



Layham Road Sports Ground Working Group

Report from Meeting on Friday 6th September at 7pm

Location of meeting. The Millfield Clubhouse.

Apologies for Absence

Andrew Knock

The following Councillors were present:

Angela Gregg, Carol Schleip, Carolyn Cammack, Gavin Talbot, Rolf Beggerow
(chairing)

The following User Representatives were present

Tony Hayward Hadleigh United Youth

Mick Collins Rugby Club

Geoff Scott Tennis Club

No members of the Public attended.

Introduction

Rolf welcomed and invited all user members to join the Working Group and this was followed by a round table of introductions.

Notes from first meeting held 9th August 2018

Rolf summarised the discussion points from the first meeting of the Working Group that focused mainly on examining the constitution of the Layham Road Sports Ground Management Committee. The view of the councillors present was that running the LRS GMC as a separate entity outside of the Town Council was not providing any benefit. The rules within the constitution have not been followed by previous Council members for many years and the view of the current Councillors who were members of this Working Group was that the LRS GMC should be wound up with the Town Council assuming direct control over the affairs of the Layham Road Sports Ground, which is in fact how things have been run for many years. If the winding up of the LRS GMC was approved by the Town Council the constitution of the LRS GMC requires an EGM to be called. The membership of the LRS GMC is 7 Councillors (i.e all members of the Council Matters Committee) and the 3 User Representatives.

Matters arising from meeting on 9th August 2018

We continued to discuss some of the reasons for thinking we should wind up the LRS GMC rather than changing the constitution. e.g There is a need going forward when making a business case for grants to know the true costs of running Layham Road Sports Ground; No lease has been granted for many years to the LRS GMC as per the constitution; LRS GMC has a separate bank account and books of account causing extra administration effort paid for by the Town Council . For many years accounts of the LRS GMC have been prepared but they have never represented all the Income and Expenditure of running Layham Road so it is not clear how much the Council Tax payers are paying to run the Sports Ground. e.g Grass Cutting, Service Officer and Admin costs are paid by the Town Council. We discussed an alternative approach of managing Layham Road Sports Ground operations through the Layham Road Working Group reporting to the Town Matters Committee to obtain decisions and approvals for spending. We discussed the need to ensure the Services Officer (Alan Munson) attends future meetings of the Working Group so he can make a report on relevant activities of the Town Council, and Layham Road User Members can discuss issues and make requests to be put forward to the Town Matters Committee. The User Representatives agreed this was a logical way to progress and it is important to have a regular forum such as the Working Group where Users and Councillors can meet regularly with



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Councillors and have an informal discussion to develop ideas and discuss operational issues and report them to the relevant Town Council Committee.

Rolf asked each User Representative to give Councillors a quick overview of their clubs and how they use the Layham Road Sports Ground and any major issues they have with the Town Council

Football Club

Tony explained that Hadleigh United Youth Section has 240 ? registered Youth Players ranging from age of 8 to 17. The Layham Road is block booked for football matches on Saturday mornings by older age groups and also in the evenings during the summer months for Youth Training by several age groups. 2 pitches are marked out at Layham Road and paid for by Hadleigh United Youth Section. 3 sets of goals are needed (different sizes) and these have been purchased by the Hadleigh United Youth Section. The Town Council has spent nothing on grounds maintenance for many years other than grass cutting under a Town Council Contract. The main football pitch at Layham Road needs verti-draining to encourage strong growth of the grass.

The key problem for the Football Club is lack of playing pitches in Hadleigh. The High School pitches are fully booked by the Football Club for their matches on Saturdays. Pitches are over marked in different colours to facilitate the 3 different pitch sizes needed for each age group. The Under 17's have to play their matches at Bildeston.

Rugby Club

Mick explained that the Rugby Club has 220 ? registered players and have grown their Youth Section significantly in recent years. The Club is currently in a difficult position as a result of outgrowing the space available at Layham Road which is 2 pitches. One of these pitches is often not fit to use due to flooding. The Rugby Club have signalled their desire to relocate but at this time the only prospect of moving is linked to the proposed Hook Lane development the outcome of which is uncertain.

The Town Council had agreed a grant of £5000 for club improvements but in the light of the possibility of the Club moving it was decided to reclaim it. Any move to a new location is likely to take 2/3 years, it's not just a matter of acquiring the land.

The main issue restraining the development of the Rugby Club is that they have no security of tenure on their ground. Grants are only available to Club's that have security of tenure of at least 25 years. The Rugby Club is significantly disadvantaged compared with the Football and Cricket Clubs who have a long term leases on Town Council owned land.

Financially the Rugby Club are finding it difficult. They made a request last year to the Town Council requesting permission to put up adverting banners as a means to raise funds and this was refused. Councillors asked why and the reason cited at the time that it was not possible as Layham Road has a restricted covenant and that it is a public ground. This has never been confirmed from a legal standpoint. Perhaps this should be revisited by the Council Matters Committee?.

Tennis Club

Geoff reported that the Tennis Club has 39 members. There are 3 Tennis courts, one of which is deemed a Multi-Sport Court but is only used for Tennis. The Tennis Club's usage is quite a small percentage of the court time available. The Courts are used by members of the Public often without any payment as policing the courts for public use



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has been a long standing unresolved issue. There are signs requesting members of the public to go to the Town Council Office or ring to hire the courts but the gates are left unlocked. Over the years various gate locking schemes have been tried and failed. The Town Council are therefore losing income and this impacts also on the cost to Tennis Club members who are asked to pay £100 per annum as a membership fee most of which comes to the Town Council in the form of hire charges. It is no wonder the Tennis Club struggle to increase their membership or attract Youth Tennis players to their Club. We discussed various potential avenues that could improve the situation. e.g Involve the Schools, revisit how technology may be used to control the gates for public use so we bring in extra income to help finance the courts that are in good order and also the most expensive asset to maintain at Layham Road.

The Tennis Club pays for the Electricity it uses for the lights on the courts by purchasing Tokens from the Town Council. The tokens are fed into separate light Meter boxes locate inside the Pavilion Building.

Tennis Club needs a mechanism to raise and solve maintenance problems with the Town Council.

Rolf commented there has been no extra pitch space provided in Hadleigh for 40 years during a period when the Football Club, the Rugby Club and the Cricket Club have all grown significantly particularly with regard to Youth activities all of which has been achieved with volunteer effort. The need for extra Open Space for these Sports Clubs and the Public was evidenced in a report produced last year. This report was published and presented to the Town Councillors in October 2018 and shared with David Bass the consultant employed by Babergh in 2016 to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council. It is important that this Town Council gets it's Neighbourhood Planning process going again and that the needs of the Hadleigh Sports Clubs are reflected in the Plan. Rolf also mentioned that recent attempts to get an update on the Status of the Playing Pitch Strategy, after some prodding from District Councillor Mick Fraser, have revealed that the PPS plan is still in draft and has stalled due to lack of funding.

Hadleigh Games 2020

Angela presented her idea for a multisport Hadleigh Games event. Her idea was a 4 day series of events taking place over the August Bank Holiday weekend in 2020. The objectives would be to encourage participation in sports not previously tried from age 10 upwards. All schools and Clubs would be encouraged to support the Games allowing their equipment and facilities to be used. Volunteers would be sought to assist the management of the events from our School Teachers and High School and College students.

All felt the idea was a good one, but it was suggested we start small and spread the events over a longer period of time, that we look to add on an extra element to events that the Clubs already put on in the Summer. e.g Rugby Club and Football Club already put on events such as a Beer and Music Festival so perhaps the Hadleigh Games or perhaps we call it a Summer Festival of Games can be better accommodated and managed with the Clubs and some events staged at the Leisure Centre.

It was suggested the timing of a 4 day event at the end of August would not work well for the Schools who will be focussed on their workloads needed to get Schools ready to open. Events spread earlier from May to August would work better.

Topics for discussion at next meeting

Hire charges review RB



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Discuss Artificial Grass Pitch at Layham Road RB

Proposals to put on Full Town Council Agenda's

1. To consider the winding up the Layham Road Sports Ground Management Committee and that the Town Council directly manages the affairs of the Layham Road Sports Ground.
2. In the event of Item 1 being agreed, to consider the disposition of the Funds in the Ipswich Building Society Bank Account in the name of the Layham Road Sports Ground Management Committee.

Proposal for Town Matters

1. To consider approval of Verti-draining of the Football Pitch by the Hadleigh United FC contractor at a cost of £350 plus VAT.

Proposal for Council Matters

1. To consider requesting legal opinion as to whether the Rugby Club can erect advertising boards at Layham Road.