

Minutes of the Recreation Ground Users Group
held at 7pm Tuesday 30th January 2024
in the Chamber, Council Offices, North Street, Ilminster

Attendees:

Cllr Sue Osborne, Ilminster Town Council
Cllr Paul Sellers, Ilminster Town Council
Cllr Matt James, Ilminster Town Council
Julie Earp, Deputy Town Clerk, Ilminster Town Council
Jason Fontana, Recreation Manager, Ilminster Town Council
Stuart Shepherd, Ilminster Education Foundation
Jonny Watkins, Vice Chair, Ilminster Youth Football Club
Craig Rice, Chairman, Ilminster Cricket Club Ltd
Sian Sainsbury, Safeguarding & Welfare, Ilminster Cricket Club Ltd
Sarah Stuckey, Ilminster Town Football Club
Claire Oaten, Herne View CofE Primary School

1. Welcome and any Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Ben Jenner-Hurford, recreation ground user
Dan Haines, Chairman, Ilminster Town Football Club
Mark Nicholas, Ilminster Angling Association

2. Update about Open Spaces from the Town Council

The Deputy Town Clerk provided an update about Open Spaces from the Town Council:

a. Winterhay – new play equipment and bow top fencing has been installed and the Town Council have received a lot of positive feedback from both the users and the residents who live around the play park.

b. Canal – the heavy rain over the previous few months lead to the canal flooding. The Angling Association had hoped to install a wider pipe to allow the water to move through quicker, however, this is not recommended as this level of rainfall could lead to areas around Winterhay flooding. The recreation ground area is a flood plain which saves the water moving onto the housing estates. The Town Council grounds team have installed fencing along the end of the canal towards the Archie Gooch Pavilion car park. The triangle area of grass by the entrance to the Archie Gooch Pavilion will have knee high fencing installed to stop cars parking on it. A date is expected to be known soon.

c. West Crescent – New play equipment is due to be installed towards the end of April/beginning of May.

d. Recreation Ground – A fitness station will be installed towards the end of April which is paid from S106 funds. Unfortunately, the trail can not be installed at the moment as there are drainage issues on The Mead side of the recreation ground which would need to be solved before the trail is laid. Otherwise, it would need to be dug up for the drainage work to be completed. There will be a large gate installed where the fair lorries enter the recreation ground. This is to stop people driving their

cars and vans directly across the recreation ground. The IEF lease with the cricket club and the Town Council is expected to be finalised and signed off for 1st April.

e. Somerset Council – the financial difficulties of the council will mean a lot of services will stop over the coming months. The Town Council have included extra funds in the budget to be able to cover some of those services such as public waste collection, grass cutting in open spaces and the verges. However, nothing has been confirmed and the Town Council are waiting for further information.

3. Proposed Schedule of Charges 2024/2025

Discussions were about the charges for users of the Town Council open spaces and the pitch fees charged to the football and cricket clubs. A spreadsheet provided by Dan Haines, Chairman of Ilminster Town Football Club, has been used to calculate three options to be put forward to the Open Spaces Committee on 6th February. It was agreed to change the inflation figure from 10% to 5%, and to note the RPI figures for September 2023 as a comparison. The prices for the use of areas of the recreation ground need the time limit removed from the table. The cricket club pitch on Britten's Field is used by both adults and youth teams therefore the options need to be updated to reflect that.

4. Updates from users and clubs

Craig Rice asked if the Town Council would consider having storage facilities on the recreation ground. A reference was made to the storage area of the Archie Gooch Pavilion. The Deputy Town Clerk asked them to send in their request to be considered at Town Council.

Jonny Watkins asked about the results from the Community Plan. The Deputy Town Clerk said she would send a link to the Town Council's website which shows the Community Plan, the Executive Summary and the Action Plan.

Jonny Watkins asked about the S106 funds that were related to the latest Persimmon housing plans. The plans seem to have changed and the expected pitch is no longer listed. Cllr Osborne explained the situation with the S106/CIL funding related to the planning application. Decisions were still to be made regarding the allocation of the funds and the whole process will take a long time.

Emma Jane Taylor asked if the Town Council could let all of the clubs know when discussions took place, and whether they could write to Somerset Council to request the original S106 funding plan to be reinstated.

Claire Oaten gave an update from Herne View CofE Primary School. The school use Herne Hill for Forest School and will be there after Easter. They have also been offered Pretwood to use as well which they are grateful for. A recent request was sent out for donations of trees for the land by the Shudrick Lane car park which gets flooded, and it is the entrance to the school. It prevents all parents having to use the entrance on Ditton Street. They have received various offers from individuals and other organisations. Claire also thanked the Town Council for the contacts at Somerset Council. Following a meeting with Somerset Council, planting of trees will take place at the end of February/beginning of March.

5. Date/time and venue for the next meeting.

It was suggested that venues for future RUG meetings could be alternated between the Tony Rice Bar and the Archie Gooch Pavilion. The next meeting will be Tuesday 14th May 2024.

Recommendations for the Open Spaces Committee:

1. To consider and agree to Option 2 for the pitch fees for the football and cricket clubs, and the fees for use of the open spaces for 2024/25.
2. To consider and agree to the RUG meetings being held alternately at the Tony Rice Bar and the Archie Gooch Pavilion.

Meeting ended: 20:24