

**MINUTES Of a Bowerhill Sports Field Joint Management Forum of Melksham Without Parish Council held Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at Crown Chambers, Melksham 8.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Parish Council Cllr Mike Mills (Chairman); Cllrs. Alan Baines, Rolf Brindle; John Glover; Pat Nicol and Richard Wood

Sports Representatives: Andy Cadwallader (Melksham Rugby Club); Mike Rogers (Melksham AFC) Russ Hillier (Melksham United) Gary Cook (Group Scout Leader Bowerhill Scout Group); Nigel Webster (Chair of Bowerhill Scouts Executive) and Janet Jory, Bowerhill Youth Group.

309/12 **Welcome to representatives:** The Chairman welcomed representatives to the Group, and invited Andy Cadwallader, the Secretary of Melksham Rugby Club to become a permanent member of the Forum. It was noted that the proposed new Rugby Clubhouse and pitches at Dunch Lane would be in the Melksham Without parish. Andy Cadwallader agreed it would be advantageous to join the Group as at present some Sports Groups were trying to address problems individually which was difficult.

310/12 **Hire of rugby pitches at Melksham Oak School:** Andy Cadwallader reported that the Rugby Club had to use pitches at both Melksham House and Melksham Oak School most weekends, as these were the only two sites in Melksham with rugby pitches. This weekend the under 16s, under 17s, under 18s and girls' teams wished to hire pitches for two days and Melksham Oak was charging them commercial rates although most weekends there was no access to the school changing facilities because the Caretaker was not there. There was a welfare issue because if there were to be an accident, there was no place to take an injured person or to have access to water or facilities. At present they had to take water in bottles for matches including the away teams as they often came without water. He felt the school community facilities were being run in an amateur way while charging commercial rates. This also caused less use of the bar facility which normally provided the Club with an income, as if away- team players could not shower, they often went straight home without coming to the bar. Last weekend even though a senior team was playing there was no access to changing facilities. This coming weekend was an open day with under 13s and under 14s playing without changing rooms. The under 18s were playing away because there was no changing facilities. The girls had been due to play at the Oak school as well, but they had now been switched to Melksham House for the same reason. The Club was having to switch around fixtures continually due to the lack of facilities. He would be meeting Wiltshire Council to discuss the issue on 4<sup>th</sup> December. He understood part of the problem was that the school was an Academy. There was a need to question whether the facilities were suitable to be community facility if changing rooms could not be used. The Club needed to have access to a key if a Caretaker was unavailable. During the first year the school had been open, the Rugby Club had overpaid by £1,500 and had not demanded that sum be returned. Members were cleaning up after a match and were still paying the full rate but the school was often still blaming the Club for mud etc.

Cllr. Wood emphasised Melksham Oak School was not an Academy. Ms Liz Diamond was the liaison person at the school. Discussion was taking place re community facilities being provided at the proposed new Forest and Sandridge School on the new East of Melksham

development so it was important to get these issues addressed or they would be repeated there as well.

It was noted that the present evening Caretaker had been offered voluntary redundancy which he had accepted.

Cllr. Glover emphasised the Parish Council had warned when the school was being built that control by the school could lead to community users getting a poor deal.

Cllr. Brindle felt that if the Club were paying and not getting full use of the facilities, their contract was not being honoured.

Andy Cadwallader emphasised that if the Club did not use the facilities then they did not pay that element of hire. However the arrangements were adhoc, leading to problems for the Club.

Russ Hillier reported that Melksham United avoided having to use the school if they possibly could, for the same reasons. The School Governors set the rates independently of Wiltshire Council

Andy Cadwallader added that hiring rates were scrutinised by Wiltshire Council Officer Colin Brown to ensure charges were in line with other facilities. The Rugby Club had considered whether to go to Lackham but their pitches were not always available, particularly on Saturdays.

The Chairman reported the Council had been assured community facilities would be available at the weekends.

Mike Rogers advised all that was needed was an Assistant Caretaker to fill in when the main Caretaker was unavailable and this post would be self-funding.

It was noted that during past weekends when the Caretaker had been available, he unlocked facilities, and then went home. The last Club player out then slammed the door shut when going on to the pitch and the Caretaker then relied on a mobile phone call to come back and open up again when the match was over. If an accident occurred there would be a wait while he returned. However now that the Caretaker had decided to take redundancy, as things were at present the facilities would be closed every weekend.

***Recommended:*** *It was agreed to make representations to the Chair of Governors, Ruth Gillings, Melksham Oak Head Teacher Steve Clarke and the Wiltshire Cllr for Bowerhill, Cllr Roy While.*

- 311/12 **Minutes of last Forum Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> October:** The Meeting noted these Minutes.
- 312/12 Arising from Min 219/12 **Line Markings:** It was noted that English Landscapes had confirmed the substance used for line markings was safe and in line with Health and Safety requirements.
- 313/12 Arising from Min. 227/12 **Junior Pitches at Shaw:** The Clerk reported that the Council had taken up the issue of the shortage of junior pitches with the Secretary of Shaw Hall Management Committee. With adjustment to the positioning of the present football pitch at Shaw, it may be possible to fit in two extra junior pitches. However the Secretary firstly required Melksham United to discuss requirements with him. Russ Hillier offered to contact Richard Bean.

- 314/12 Arising from Min. 228/12 **Disabled Football Team:** Mike Rogers reported that there had been an excellent response to his advertisement including some from school Special Educational Needs (SEN) units. With a £2,800 grant received from Melksham Area Board, he would be able to provide 2 FA Disability Qualified Level 1 and Level 2 Coaches, working with Wiltshire FA. He was putting together a programme using the Melksham Oak indoor facility. There would be 4 “come-along” sessions and the first one was planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> January. There would be enough funding to run an Under 16s team and a five-aside.
- 315/12 **New Pavilion plans from Wiltshire Council:** The Meeting viewed a revised design on screen that had been received from Wiltshire Council at a Meeting on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2012. Following concerns expressed about the design, Mark Hunnybun of Wiltshire Council had met the Chairman, Cllr Baines and the Clerk that morning and had made a further booking to meet Council representatives again on the coming Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November. The Clerk reported she had checked the District Valuer’s report and it appeared the revised design had been based on the old measurements whereas the District Valuer had stipulated at least 147 sq metres of internal space and 164 sq metres for the external measurements. Russ Hillier confirmed that the revised drawing was working to 138 sq metres as the external measurement which was far too small. He reported that Wiltshire Council Officer Jane Smedley was very familiar with the correct Sport England building requirements for this type of building, as she had worked on other new builds for Wiltshire Council. There was concern that only two changing rooms were being proposed and the estimated cost was £500,000. The Chairman emphasised that he had made clear the reduction in changing rooms was unacceptable because income would be halved making the facility unviable. Mike Rogers reported that the official Sports England costing for a 4 changing room facility was £335,000 and he would be able to get at least 10 quotations for around that sum. Gary Cook emphasised that if the scouts were to use the facility, a bigger games room would be required; at least 17m square with a partition. The Chairman asked if the Scouts had access to any funds. Gary replied that most of the Scouts’ funding had been spent on the new Stony Gutter facility. Even if the Scouts did not make the Pavilion their permanent home, they still wanted to use the playing field regularly for games, sausage – sizzling events, and making hollows for fire-lighting. In the summer they would like the option of using both the games room and field together. The Scouts were also looking for more storage space as at the moment they were restricted in size to 8’ x 4’. It was noted that the ATC too were keen to use the field. Cllr. Glover suggested the ATC and Scouts would benefit by working together on their needs which were similar; space for storage use of the games room and the field.
- It was agreed the new facility must meet Sport England standards. Any changing room now needed a minimum of 16 sq. m per player for football and 20 sq m per player for cricket where there were no kit lockers. Mike Rogers reported he had checked the cost of building the Malmesbury facility and it would still be £330,000. The only extra requirement was for the youth facility. It was noted the notes for the revised drawing made no mention of using the roof space. A modified roof structure to allow for a 2<sup>nd</sup> storey would be most useful. A sturdy foundation base needed to be built in, to allow future use of the roof space. It would also be useful to have changing rooms lit by natural light. It was noted that at Staverton where a Pavilion had been built just for the football teams, they had gone elsewhere.

**Recommended:** *The Council convey the views expressed at the Forum to Wiltshire Council and emphasise that the new design had to supply the modern updated equivalent of existing facilities. This required four changing rooms but with the additions required by Sport England e.g. separate officials' rooms, correct measurements re showers toilets and disabled toilet and at least one good-sized games room facing the field that could be used by all the youth groups including the youth club, Scouts and ATC. There also needed to be sufficient storage space together with a veranda on the field side, the full length of the building.*

316/12 **Arrangements for bookings:** The Chairman drew attention to the fact that English Landscape's contract would be ending on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and expressed concern that in 2013 Council elections would take place which could make things more complex. He asked teams when they currently paid for use of the pitches. Mike Rogers reported he received an annual bill which this year had been £702. English Landscapes had tried to increase this amount on several occasions. The bill came in August and covered the period up to end April/May. Russ Hillier reported he usually paid in October approximately £5,500 depending on the number of teams. The first bill received was usually incorrect and he liaised re the correct amount.

Andy Cadwallader confirmed the contract would end in May 2013, as Wiltshire Council then intended to have one contractor for the whole of the county, although sub-contractors could be used as well. When the new contract came into force, the rates would increase as well; possibly by 20%. This was noted.

317/12 **Flooding Issue on Cereal Partners boundary:** Cllr. Baines reported the flooding had now been cleared. A home-made grill had been used on the outfall and this had led to debris being trapped in the pipe. A grid was needed on the inlet end so debris which collected could be easily cleaned out. Flooding had been caused by a football being trapped by the home-made grill, inside the pipe.

Cllr. Baines further reported that although the culvert under the A350 had been examined and was clear, there was an ongoing drainage problem downstream of Cereal Partners. It appeared the Police were refusing the Environment Agency access to the watercourse on their property. By law no property owner could refuse access to a water course.

318/12 **Public Liability charge to use Melksham Oak School:** Teresa Strange reported that St Barnabas Netball team was having to charge a high affiliation subscription of £31.70 per annum to all its players due to Melksham Oak's insistence that clubs had to have public liability insurance to play there. This made every game very costly. The South West England Netball rep. had been extremely surprised to hear that a team had to hold its own public liability insurance. The reduced affiliation rate for playing Netball was £14.95 per annum and most pitch providers covered teams who used the facilities. Andy Cadwallader reported that liability insurance rates varied for Rugby Football teams, depending on the level of game played.

**Recommended:** *It was agreed to raise this matter with the Melksham Oak School.*

Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Chairman, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012