

Henfield Parish Council

Playing Field Strategy 2014

(Approved on 18th March 2014)

1. Introduction and Rationale

Henfield Parish Council is committed to providing green open spaces for amenity and leisure to the community of Henfield. This is demonstrated through the support given to the various clubs and societies that use these facilities.

While this represents a significant investment in the provision of these facilities, HPC is aware that the demand and use of these open spaces is increasing to a point where in some cases there are insufficient playing fields. HPC is also aware that some of the shortfall is as a result of the poor quality of the pitch surfaces.

In order to manage the current situation and plan for the future, HPC has decided to take a strategic approach to the management of its playing fields. This will provide an overview of the current and future situation and enable HPC to prepare a management plan that will provide a route to meet the demands of the Henfield community.

This strategy uses the Sport England document "Towards a Level Playing Field – a Guide to the Production of Playing Field Strategies". The methodology recommended in this document has been used for producing assessment questionnaires for data collection and the subsequent analysis of the data gathered.

2. Report Summary

- a. There are significant quality issues for most football pitches that affects the availability of pitches to meet the demand for adult football matches. Pitch availability for junior matches is being met.
- b. The cricket pitch is in good condition. Current demand for all cricket matches is being met. Future demand for junior and female matches is likely to increase but by continuing the established process of effective pitch management this demand is likely to be met. Adult matches are at peak capacity at present. Any future increase in demand will be difficult to meet.
- c. Strategy recommendations:
 - i. Produce a Statement of Principle identifying the commitment that HPC has towards its playing fields and all their users and to act as a blueprint and guidance.
 - ii. Address the quality issues to enable a greater utilisation of football pitches. Identify costs involved and sources of funding.
 - iii. Establish a formal maintenance specification and programme. Agree an implementation process with relevant clubs.

- d. Future demand for pitch use for matches is likely to increase in line with the previous five years. Capacity for adult matches will be difficult to meet.

3. Objectives of the Playing Field Strategy

Appendix 1 shows the terms of reference and objectives for the preparation of this Playing Field Strategy which was agreed by the HPC Lighting and Open Spaces Committee on 9 April 2013. The main aim is to match as far as is practically possible the demand for pitches to their availability for use by Henfield based sports clubs.

The key objectives are summarised below:

- a. To assess the quality of playing fields and their suitability for use by an appropriate sports activity.
- b. To assess the current and future use and demand for HPC playing fields.
- c. To assess the current and future capacity of HPC playing fields.
- d. To make strategic recommendations based on the findings of the assessment in objectives a, b and c above.

4. Assessment of Playing Fields.

Principle users of the playing fields are the Henfield Cricket Club (HCC) and the Henfield Football Club (HFC). A separate assessment of current and future demand has been carried out for each of these clubs. There is no other sports club that has significant use of any pitches and therefore no consultation has been carried out with any other club.

- a. To assess the quality of playing fields and their suitability for use by an appropriate sports activity.**

In developing the playing field strategy a data collection and analysis of existing and future requirements was undertaken. Based on the information collected from HCC and HFC, an assessment of quality was prepared using the following scale based on guidance from the Sport England document;

Table 1 Quality Assessment Categories	
Category	Description
A	Good quality and maintained to a high specification
B	Acceptable quality, requires a specific maintenance regime
C	Poor quality, requires upgrading and a significant enhanced maintenance regime
D	Very poor quality, poor drainage, requires upgrading and a significantly enhanced maintenance regime
E	Uncategorised. Open, fairly level grassland areas offering potential scope for adaption for use as informal training or kick-around areas

Appendix 2 shows a detailed analysis of the quality of each playing field based on information provided by each club from the questionnaire they were sent. Table 2 below shows a summary of the analysis of this data for each playing field currently owned or leased by the HPC. It also shows pitches not owned by HPC but used by HCC and/or HFC. The table shows that the pitches owned or leased by HPC and used for football have significant quality issues which give rise to a substantial loss of use.

Table 2 Pitch Assessment Summary						
Name/Location of Pitch	Sport/use	No of Pitches	Condition	Changing Facilities	Condition	Loss of Use due to pitch condition
Kings Field West (main pitch)	Adult football	1	C/D	Yes	B/C	25%
Leisure Centre Field	Junior Football	3	C/D	Yes	C/D	25%
Rothery Field, Nep Town Road	Junior football training	1	C/D	Yes	B/C	25%
Memorial Field, Henfield Common	Adult football	1	D	Yes	B	50%
Wantley (WSCC)	Not currently used	1	E	No	N/A	100%
Blackstone (Sussex County CC)	Junior football matches	1	A	Yes	B	50%
Henfield Common (HPC)	Cricket adult and junior	1	A	Yes	A	0
Sayers Common (Sayers Common PC)	Cricket	1	B	Yes	A	0

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b. Current and future Use and Demand for Pitches

Tables 3 and 3a below show information relating to the current demand for pitches for the football club and cricket club.

Over the last 5 years both clubs have stated that there has been an increase in members of 15%. This is reflected in the increased number of teams especially juniors and female teams. As a comparison and based on the 2011 census the population of Henfield has increased by 4% since 2001.

Table 3 Current Demand for Football Pitches									
	No of teams	Home games %	Home games per week during season	% of matches played at these times – excludes training sessions.					
				Mid wk evngs	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Total
Adult Teams	5	50%	2.5	0	0%	80%	20%	0%	100%
Junior Teams	5	50%	2.5	0	80%	0%	20%	0%	100%
Mini Teams	4	50%	2	0	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Total	14								

Table 3a Current Demand for Cricket Pitches									
	No of teams	Home games per season	Home games per week	% of games played at these times					
				Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Total
Adult Teams	5	67	2.5	10%	0%	45%	5%	40%	100%
Junior Teams	4	18	1.5	67%	0%	0%	33%	0%	100%
Total	9								

c. **Current Demand and Capacity**

i. **Henfield Football Club**

Table 4 below shows the current peak demand for pitches and the current capacity.

Table 4 Comparison of demand against capacity for football pitches															
	Pitches required to meet peak demand					Pitch Availability					Under Use (-) or Shortfall of Pitches				
	Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm
Adult Teams	0	0	2	0.5	0	0	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	0	-1.25	0.75	-0.75	-1.25
Junior Teams	0	2.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	-2	-1.5	-2
Mini Teams	0	2	0	0	0	0	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	0	0.75	-1.25	-1.25	-1.25

Key points are:

- a) Peak demand for adult pitches is on Saturday afternoons where 2 pitches are required.
- b) Under the current arrangements only 1.25 pitches are available at this time leaving a shortfall of 0.75 pitches. This is based on a reduction of the potential use of the King's Field and the Memorial Field of 25% and 50% respectively due to their poor condition. If these pitches were able to be used 100% of the time they were required, there would be no shortfall. Mini teams also have a capacity gap as the pitch at Blackstone is not available for 10 weeks during the season when the ground is prepared for cricket use.
- c) Training sessions have not been part of the study but in its response the Football Club has explained that training facilities are seriously affected by the poor pitch quality. In addition the lack of more training grounds with floodlighting also affects their training schedule and their ability to increase their standard of play in competitive matches.

ii. Henfield Cricket Club

Table 4a shows the peak demand for pitches and the current capacity. Key points are:

- a) The peak demand for pitches is on Saturday afternoons where 1.1 pitches are required usually for the men’s first and second teams. Sunday afternoon is also a peak period.
- b) Under the current arrangements there is a small shortfall of 0.12 which is managed by the men’s third team playing at Berryfields Sayers Common. Unlike the football pitches the cricket pitches are able to be fully used with the A pitch having the reputation of being one of the best in Sussex.
- c) There are no significant problems in meeting the demand for other teams.

	Pitches required to meet peak demand					Pitch Availability					Under Use (-) or Shortfall of Pitches				
	Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Mid wk evng	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm
Adult Teams	0.248	0.0	1.1	0.1	1.0	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-1.8	-1	0.12	-0.88	-0.01
Junior Teams	1.005	0	0	0.495	0	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-1	-1	-1	-0.5	-1

5. A Strategy for Henfield – Options and Solutions

Henfield Parish Council has a significant asset in its green open space areas available to members of the community for recreation. These open spaces are also used for match play by the football and cricket clubs. The Playing Field Strategy 2014 is a blueprint for providing good quality and safe sports playing fields.

a. Recommendations for the main areas of the strategy

- i. Establish a HPC Statement of Principle that identifies the HPC's commitment to its playing fields.
- ii. Improving the quality of pitches. This would include an assessment of cost and likely sources of funding.
- iii. Management and maintenance.

b. Statement of Principle

The formal relationship between HPC and the various clubs is currently one of landlord and tenant with the clubs being independent and meeting the needs of their members. The reality is that in a small community such as Henfield everyone works towards meeting mutual interests.

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate the key principles of commitment of HPC towards its playing fields and establish the limits of responsibility for HPC and all users of the playing fields. Such a statement would provide clarity and act as a blueprint for all aspects of playing field strategy. Appendix 3 shows a suggested statement.

c. Quality

The audit of pitches and the consultation exercise identified areas for improvement in the quality of some of the football pitches (see table 2). A strategy to deal with these quality issues is necessary. Some pitches and facilities will require a minimal investment but others will require significantly more. The football club would benefit from an improvement in the quality to overcome its deficit in pitch availability.

King's Field. Quality C/D. Investigations have already commenced to remedy the drainage problems at the King's Field and quotations have been received.

Memorial Field. Quality D. The costs to improve the quality of the Memorial Field are likely to be significant. A quality rating of D does not reflect well as this pitch is described as the "main" pitch of the HFC. Discussions have commenced with contractors to establish the order of cost of works to improve the pitch to at least B. It is likely that this pitch will always suffer with drainage and the cost of annual maintenance is likely to be high.

Rothery Field. Quality C/D. This pitch is used by juniors for matches. It is not large enough for adult matches. As the availability for pitches for junior matches are currently being met, there is no urgency to commence immediately on seeking remedial quotations to improve the quality but should be included in a future programme.

Wantley Field. This is a resource that is not currently used by the football club or cricket club but by locals for recreational purposes. Although the field is large it has limited vehicular access and parking and is under the ownership of the West Sussex County Council. Ownership would not normally be a problem, but in recent years there have been unattributed statements that WSCC intend to use the land for building. In these circumstances it would be best not to commence any changes to current use.

Changing Facilities. The quality of changing facilities is shown in Appendix 2. The minimum rating is B/C currently providing an acceptable standard.

In the current economic climate funding for the necessary works to improve the quality of provision is likely to be difficult. Identification of various funding bodies will be an integral part of the strategy with subsequent communications to apply for funding.

d. **Management and Maintenance.**

HPC has a good relationship with the clubs using the playing facilities. However, discussions with them has tended to be on an as needed basis. This has led to an un-coordinated approach to maintenance needs.

In order to overcome these communication issues a more formal approach to management and maintenance of the playing fields needs to be established. This could be in the form of a maintenance specification covering all aspects and showing costs and frequencies produced in partnership with the clubs.

6. Future Demand for Playing Fields

Future demand is likely to continue to increase but the rate of increase is difficult to assess. As discussed in section 3b, the football and cricket clubs have indicated that over the last 5 years there has been an increase in their members of 15%. This is significantly higher than the 2011 census for the population of Henfield which has increased by 4% since 2001. It is likely that this difference is due to the increase in popularity of female and junior teams, for both football and cricket.

The development of these teams is likely to increase and will put additional pressure on pitch availability. At present, HFC and HCC manage this demand by playing at off peak times and/or on non Henfield pitches. This arrangement is likely to continue for foreseeable future. For adult teams the situation is different. The cricket club is able to meet current demand but only by using a pitch at Sayers Common. Any increase in adult teams will be difficult as capacity has been reached already. There are limited options for resolving this issue and each has its own problems relating to acceptability which should be the subject of future discussions.

The football club have a significant problem. Even if the King's Field and Memorial Field were

100% usable by improving quality this would just meet the current demand but with no margin for the unexpected. Resolving the problems on the Memorial Field is not likely to be done for about 2 years.

7. What next?

The Lighting and Open Spaces committee is invited to consider this strategy document and its recommendations. If accepted:

- a. Specifications and quotations need to be obtained for the works to improve the quality of pitches and funding sources found.
- b. A management structure needs to be established involving the relevant bodies.
- c. A fully priced maintenance specification and programme to be established.

Henfield Parish Council
Terms of Reference for the
Development of a Playing Fields Strategy

Introduction	At the LOS meeting held on 15 January 2013 it was decided to develop a playing field strategy and Vas Siantonas was appointed to oversee the development of a strategy document. Proposed Terms of Reference for this document are set out below for approval by the LOS Committee.	
Reasons for a Strategy Document	<p>A strategy document will:</p> <p>Corporate and strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direction and set priorities. • Provide evidence for capital funding. • Help deliver national and regional policies for social inclusion, environmental protection, community involvement and healthy living. <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a basis for establishing new pitch requirements arising from new housing developments. • Be a good tool for the protection of pitches threatened by development. <p>Operational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Council’s asset management. • Identify the quality of pitches and any remedial work that may be required. <p>Sports development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify the capacity of existing pitches to supply current and future demands. 	
Steering Group	There will be no steering group but consultation will take place with representatives from relevant organisations including the football and cricket clubs, Horsham DC etc.	
Areas of Responsibility	Vas Siantonas will be responsible for delivering the strategy document.	
Reporting mechanism	An oral progress report will be submitted by Vas Siantonas at each LOS meeting.	
SCOPE	Limits	Playing fields and associated pavilions/changing rooms owned or leased by Henfield Parish Council. The Sport England document “Towards a Level Playing Field – a Guide to the Production of Playing Field Strategies” will be used as the key reference document.
	Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To assess the current and future use and demand for HPC playing fields. 2. To assess the current and future capacity of HPC playing fields. 3. To assess the quality of playing fields and their suitability for use by an appropriate sports activity. 4. To assess current income, expenditure and capital arrangements. 5. To make strategic recommendations based on the findings of the assessment in objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 above.
	Delivery	The report to the LOS committee to be submitted no later than two weeks before its October meeting.

Appendix 2 Pitch Utilisation and Quality Assessment

							Net Availability				
		Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Reduction due to quality	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	
Kings Field/Leisure Centre Field											
Adult		1	1	1	1	25%	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	
Junior		1	1	1	1	25%	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	
Mini		1	1	1	1	25%	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	
Total Pitches		3	3	3	3		2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	
Rothery Field											
Adult		0	0	0	0	25%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Junior		1	1	1	0	25%	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	
Mini		0	0	0	0	25%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Pitches		1	1	1	1	25%	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	
Memorial Field											
Adult		1	1	1	1	50%	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
Junior		0	0	0	0	50%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Mini		0	0	0	0	50%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Pitches		1	1	1	1	50%	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
Manor Way, Wantley											
Adult		0	0	0	0	100%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Junior		0	0	0	0	100%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Mini		0	0	0	0	100%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Pitches		0	0	0	0	100%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Blackstone											
Adult		0	0	0	0	50%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Junior		1	1	1	1	50%	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
Mini		1	1	1	1	50%	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	
Total Pitches		2	2	2	2	50%	1	1	1	1	
Total Pitch Availability											
Adult		2	2	2	2		1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	
Junior		3	3	3	3		2	2	2	2	
Mini		2	2	2	2		1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	
Total Pitches		7	7	7	7		4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	
Cricket	Mid week	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm		Mid week	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm
Henfield Common grass	2	1	1	1	1	0%	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Henfield Common synthetic	2	1	1	1	1	0%	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Sayers Common	0	0	1	0	0	0%	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00

Appendix 3 Ideas for a Statement of Principle

- Henfield Parish Council is committed to providing good quality and safe sports playing fields for use by the general public and Henfield based sports clubs.
- HPC will as far as practically possible ensure that the pitches and associated facilities are well maintained.
- HPC will work closely with interested groups and clubs to ensure that their needs for sports playing fields are met.
- Available playing fields
 - The King's Field, Northcroft
 - The Leisure Centre Field
 - The Rothery Field, Nep Town Road
 - Cricket Ground and the Memorial Field