

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

L&A – Football pricing update

5th June 2019

Introduction

The estates manager has been asked to produce a report and draft a pricing policy for the parish football pitches.

Report Details

Before the start of 2019/2020 season, the parish will have acquired approx. 17 football pitches from Swindon Borough Council. These pitches along with changing facilities, vary in condition from average to poor, and the accurate usage figures are not fully known or available from SBC as the leagues manage this information directly.

For reference, the following sites are pending transfer from the Borough:

1. Mannington Recreation & Changing Rooms
2. Southbrook Recreation Ground & Changing Rooms
3. Penhill Recreation Ground (Sevenfields) & Changing Rooms
4. Pembroke Gardens Recreation Ground & Changing Rooms

It was believed a further 5 pitches at Moredon Recreation & the changing facilities would also be acquired. However, it has been confirmed that, as the Council are in conjunction with various sporting partners regarding the re-development of the area around the Moredon Rec. The pitches and changing facilities have not been considered for leasing to the Parish.

After meeting with Pete Mildenhall (Saturday league secretary) I am aware that the Swindon & District league currently use Moredon & Sevenfields for the majority of their matches. Feedback was that 'these are the best pitches out of the bunch' and that's why they use them. It is also mentioned that teams from both leagues are desperately looking for good playing pitches to use.

Hi Andrew,

There are still the existing 5 teams who wish to play and there will be a couple of new teams expressing a wish for council pitch.

We have migrated to the Moredon and Penhill sites just because most of our teams like to play there and it is good for the league as everyone knows that they can get to see a game every week, also clubs have an affinity with the ground and try to keep facilities as best they can.

With these 2 sites I can get a max of 2 games at Moredon and 3 games at Penhill (due to dressing room constraints at Moredon and only 3 pitches marked out at Penhill)

Going back to problems we lost both grounds in September due to cracks and Penhill went into November due to cracks however we still played nearly 50 games on these 2 sites.

With planned rotation of Penhill pitches they are the best ones according to our teams (that's why our best 2 teams wish to play there).

We have shown no interest on the other sites solely due to the responsibility of opening and

closing these sites as we simply do not have the manpower, also teams show no interest in Shrewsbury or Pembroke because of changing facilities. - Pete Mildenhall

Separately, I also met with Clive Archer to discuss the Sunday league requirements.

The league currently average anywhere between 3-9 games per week (depending on the number of teams). These matches are rotated and mainly split between Mannington, Sevenfields & Moredon.

At the time of the meeting, and as a result of the approach by Clint Ricketts of FC Abbey Meads, the Sunday leagues requirement and usage of Moredon was discussed. However, as it is now likely the Moredon asset (in the short term prior to the Sports Hub Development) will not be transferred to the Parish, this proposal will no longer be required.

Finally, the suggestion was put to both leagues of pitch assistance (i.e. a grounds person on match days). This suggestion was positively received (price dependant) and it was remarked that having a grounds person to set up and pack away would make a big difference, especially at Mannington where the member of staff could provide a security measure around the changing rooms. This in turn would make using Mannington more attractive and more teams would play there.

Considerations

- i. A site visit to Southbrook took place where Andy, Aaron and I met with the football caretaker of Super Marine. He was able to provide some thoughts on what's required to improve the condition of the playing surfaces.

At the time, the grass at Southbrook was wildly overgrown (which has now been addressed) but it was advised that the grass needs to be cut more frequently to avoid it sitting in clumps, which kills the grass underneath. Additionally, a comment was made that for just the far pitch alone a tonne of soil would be needed from the outset, especially around the goal mouths.

We have to appreciate the standard set by Super Marine is currently beyond our capacity short term. However, the principle objective is to 'start getting the basics right' by improving the condition of these surfaces and make them a place where teams and parish residents want to play.

- ii. Pitch Improvement Reports:

As per the independent reports produced by the 'Grounds & Natural Turf and Improvement Programme' there is significant cost investment required to bring all pitches up to an acceptable standard.

These improvements, (I would suggest) need to commence at the earliest opportunity in readiness for the start of the next season.

I have provided a basic list of the types of machinery needed and the attributed costs in an ancillary document for reference, should we wish to undertake the pitch Improvements ourselves and should we employ a grounds person for continual upkeep. (please note there are no labour costs included and prices are subject to change).

On Friday 3rd May I met with Darren Matthews from a company called 'Ecosolve' to survey Mannington, Sevenfields & Southbrook. Darren provided the same diagnosis at each site.

Initially a correct program of grass cutting needs to be implemented (at least once every 2 weeks). A decompaction of the soil using a verti-drainer will improve the drainage and growth and finally a selective weed control programme implemented. These three things would form the basis of an improved overall surface and at a push could be carried out in time for next season (but this will be time approval dependant).

Good afternoon Andrew,

Thanks for meeting with me to look around your Football pitches the other day, as discussed, we feel that it would be good to get the selective weed control and Verti-drain decompaction elements done at the moment and look at other improvements further down the line.

As there is a lack of watering facilities at all the sites it could be wasteful to overseed each pitch and have another dry summer like last year, as the seed will not germinate.

I feel that once you have managed to get the grass cutting "under control" this year it will show what pitches will require overseeding for next spring.

- iii. Alongside improving the playing surface, another concern highlighted as to why teams are reluctant to use council pitches, is because of having to set up and pack away on the day. Therefore, as mentioned there is a likely revenue cost of purchasing new equipment and ongoing costs for the employment of full / part time grounds person, needs to be taken into account. Long term this would present an ideal opportunity for apprentices / volunteer workers.
- iv. In order to facilitate the pitch rotation for the leagues (less Moredon) there will be the requirement to improve the changing rooms to a better standard. The current condition of onsite facilities is poor, especially at Pembroke Gardens & Mannington (where additional security measures are also required to aid in preventing theft). Therefore, there will be time & costs associated in undertaking this.
- v. One concern raised by Cllrs was the pricing for non-club parish residents. I have now included a tier to accommodate this with an idea of making Pembroke gardens a specific recreational pitch for non-club matches.

Draft Policy

For reference, these are comparable costs of hiring local pitches:

- **Swindon Borough Council** - £91.44 Inc Vat or £76.20 when block booked for 10 - £762.00.
- **Beverbrook** in Calne - £60.00 per match.
- **St Joseph Catholic College** - £67.50 per match
- **Kingsdown School** -£42.00 per hour / peak time
- **Nova Hreod College** - £58.00 +Vat per hour

A vital part of this pricing policy is to make usage ascertainable and affordable for parish residents.

There are several different options of what the CSNPC could offer but I believe a simple tiered approach (as follows) could work best.

Tier One Full Size Adult / Youth Pitch: Pay Per Match / Per Pitch (including set up assistance with grounds person) *

1. £75.00 per match
2. £650.00 block x 10 bookings

Tier Two Full Size Adult / Youth Pitch: Pay Per Match / Per Pitch (not including set up assistance with grounds person) *

1. £55.00 per match
2. £500.00 block x 10 bookings

Tier One Youth Pitch (9v9 or 7v7): Pay Per Match / Per Pitch (including set up assistance with grounds person) *

1. £50.00 per match
2. £450.00 block x 10 bookings

Tier Two Youth Pitch (9v9 or 7v7): Pay Per Match / Per Pitch (not including set up assistance with grounds person) *

1. £40.00 per match
2. £350.00 block x 10 bookings

Public Tier (Wilts FA): Pay Per Match / Per Pitch (Pitch only) *

1. £55.00 per match

Finally, due to the poor condition of its changing facilities the intention is to use Pembroke gardens as recreational sport pitch for public users.

*prices subject to annual review

Booking

- All pitch bookings must be made, and payment received 48 hours in advance of the day.
- Bookings can be made via telephone or walk-in.
- Club payments should be made via Bacs payment or bank card.
- Adhoc matches can be paid in cash (if no other alternative available).
- League secretary's will be notified by midday (of all payees) the day before the match and informed of which pitches are available for use.
- The leagues will continue to distribute teams to pitches.

Potential Revenue

Based on an average of 10 league matches taking place per week (paying tier 1, £75.00 with groundskeeper assistance), the potential weekly revenue would be £750.00.

Please note - the number of matches that can be played per site is dictated by the amount of onsite changing facilities available.

There are approx. 32 weeks in a season, giving a potential income of around £24,000

A nominal income from Ad-hoc public matches of around £500.00 - £1000.00 per season

Potential seasonal income total - £25,000.

To ensure the highest possible return, it is paramount that the pitches and changing facilities are available for use. Therefore, the more pitches out of the 17 available, the higher the potential income return*

*These figures do not take into consideration cancellations or disruptions to weekly playing schedule.

Costs

As per the pitch review, there is an initial pitch improvement cost required. I have included an appendix quotation from Ecosolve to undertake this. Their cost for the Verti-drain of 12 Pitches is **£3300.00 & £1320.00** for the selective weed control program.

For comparison using Wiltshire FA the total cost for 12 pitches is **£3162.00**, with the breakdown as follows:

- Mannington (based on specific 5 of the 8 x 11v11 pitches) – 5 x £340 = £1700 less 25% discount = £1,275.00
- Sevenfields (based on 5 x 11v11 pitches) – 5 x £340 = £1700 less 25% discount = £1,275.00
- Southbrook (based on 2 x 11v11 pitches) – 2 x £340 = £680 less 10% = £612.00

SBC Pricing:

The Verti-drain machinery is hired in on a weekly basis at a cost of £1,500 and it can do around 3 pitches per day so it will depend on how many pitches you want to do (i.e. around 15 pitches over the week)

To do all the pitches at Mannington, Penhill, Southbrook and Moredon would mean 21 pitches in total so we would be looking at a hire period of 2 whole weeks at a total cost of £5,300 excl VAT. (although only 7 actual days of work)

If you wanted us to just hire it for a week (to do 15 pitches), the cost would be £3,400 excl VAT

Work would be subject to suitable weather / ground conditions at the time of the operation

Grounds Person

I recently attend a groundsman coffee club meeting set up by the Wiltshire FA to discuss pitch improvements. This also allowed me to find out a rough idea of costs for the employment of grounds persons.

The recruitment of 1.5 FTE to undertake the grounds keeper duties.

Full Time salary between £18,000 - £23,000 DPE *

Part Time salary between £8,000 - £10,000 DPE *

The Grounds person responsibilities would include but not limited to:

Grass cutting, maintain pitch conditions and equipment, line mark pitches in preparation for matches, assist teams with set up and taking down nets & corner flags on match days.

* Depending on experience

The grounds person would be employed by the parish and there is a supporting document for their recruitment was discussed as F&S on 4th June.

Current SBC Provision

The normal maintenance work included within the Parish payment covers the following:

Mowing

Marking Out

Clean Changing rooms (basic weekly clean only)

Rolling (autumn / winter)

Aeration (autumn / winter)

Autumn Fertiliser application

End of season renovation work to worn areas (centre of the pitch - approx. 1/3 of the pitch surface), using a Verdi-seeder (a tractor mounted disc-seeder which we hire in) and top up with soil

SBC do not include any re-painting of the goal posts or replacement goal posts

Other operations may be required, and we can price for this but not covered in the "at-cost" Service:

Selective Herbicide Application (outside Contractor)

Verti-draining (hire in specialist equipment)

The above standard was the same as undertaken by SBC prior to the work being transferred to the Parish. So, it is only a basic standard and partly down to the poor condition of the pitches due to a lack of investment over many years.

Recommendation

Allow the Estates manager to;

1. Request the current grass cutting schedule for the sports pitches. Implement a bi-weekly cut to avoid overgrowth and clumps of grass sitting.
2. Commence the necessary 'basic' pitch improvements (on the pending transferred pitches) of a Verti-drain & Weed control programme for at least 8 pitches.

2 x Southbrook
3 x Seven Fields
3 x Mannington

Approx. cost to undertake - **£3000.00**

Revision on this – To use SBC, as 15 sports pitches can be undertaken for similar costing.

3. Carry out a site assessment of the onsite changing facilities to assess the overall condition. Based on findings, seek costings of the basic requirements to bring them up to a better standard for the teams to use.

Following this,

4. Implementation of the above pricing policy.
5. Provide Cllrs with costs to employ grounds person(s)
6. Work with the grants manager towards the funding / purchase of initial basic equipment and machinery for on-going management & maintenance by the parish and grounds keeper.
7. When available, review the business case presented by SBC for the price/cost associated with the pitches for the Moredon sports hub, to ensure the pricing strategy is kept inline and avoid vast discrepancies

