Recreation Ground area.

It was agreed that these factors could be considered by the Council when establishing a formula for the annual fee.

For information prior to 2000 the CAE paid the Tennis Club directly for use of the Tennis Courts at certain times.

MLW 19 May 2009.

Appendix B

**Sport and Recreation Committee
Strategic Planning Document for Sport and Recreation 2008- (2009 revision)**

1. Objectives

The Parish Council has the following Institutional Objectives:

1. To execute its statutory duties.
2. To maintain and enhance the amenities of the village including, but not limited to, managed open spaces, woods and recreational facilities for all ages.
3. To serve as a focus for community action and development.
4. To represent the collective interests of the village to local, regional and national government or other bodies.
5. To develop partnerships with voluntary organisations, community groups and other local authorities to promote these objectives.

2. Remit of the Sport and Recreation Committee

- To oversee and administer sporting and recreational facilities in the Village, including the upkeep and maintenance of the Pavilion, all LEAPs, the Trim Trail, all exterior sporting facilities, and all equipment used for sporting facilities together with the marking of sports pitches.
- To administer the use of such facilities by the public and to ensure public safety at any event held on or using such facilities.
- To assess future needs for new sporting and recreational facilities and where appropriate to draw up a budget for the provision thereof.
- To liaise with the YouthWorks programme and to consider facilities for youth in the Village.

The Recreation Ground consists of:

- The area comprising the Recreation Ground proper bordered by the

Parish Church and Girton Glebe School including the Pavilion building, tennis courts, multi-use games area (MUGA) and car park.

- Ten Acre Field to the rear of the Recreation Ground bordered by private land, St John's field and a strip of land owned by the Woodland Trust.
- St John's field abutting the Recreation Ground along its northern side.

3. Budget and Activities

The Committee is responsible for the operation and upkeep of the Pavilion and related sport facilities and other recreational (play equipment) areas within the village. The Annual operating budget includes amounts set aside to cover the costs of (among others) grass cutting, pitch maintenance and preparation, maintenance and inspection of play equipment, salary of the Booking Administrator and utility charges for the Pavilion. For the 2008/09 financial year it had an operating budget of £48,478. Total expense at the end of the financial year was £40,572. (Explanation of the shortfall are given below)

The operating budget for 2009/10 (the current year) is set at £51,350

In addition to the operating budget separate Reserve funds are built up by annual increments and are available for capital expenditure in three specific areas:

- Pavilion Fabric (Eventual replacement cost of Pavilion. Also taken to include major current repairs/refurbishment of Pavilion fabric in order to lengthen the life of the building)
- Replacement of play equipment (Replacement of existing or equivalent but also used for replacement of safety surfaces)
- Replacement/refurbishment of games surfaces (Tennis Courts/MUGA)

Balances on these reserves including transfers in for 2009/10 are:

{Estimates to be tabled}

4. Income

Included within the annual budget is an estimated income from fees and charges for the use of the facilities. The Recreation Ground raises the Council's second largest amount of annual income (second only to the precept) through its user fees. For 2008/09 this target amount was set at £26,000. Total income for the year in the final accounts is recorded as £28,596. £1,350 of this should have been credited to the previous financial year leaving a corrected figure of £27,236. The target income for 2009/10 is £27,500.

Actual income year to year has since the opening of the Pavilion has been quite variable with annual increases from opening in 2001 but a noticeable drop from £25,431 in 2005/06 to £21,297 for the following year. Income levels are vulnerable to the loss of custom for bookings for which an alternative may not be immediately identifiable – a given club ceases operations in the course of a season or a club reduces the number of teams run.

5. Fees

Fees are currently set within a tiered structure providing preferential rates for village youth and village users generally. The Committee agrees a proposed fee structure as part of the annual budget setting process each autumn. In setting the fees and recommending increases the Committee will review the previously prepared risk assessment for setting fees. Income from users has never been sought on a total cost recovery basis but on the basis of a *reasonable* contribution to overall costs attributed to Sport and Recreation. The funding of the new Pavilion building by Sport England made explicit that the Council should use the Pavilion and its fee structure to promote sports activity especially by youth, minorities and women/girls and also that it should not use the expected improved levels of income to reduce the Council's financial contribution to sport it was providing prior to the construction of the Pavilion (which was estimated at around £10,000 at 1990's prices).

It can be noted that this notional £10,000 did not cover many costs that the Committee is responsible for today – such as the salary of the new post of Bookings Administrator nevertheless a quick calculation indicates that in 2008/09 adjusted income covered all expenses but £13,336 – remarkably close to that £10,000 plus inflation.

The Committee has historically given the Booking Administrator flexibility and discretion over setting reduced fees within the framework for specific groups or individuals based on her appreciation of their ability to pay – for example where an exercise class may have a small number in the group etc.

For 2007/08 the Committee restructured several fee arrangements (Tennis Club and Cricket Club) with a view to making the fee structure sustainable and formula driven without recourse to separate annual negotiations but to enable the Committee to defend increases in large lump sums which were linked to a per session increase of the same percentage. The remainder of fees were raised by a small amount which represented a target of a general increase of 3% over the previous year.

In 2008/09 following review no general percentage increases were made but significant increases in the Cricket Clubs fees were approved. There was an expectation of increased income over the previous year from the Tennis Club (in the second year of a new fee formula) and from the Girton Glebe School which was paying for school and after school sessions for the first time.

The “reasonable contribution” of the user fee is, despite inherent vagueness, an approach which is reflected in the rates charged by other local Parishes. No Parish aims to make a profit from local sport but neither does one underwrite all sports activity from public funds. Care does need to be taken not to alienate or price away users, particularly local, of the facilities. Custom can now be lost to several village venues: the Cotton Hall, WI Hall, Girton Glebe or St Colette's School. Further details are included in the Fees Risk Assessment document.

Financial information available is now provided to the Committee and realistic priorities within the Sport and Recreation budget can be properly assessed. As in previous years it is unlikely that large additional funds above existing levels from the precept will be provided to finance anything beyond the existing core commitments and the established reserves.

6. Greater budgetary control

As we now do have reliable financial information several issues can be now be considered as part of our strategic plan.

- 6.1 The actual **running costs of the Pavilion** building have long been underestimated or rather were not considered at all. No adequate budget for ongoing maintenance was established and so a great deal of remedial building related repairs and refurbishments have been carried out over the last three years. Over £10,000 was spent in 2007/08 £4,690 in 2008/09 and a further £5,000 is budgeted for 2009/10. Long standing faults such as damage to the balcony have yet to be resolved completely. These expenses can be justified following years of very little investment in the building in addition to normal wear and tear over its lifetime. However these funds have been made available through the transfer of funds from the established reserve set aside for the replacement of the building which does mean that in recent years there has been a reduction in the commitment to building up a long term fund in order to cover wear and tear expenses perhaps more appropriately considered operational expenses.
- 6.2 **Ongoing health and safety expense** has also been overlooked. As a public building the financial risks run by the Council in not ensuring that the building conforms to legal requirements are very serious. Ongoing costs for fire safety management, water monitoring, electrical testing and others must be identified for the budget setting process. Effective CCTV is included within this heading. The existing CCTV is not providing what we need but is clearly essential to limit vandalism, crime/fly-tipping around the Pavilion and we require expert advice on a proper specification.
- 6.3 **Large ticket “improvements”**: The Committee has often been placed in a reactive stance over suggestions for improvements in the facilities offered. These suggestions often originate from sports clubs and as our budget does not include any provision for out of the blue expenses of this kind it is easy to turn each proposal into an unfortunate “us and them” dialogue: “if this benefits the club then the club should fund it” versus “the club pays XXXX fees per year and we expect something back”

There clearly needs to be a view over what represents the baseline service - and therefore normally contributed to by existing user fee income - and what represents significant additional investment either through a step change in facilities (additional changing rooms/pitches,) or in provision of new capital equipment (heavy roller/replacement wicket mower). The policy of the Town Charity in this respect that the Council be required to take ownership of equipment funded by them rather than the club is instructive – the Recreation Ground is the Council’s asset and any genuine improvement is an improvement to our facilities even though most of the benefit through use may appear to be accruing to a particular club. Advance planning (looking years ahead) by both clubs and the Committee and honest assessment of any proposals including seeking external sources of funding (NOT using the GTC as first port of call) is necessary as our main budgets are established so early in the previous year.

Example: All weather wicket. An all weather wicket is installed in the middle of the 7 Acre field. The Cricket Club now wish to replace that with practice wickets at the perimeter of the main 7 Acre field and return the central wicket to turf. In practice the existing practice wicket and the cricket square are used almost exclusively by the Girton Cricket Club but the club does not own the pitch – they merely rent it per game. As we consider relocating a practice wicket we must balance the long term consequences of devoting space to this – or in reconfiguring the hardstanding of the multi-court area as an acceptable enhancement. Who should own the roll up wickets? – if the Council we can use for other customers – if the club they would need to store off site or pay for storage on site.

7. Fees and Bookings Issues

7.1 An annual inflation figure for reference has been informally advised by the Clerk as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure rather than the Retail Price Index. At April 09 the annual CPI figure was 2.3%.

Users were informed of the fact their fees were not being raised last year but the letter indicated that a subsequent increase would take account of this.

An increase of 4.5% on most existing village rate session fees would translate to round about £1 or 50p increases – 5% slightly more. (4.5% increase on 2008/09 total income figure given above (and including no other increases) would generate around £28461)

7.2 Higher charges to cover increased cost for utilities have been discussed. We could modify the fee structure so winter activities contribute more additional income (over the % increase) to reflect floodlights, heat and water consumption – or seek to spread over all income over the year.

7.3 Adoption of a new fee formula for the CAE. To establish a formula based on MUGA per session fee (more detail in report of CAE discussions).

7.4 Policy for games cancelled due to weather conditions. Both cricket and football need to be considered. The possibility of rescheduled games and therefore reclaiming lost income varies from sport to sport. Options include a flat season charge for day cricket fixtures – say 17 at £60 = £1020 plus cup games at a per game rate.

7.5 Review of Tennis Club use of courts vs walk-in users as part of fee formula. This would revise the terms established three years ago to rationalise the Tennis Club fee.

7.7 Block bookings guaranteed payment policy. Where a regular court booking has been set up for x weeks but may not be taken up on any given night. The user should be charged for the session even if absent – as it is effectively blocking another booking.

7.8 Establish bookings calendar with dates of agreed fixtures by which changes can be arranged and double bookings avoided. Dates for seasons to be provided to Bookings Administrator/Clerk in advance so possible conflicts can be cleared prior to confirmation.

7.8 Removal of “free” dates from the calendar. Two (to my knowledge) unpaid bookings of the Recreation Ground are the School Sports Day and the Girton Colts Presentation Day. The relevant fees in both cases would be exclusive use of ground and Pavilion per half day currently set for “youth” at £75 peak and £60 off peak. (see also 7.4 – the school will schedule a reserve date for sports day if bad weather – however it is unlikely to conflict with any other potential bookings).

7.9 Consider the legal restrictions on the amount of the total recreational land reserved for sports pitches. A limit of one third of the total is established in law and there is the potential to be challenged on this. The present use patterns and our lease of the St Johns Field mean that we do comply with this with regard to cricket and football. It is my opinion that given that the aim of the legislation is to make sure land remains open for non-organised recreation the reservation of the field(s) for Feast Week also does not fall foul of this. People are free to pass from attraction to attraction. However as a general rule we should ensure that no fee paying user activity blocks either the permissive right of way along the side of the 10 Acre field and the strip used for part of the dog route along the side of the 7 acre field.

7.10 Storage for regular users. The Bobtails cabinets have raised a general issue. New cabinets are available for use and Bobtails require several. A charge for reserved storage of this kind has been proposed by the Clerk. Not to charge would expose us to charges of providing an extra service to some users but not all for equal charge – it would also mean there is no incentive to give up storage once obtained. Other clubs seem to have established squatters rights – Bridge club cabinet – Tennis Room – other items in containers? Storage costs need to be added to the fee setting regime.

8. Notes on the Underspend for 2008/09 and comparison of income and expenses. (this is based on financial report Profit and Loss budget vs actual run 29/4/09)

Summary of major expense lines:

8.1 Grasscutting underspent by 1,843 but Grounds Maintenance overall total slightly overspent by 324. So expense basically on target. The grass cutting 3 year contract was finalised after setting this budget figure.

8.2 Cricket Maintenance (materials and labour) underspent by 830. Affected by weather conditions this year.

8.3 Building maintenance underspent by 1,309. Lack of certainty over Balcony and other expenses delayed ensuring budget spent this year.

8.4 CCTV underspent by 1880 (out of budget of 2000) also see note above.

8.5 Cleaning underspent by 630 – clarify costs and frequency of “deep clean” which may have been included into preparing a projected figure. If deep cleans expected

every year or every other they need to be budgeted for.

8.6 Utilities **overspend of 2042** This was an expected overspend this year but the actual amount was in doubt as it could have been even larger. The reason contingency budget of 3000 not used during year.

8.7 Booking Administrator Wages underspend of 1848
Security/Maintenance Wages underspend of 879
Inaccurate budget estimates based on historical figures that included reimbursement for supplies etc.

8.8 Overall underspend for Sport and Recreation 2008/09 = 7905.36

8.9 Taking this into account The Chair will request that funds from unallocated reserves be released to cover new unbudgeted expense on fencing of the recreation ground at: £4348.39 as recommended at the June 2009 Sport and Recreation Committee Meeting.

9. Expenses grouped by activity and income (based on financial report as above)

Shared or non-attributable expenses

1.Recreation Grounds

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Grass Cutting | 4956 |
| Spraying | 705 |
| Groundsman | 1222 |
| Booking Administrator | 5490 |
| Security maintenance staff | 3800 |
| Litter picker | 740 |
| Equipment repair | 346 |
| Sports equipment | 281 |
| Subtotal | 17540 |

2. Building

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Building maintenance | 3650 |
| CCTV | 120 |
| Pavilion supplies | 1543 |
| Cleaning | 4870 |
| Subtotal | 10183 |

3. Utilities

| | |
|----------|------|
| Electric | 6042 |
| Water | 410 |
| Subtotal | 6452 |

4. Playgrounds

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Inspection | 80 |
| Maintenance | 1320 |
| Subtotal | 1400 |

| Attributable expense | | Income |
|---|---------------|--------|
| 5. Sports pitches and courts | | |
| Football pitch maintenance | 3130 | 3658 |
| MUGA maintenance | 614 | 9061 |
| Cricket pitch | 1119 | 820 |
| Tennis Courts | 70 | 2310 |
| Subtotal | 4933 | 15849 |
| 6. Hall | (see 2 above) | 10467 |
| 7. Combination Facilities | | 1940 |
| 10. Meetings/Committee Structure and user feedback | | |
| <p>A schedule of meeting in alternate months has been adopted in recent years. However the timetable for planning and finalising fees and budgets really means that a monthly meeting regime has been proposed for 2009/10. The two monthly cycle has also proved insufficient to ensure financial commitments are approved in a speedy manner and budgets expended. In order to manage the amount of business generated by the Committee it is also proposed from this year to appoint a vice-chair.</p> <p>The Committee holds official “open” meetings with user and user representatives/club officers twice a year as supplementary meetings of the Committee. Any user is also welcome to attend any regular meeting of the S and R Committee and many club officers are in regular contact with the Bookings Administrator. The current Clerk has also taken a more visible hand in the day to day management of the facilities.</p> <p>The “user” meetings are not very well attended despite direct invitations. Perhaps open “surgeries” during the weekends would generate a better response.</p> <p>Publicity of club activity and general encouragement of use of the facilities at the Recreation Ground remains an area of patchy success but where much more can be done. The Vice-chair’s spring walks are to be welcomed as an innovation in this area.</p> <p>If regular (either annually or less frequent) Feast Week events are to be planned as ongoing events centred on the Recreation Ground we should consider requesting representation of the Committee on the FW committee to cover our interests.</p> | | |
| 11. Main Focus/Review Assets | | |
| 11.1. Pavilion | | |
| <p>The refurbishment/improvement of the Pavilion fabric was identified as a major focus in 2007 and the top two items, installation of a lift and the use of the loft space, identified on the action plan were related to this topic. The conversion of the loft space was expected by Sport England as part of the original building project and the shortcoming was noted in their post construction review of their funding of the Pavilion.</p> <p>Although no progress has been made in following through with these two projects they have been included in suggested outline plans for a more ambitious (yet necessary)</p> | | |

expansion of the Pavilion. At the request of the Clerk a preliminary drawing sketched out possible expansion of the Pavilion to the side and conversion of the roof space for a meeting room, store, and office has been provided by the original architect. The Clerk is continuing to work on this.

Expansion of the Pavilion will provide additional changing rooms to cover the existing use of the pitches and is not in itself a driver of greater activity. The existing footprint and the improvement in the quality of the pitches on the 10 Acre Field has meant that the use of the site by football teams has increased – which has highlighted lack of sufficient changing facilities within the Pavilion and also placed pressure on the car-park.

Expansion of the Pavilion – as proposed - towards the Tennis Courts will eliminate one of the emergency vehicular routes onto the fields. Even before this the front side of the 7 Acre Field is already quite congested – from the Play area, across the Pavilion to the Courts, multi-goal area and MUGA. Suggestions that we accommodate two new practice cricket wickets and nets within the site have been discussed although locating these in a relatively secure area has proved difficult. A new proposal to locate temporary surface adjacent to the multigoals court needs to be pursued.

Cycle parking on site is also urgently needed if we are to encourage less reliance of cars on site.

11.2. Fields

The Recreation Ground fields comprise the 7 Acre Field (the “main” field), the 10 Acre Field and the St John’s Field. The first two are used for field sports – the St John’s Field surface makes it unsafe to use for such sporting use was left as an informal open area. Playing conditions on the two playing fields have improved over the last few years – thanks to drainage work, the use of the new Power Roller and the work and expertise of the grass cutting contractor and (not least) our part time groundsman. The feedback from the clubs in this area has continued to be very good.

Disease has taken its toll of the Horse Chestnut trees around the perimeter of the 7 Acre field and further losses may be experienced. Over the last year Chris Wilson has discussed a regular ditch clearing regime with the Environment Committee. Both Committees will need to establish a calendar for ongoing works and to ensure that the work is built into the relevant budget.

The Parish Council has now agreed to a proposal to use the St John’s Field as a dog running area and has agreed to renew the lease of the field for 10 years. Part of the lease terms and conditions will be the fitting of gates between St John’s and the 7 Acre Field. Funding for this and the improvement of the hedging or fencing of this boundary has yet to be identified.

The Council will be taking a view on the desirability of placing the Recreational fields in our ownership (St John’s Field is leased) in Trust. Initial advice is that this should not unduly restrict the Council in managing the site as at present – but the matter will be decided by full Council.

11.3 Equipped Area of Play

In one corner of the 7 Acre Field is the village's main equipped children's play area. We are presently consulting the school on options for the replacement of one major piece of equipment using funds from Play Equipment Reserve.

For safety reasons the front edge of the children's play area (facing car park) needs to be properly fenced and gated for safety reasons and to prevent dogs entering the site. A recommendation and quotation are to be considered by the full Council. Fencing in of the play area from the rest of the 7 acre field has been considered in the past but discounted as reducing our capacity to add or extend the play area footprint and removing the open aspect of the recreation Ground overall. Along the side of the site the Churchyard wall has been partially removed as the structure was deemed unsafe. The Church has at present no funds or immediate plans to rebuild this wall.

Linked to this topic is an urgent need to review the smaller LEAP play provision at Weavers Field and if possible upgrade the existing provision.

11.4 Youth focus

Apart from the provision of the multi-goal area for informal pick-up games (which replaced skateboard features) the site has no facilities targeted at teenagers – beyond clubs - however the crowded nature of the site does make it difficult to sensibly site either a youth shelter or other feature which would provide a sense of ownership and a degree of independence balanced by a realistic concern that the facility is not abused.

The Committee has seen suggestions to locate a Youth pod beside the Pavilion – which was considered inappropriate as a permanent structure and noted that they would appreciate dialogue with the youth worker to work on future options. It would be valuable to invite the new youth worker to a Committee meeting.

12. Safety

The Committee had established paperwork to carry out weekly and annual safety inspections of its facilities. The first annual safety and maintenance inspection by the Chair/Clerk and Health Safety Expert was carried out this year. This is a valuable exercise in addition to the required independent annual safety inspection. The inspection regime is still under review - in addition to weekly visual checks a monthly or quarterly mechanical inspection is recommended.

13. 2008/09 Goals and current status

Goal: The Committee recommend that the Parish Council consider developing proposals to enlarge the existing Pavilion to provide additional changing facilities, the installation of a lift and the fitting out of the Pavilion loft space as a usable recreational and meeting area.

Action: Options outline costs and funding opportunities being sought by Clerk.

Goal: That the Committee purchase and fit gates at St John's Field and establish it as a secure dog running area with authorised access via the side of the 10 acre field.

Action: The Council has agreed to the change in use of the field. The fitting of gates has also now become a priority for the Council as a requirement of the lease agreement for St John's Field.

Goal: The Sport and Recreation Committee request that the Environment Committee nominate a contact with whom Chris Wilson may liaise over the condition of ditches around the playing fields.

Action: Cris Wilson is in direct contact with the Environment Committee.

Goal: To improve signage of the dog walking route and to publicise the St John's Field as a destination of the route.

Action: Responsibility for this was delegated by the Parish Council in April 2009.

Goal: Selection, purchase and installation of new equipment using funds from Play Equipment replacement reserves.

Action: Shortlist of suitable equipment passed to School for pupil comment.

Goal: The Committee approve the location of two fixed all weather cricket wickets and nets in the strip of land between the side of the MUGA and the far hedge. Funding for the purchase of the wickets and nets is being sought by Girton Cricket Club.

Action: Proposed site is now unusable for this. Alternatives to be investigated.

Goal: The Committee agree to fencing of the Recreation Ground play area in order to separate the area from the carpark, and prevent access by dogs to the play area or 7 Acre field, together with self-closing gates, associated signage and benches.

Action: A preferred quotation for a fence with self closing gates has been forwarded for approval by the full Council.

Goal: The Committee invite Youth Worker and Youths Works Committee members to discuss Youth activities

Action: Yet to be arranged.

MLW revised June 30 2009.