

# ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices  
North Street  
ILMINSTER  
Somerset  
TA19 0DG



Tel: 01460 52149  
Fax: 01460 55642  
e-mail: [town.council@ilminster.gov.uk](mailto:town.council@ilminster.gov.uk)

Town Clerk: Joy Norris

16 July 2013

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the **OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** which you are summoned to attend will be held on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 at 19:30hrs**. The meeting will be held in the Minster Rooms, Court Barton, Ilminster, TA19 0DU

The business to be transacted at the meeting is outlined on the Agenda below. Any reports listed as "to follow" will be made available as soon as possible, and in any event at least 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Joy Norris  
Town Clerk

## OPEN SPACES AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence.**  
To receive apologies for absence from Councillors unable to attend the meeting.
- 2. Declarations of Interest.**  
To receive any declarations from Councillors and Officers of interests in respect of matters to be considered at this meeting, together with an appropriate statement regarding the nature of interest.
- 3. Application to Somerset County Council for Flood Alleviation Grant**  
To consider working with residents to design a flood alleviation project and applying to Somerset County Council for a flood alleviation grant for its implementation.
- 4. Open Spaces Review**  
To consider the information collected from the consultation with stakeholders and the public and make recommendations to Council on the way forward. The information will be reported to the meeting by the Town Clerk and the Community Health and Leisure Manager from South Somerset District Council.
- 5. Market Town Investment Group**  
To consider the Town Council's application for a grant from the "portas pot" for planters at various locations in the town and the future implications of a successful bid.



# Report for Ilminster Town Council – Review of Ilminster Recreation Ground

## Purpose of the Report

To provide information on potential funding to assist with the enhancement of Ilminster Recreation Ground, provide guidance on how take forward the future development of the site and present some key issues for consideration as identified by stakeholders to date.

## Background

Over several years, a number of development projects have been considered at Ilminster Recreation Ground. However, a clear consensus between key stakeholders as to what can and should be developed where seems to have been lacking. This has led to some frustration within sports clubs, and has contributed to a decline in the quality of some built facilities at the site.

In recent years, South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has managed to secure developer contributions to meet specific community needs within Ilminster. Some of these contributions could be used to enhance capacity at Ilminster Recreation Ground. In addition to this, SSDC has earmarked capital a capital grant towards the development of youth facilities. Consequently, officers are keen to work with Ilminster Town Council (ITC) to identify a vision for Ilminster Recreation Ground so that developer contributions and SSDC capital funding is spent effectively and efficiently and to afford maximum community benefit.

The following developer/SSDC capital contributions are currently held by SSDC and are available for use in Ilminster:

Infrastructure Description	Capital available	Committed Sum for future maintenance available	Where money should be spent
Strategic Sports Facilities	£22,503	Not applicable	Ilminster – agreement allows some flexibility on how this can be spent. No time limit for expenditure.
	£7,020	Not applicable	Towards the development of strategic sports and leisure facilities within the Ilminster area.
Playing Pitches/Changing	£91,273	Included within capital sum within legal agreement	Secured for use at Ilminster Recreation Ground. £20,845 of this total to be spent by July 2015.
Equipped Play	£6,958	£5,692	Legal agreement specifies Winterhay Play Area – all £12,650 must be spent by July 2015.
Equipped Play	£22,361	£18,295	Ilminster Recreation Ground. No time limit for expenditure.
Youth Facilities e.g. MUGA/skate facilities	£4,576	£2,464	Intended for use at Ilminster Recreation Ground. £1,633 must be spent by July 2015.
MUGA – SSDC capital	£35,000		Must be match funded (not from planning contributions) by Ilminster Town Council. May be reallocated if not used by April 2014
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£189,691</b>	<b>£26,451</b>	

A total of £35,128 in contributions may need to be repaid if not spent by August 2015.

Developer contributions have been secured to enhance or develop new facilities to meet the needs stemming from new development and therefore cannot be used to simply replace existing equipment/buildings on a like for like basis. Once an eligible project is identified, there will be a requirement for SSDC's Development Management and Finance teams to approve the detail to ensure money is spent in accordance with legal agreements before a formal offer of money can be made to Ilminster Town Council.

In principle, some of the developer contributions already secured could be used to pay for professional fees.

If Ilminster Town Council agrees they would like to use the SSDC capital allocation of £35,000 toward the development of an open access multi use games area (MUGA) at Ilminster Recreation Ground, then District Council officers would expect to see some meaningful progress to move this project forward by April 2014. Otherwise these funds may need to be reallocated to other priority projects in the district. If members decide to develop a new MUGA then the equivalent match funding must be found either from reserves or through fundraising. A loan could also be considered.

SSDC would normally expect new MUGA's to be floodlit to ensure their use is maximised. However, the SSDC MUGA grant would not be withheld if members provided reasonable justification for not floodlighting the facility.

## **Report**

During April and May, SSDC Officers have met with Ilminster Cricket Club, Ilminster Town/Youth Football Clubs, Ilminster Town Council Members and ITC office staff and ground staff. A detailed summary of this feedback along with suggestions for alternative site layouts are attached as appendices. The Town Clerk will be seeking feedback from members of the public directly and this information should be considered in conjunction with this report.

The purpose of undertaking this consultation is to help Ilminster Town Council (ITC) and other key stakeholders to develop a realistic and shared vision for the development of Ilminster Recreation Ground that is widely supported. In doing so, piecemeal development of the site can be avoided and priorities for spending of S106 funding received can be agreed.

## **Key issues emerging from consultation with stakeholders to date**

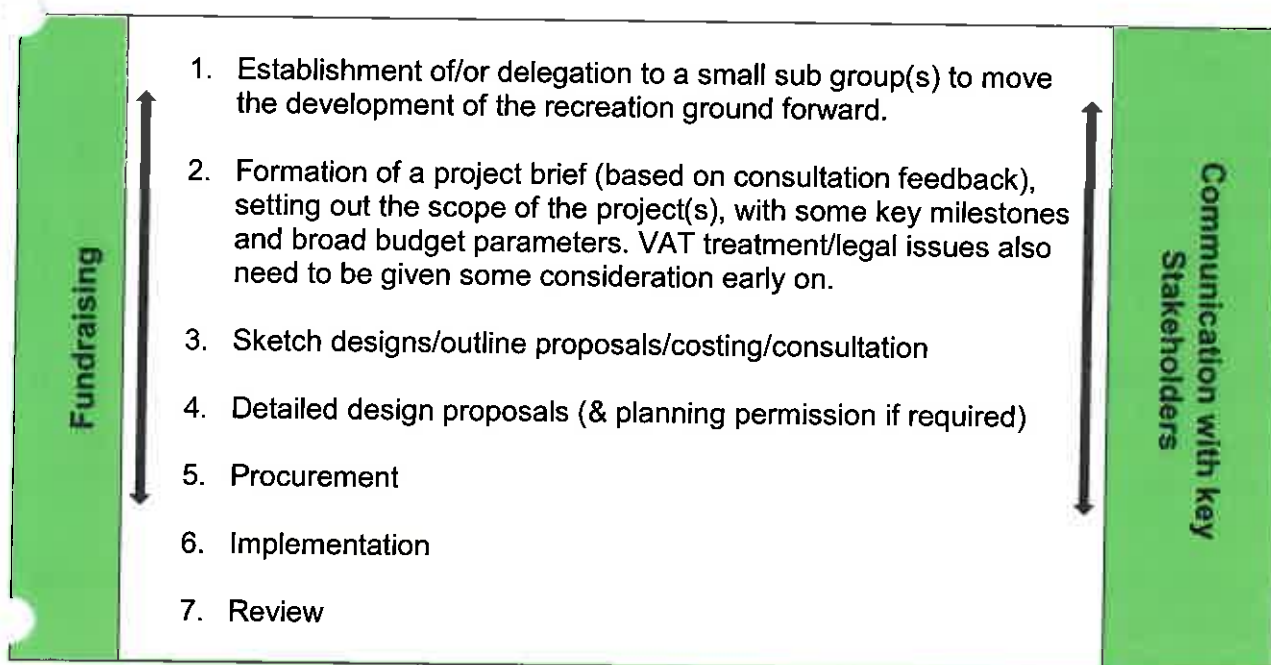
Below is a summary of some of the key points that have been made via the consultation process. A more in depth summary of feedback from stakeholders, including an existing site layout and suggested site layout changes can be found in appendices a, b, and c.

- The existing cricket pavilion requires improvement/enhancement
- New/improved changing facilities are required for football teams.
- The existing bar requires some improvement.
- Alternative pitch layouts should be explored.
- Consideration should be given to the location/relocation/rationalisation of existing buildings on the recreation ground
- The enhancement of play and youth facilities at the site needs consideration.
- Parking at the recreation ground needs addressing.
- Access to any new pavilion at Britten's Field needs investigation.
- The possibility of improving access to the site for all users should be explored.
- A review of the recreation ground provides an opportunity to look at the management and enhancement of the site features such as the canal and links with public rights of way.

- A thorough understanding of site constraints needs to be undertaken.
- An opportunity exists to develop new features at the recreation ground such as a café and outdoor seating area.
- The opportunity of improving landscaping should be explored.
- The legal agreements (length and content) that exist between sports clubs and the Town Council need to be reviewed.
- The future management arrangements for any new facilities need to be given careful consideration.
- There is sense of urgency from some stakeholders for ITC to take decisions on the future development of the site as soon as possible so that they can move forward with their own plans and take advantage of grant offers already made.
- A condition survey of the existing building on site is required.

## Moving Forward

In developing a master plan for the whole site there are a number of key steps that ITC need to take as illustrated in the table below.



Importantly, given that a topographical survey is underway and initial consultation with stakeholders has already now been undertaken, these positive steps will greatly assist in the formation of a project brief/scoping document and will enable the Town Council to move forward quickly if desired.

For a project of this scale, it would be advisable to buy in professional services to assist with design, costing and additional fundraising. In principle it would be possible to use some of the S106 contributions already secured for this purpose.

### SSDC Officer Support

SSDC officers do not have the capacity to project manage or undertake detailed design work for any project taken forward through this process, but are willing to offer on-going guidance to Recreation Ground Review Group or any other project sub group(s) formed, on the basis that meaningful progress is made towards approving a master plan for the site by the end of 2013.

## **Appendix A**

### **Overall Summary of Stakeholder Consultation**

#### **Summary of meeting with Ilminster Cricket Club (April 2013)**

There are four senior teams and six youth teams currently playing cricket at Ilminster Recreation Ground. The 1<sup>st</sup> senior team plays in the West of England Premier League (the highest level league in the South West) and the club generally appears to be very strong in terms of the coaching/training and development opportunities that it affords its members.

#### **What is important to the Club?**

It is important to the club that the separate bar (currently shared with the football club) is retained. The Club currently oversees the management of this facility during the summer over a four month period. The bar generates £12,000 - £15,000 annually for the club which they believe is crucial to sustaining the club even if Ilminster Football Club develops their own club house.

The Club also feels that the bar is fundamental in creating the right atmosphere for supporters and players alike and is located in a child friendly area of the recreation ground.

It is important to the club to retain two good quality cricket wickets. However, they would be prepared to consider moving their second wicket in order to accommodate other development proposals if the need arose, providing that they were not expected meet the costs of doing so.

In order to maintain their wickets, the club do require storage (for equipment) to be close to their main wicket.

#### **Ilminster Cricket Club future aspirations**

The Club aspires to keep their 1<sup>st</sup> team playing in the premier league with their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> senior team getting stronger. They would like grow their youth teams and ensure that Ilminster Cricket Club is the first choice for juniors

In terms of facilities, the Club would have ideally liked to have moved to the new two story centrally located joint pavilion that was proposed some years ago. As this project is no longer being pursued, the club would like to focus on improving their existing pavilion and have suggested that at least £12,000 of S106 money be allocated to internal improvements (decoration, new boiler, shower refit). They would like this money allocated as soon as possible in order to take advantage of a small grant secured from the English and Wales Cricket Trust which must be spent by the end of August 2013. The club would at some point also like to add external toilet provision to their pavilion and make it more family friendly and would be supportive of dedicated parking being created for users of the recreation ground. The Club highlighted that access to facilities was currently difficult for some of their disabled members.

## **Issues facing the Club**

The club identified that the annual licence that Ilminster Town Council grants to the club does restrict their ability to raise funds from external bodies. Typically funders will look for longer security of tenure of significantly longer than one year (typically 21 years +) before granting capital funding.

The bar that the Cricket club operate during the summer would benefit from an internal refurbishment and new exterior cladding for which they do not currently have funding secured. The club believe that the structural condition of this building is otherwise sound (although this cannot be verified by SSDC officers and therefore a condition survey may be required). The burden to the club of maintaining this facility is likely to increase if the football club develop separate facilities in Brittens Field.

While the Cricket Club have in the past been successful in raising funds to cover expenses, they do appear to lack a forward plan for developing and maintaining their assets which they will need to address if they wish to secure significant external funding to meet their development aspirations.

## **Summary of meeting with Ilminster Football Clubs (April 2013)**

The seniors have four men's teams and two ladies teams and the juniors have ten teams in total. The seniors First Team plays in the Somerset County Premier League (this team requires railings and dug outs next season which the club reported that the Town Council has approved in principle). Like the cricket club, the football clubs are strong in terms of coaching, development and training. For winter training the clubs utilise facilities at Swanmead School including their MUGA.

## **What is important to the Club?**

The football clubs are keen to secure a new pavilion within Brittens Field as soon as possible; a project that they have been working on for some years. The club stressed that they feel that it important to develop a facility with the wider community in mind and not just a pavilion for football. The club now has an advanced business plan in place for their project and has recently been successful in attracting offers of external funding towards the project. The club conveyed a sense of urgency about delivering a new facility within the next 12 months if they are to take advantage of external funding on offer but will require Town Council approval for their plans as soon as possible in order to achieve this.

As part of a potential move of pitches/facilities to Brittens Field, the club would like to relocate the 2<sup>nd</sup> cricket wicket and are prepared to pick up "reasonable costs" in doing so. The cricket club reported in April that they are happy to consider this but currently there seems to be some difference in opinion on the likely cost. It is clear however, if the wicket is to be moved with any chance of it being available for next season, then this work would ideally need to have started in June of this year.

## **Ilminster Football Clubs future aspirations**

The Club aspires to retain the same number of pitches for future use but have proposed a new pitch layout. An indicative (not to scale) illustration of their proposed recreation field layout is attached as **appendix c**.

In terms of teams, the seniors would eventually like to see the first team move up to the Western Tool Station League (but such a move would require the club to develop an enclosed pitch) with the Reserves being promoted to Somerset County League level. They also aspire to see the Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team promoted to the South West Women's League and the reserves moving up to County League.

The Youth Football Club would like to sustain their current position and potentially run an academy. They would also like to develop an U18's team to assist with transition for juniors to senior football.

The clubs reported that there were some pitch drainage issues which would benefit from improvement.

### **Issues facing the Club**

The club do require improved changing facilities that are fit for purpose. In progressing their existing proposal to develop a pavilion in Brittens Field the club urgently need to assess whether access from the highway could be achieved and how parking can best be accommodated. Planning permission has not yet been obtained, but pre-application advice has been sought.

The club urged SSDC officers to express to Ilminster Town Council how important they feel it is for a decision to be taken regarding the future development of the Recreation Ground as soon as possible. The club do not want to lose their current momentum or lose significant external funding offers.

The club also reported dog fouling as an on-going problem at the recreation ground.

### **Summary of feedback from Ilminster Town Council members (May 2013)**

Members were keen to have clarification in this report of the potential finance available to them, including clarification on potential Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) funding available.

Members identified the following issues which may require future consideration as part of the review:

- The poor condition of existing built facilities on site
- Lack of car parking
- Dog fouling
- No formal cycle ways
- Finding a suitable location for a MUGA (if one is built) that does not conflict with other uses
- Complexities of land ownership/access
- Whether it would be permissible to enclose a football pitch at the Recreation Ground
- Future management arrangements for onsite facilities
- Use of the site by the fair twice a year
- No detailed information currently available about underground services

Members considered the following to be some of the **most** important aspects of the Recreation Ground:

- The tennis courts
- Skate area
- Formal playing pitches
- Play area
- Canal

### **Summary of feedback from Ilminster Town Council Staff (May 2013)**

Ilminster Town Council office and grounds staff raised similar issues to members but highlighted the additional following constraints/issues:

- Poor disabled access to some facilities
- Out of date maintenance agreements between clubs and the Town Council. Staff felt that some aspects of maintenance may be better performed by onsite staff.
- Access to groundsmans hut is poor
- Limited money available for new site furniture
- The fair has caused some compaction of the playing fields
- Nowhere for children to play when it is wet



- Inadequate storage compound for grounds maintenance equipment.

Staff were very positive about Ilminster Recreation Ground and highlighted the following potential development opportunities:

- Development of rugby
- New paths
- Move grounds staff to Brittens Field with purpose built storage compound – could sit alongside a new pavilion.
- Move the Town Council Office to the Recreation Ground
- Refresh the tennis courts
- Relocate the fair to Tesco's car park if possible
- Increase informal play opportunities
- Bring all toilets back into use
- Develop a café
- Move the bar to open up the site/improve vistas
- Extend the existing cricket pavilion (particularly for central storage of cricket equipment)
- Move the 2<sup>nd</sup> cricket wicket to the main recreation ground so that football would predominately be played in Brittens Field and this could help to reduce some of the current conflict issues that arise. **Ground staff also highlighted that the wicket would need to be moved now.**
- Put in additional boundary hedging along Canal Way, particularly where there is just post and rail.
- Develop a new MUGA in the vicinity of the skate park/play area.
- Additional play equipment required.
- Reconsider locating a new pavilion with bar in the proximity of the existing football stand
- Relocated Greenfyld pitch to Brittens Field could free up space for parking.

It terms of layout, the grounds staff felt that moving the second cricket into the main field and moving predominantly moving football to Brittens Field, would help to reduce conflict between the clubs. An alternative layout broadly representing the suggestions of the Ilminster Town Council Staff is attached as **appendix d**.

### **SSDC Officer Site Visit – May 2013**

#### **General observations from officers**

The site is well located to serve the local community and provides a very attractive setting for sport and recreation.

Officers felt that the current location of the ground maintenance shed, football pavilion and bar restrict views across the recreation ground and that there would be benefit in removing/relocating some of these buildings if it were possible.

#### **Buildings**

##### **Cricket Pavilion**

This building appears to be well cared for given its age, although does not meet modern day design standards. If the cricket club chose to retain the existing internal layout of the building, the changing/shower provision would benefit from some modest investment. With the correct permissions, there may also be potential for the external storage to be enhanced if necessary and for an external toilet to be created. However, there is limited scope to extend the footprint of this building to any great extent. S106 funding could be used to upgrade this facility with member's approval.

## **Bar**

The exterior cladding of this building is in need of replacement and the interior currently looks a little tired and would benefit from some updating. The condition of the structure as a whole or the likely remaining lifespan is unknown. While this facility requires some investment, it would not be considered appropriate to use S106 funding as it would not accord with purpose for which the money was sought.

## **Football Changing Facilities**

These facilities are in a poor condition and do not meet modern design standards. Improved facilities are required for which S106 funding could be allocated.

The above comments regarding facilities are based on officer opinion following a visual inspection only. Members should note that a qualified surveyor would be required to ascertain the true condition of these buildings and the future maintenance liabilities associated with them.

## **Grounds Maintenance**

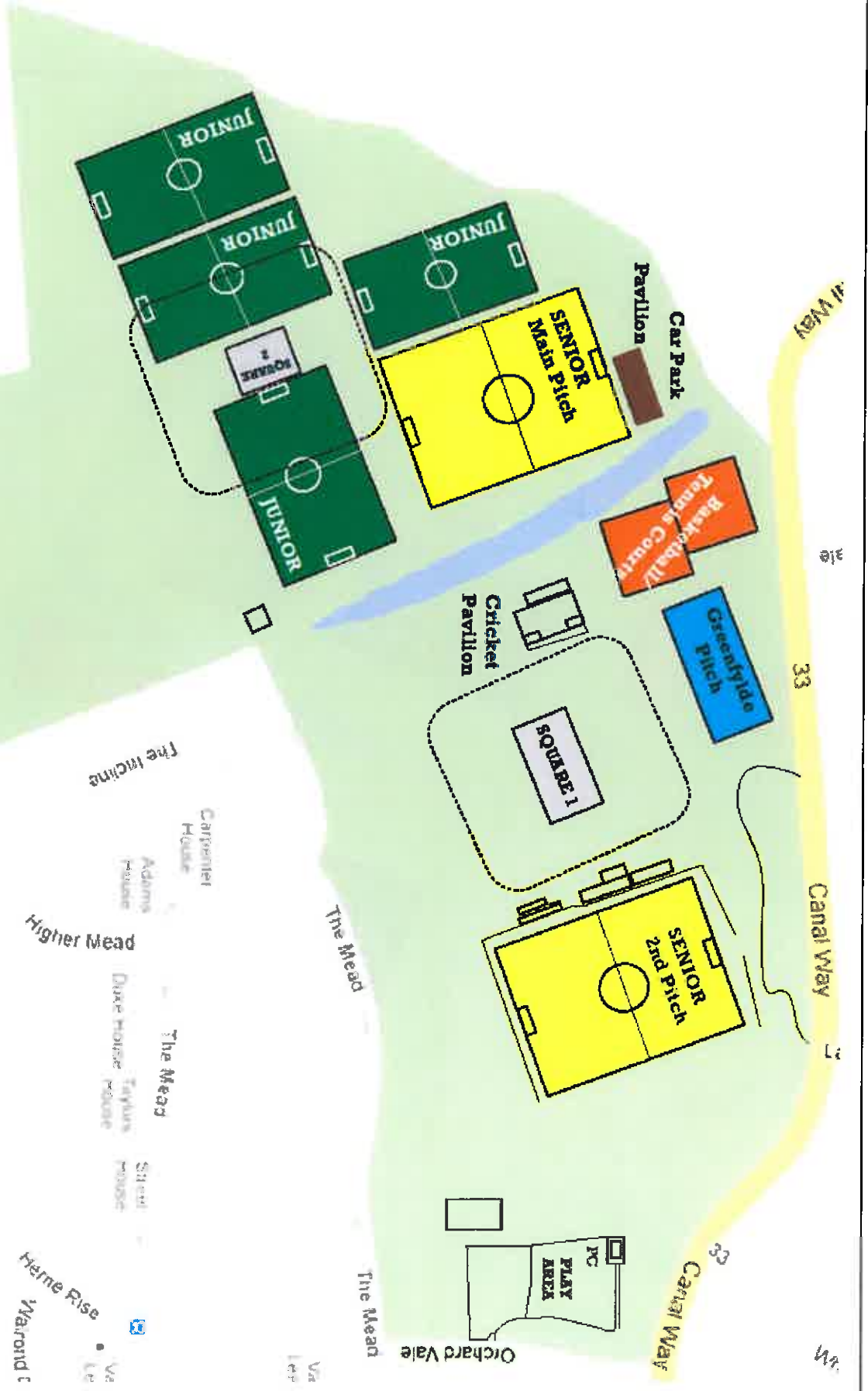
The quality of grounds maintenance at the site overall was good at the time of inspection. Goalmouth reinstatement however, did require some attention. Lack of maintenance in this respect has led to some ground compaction and dips being created on the playing fields. In Brittens this is adversely impacting on the quality of the outfield for the cricket wicket to some extent. The ground staff reported that it is not currently their responsibility to reinstate goal mouths at the end of the football season but felt that this should be reviewed.

The existing compound for grounds maintenance materials is very limited and is not secure thus limiting the staff's ability buy material in bulk. There also did not appear to be suitable storage for football goal posts on site and current goal post stock appeared to be quite rusty and in need of repainting and/or replacement.



Appendix c – indicative alternative layout of existing facilities/pitches proposed by Ilminster Town FC – not to scale

# ILMINSTER RECREATION GROUND New Pitches



Herne Rise

Herne Rise  
Warford

# ILMINSTER RECREATION GROUND

## Alternative Layout





## Open Spaces Committee 23 July 2013

### Outcomes Required From the Agenda Item Open Spaces Review –

1. Broad agreement on a recommendation to Council regarding the preferred future overall layout of the Wharf Lane Recreation Ground and Britten's field (or 2 identified options) which can be taken to the public for further consultation  
(The results of that consultation to be reported to the September Council meeting so that a final decision can be made on the overall layout.)
2. Agreement to recommend to Council to vary the Open Spaces Review Group Terms Of Reference so that the review group can take a clear lead and report direct to Council.





## Open Spaces Review Group Terms of Reference

**Scope:** To review the current play and sporting facilities available at the recreation spaces owned and / or maintained by Ilminster Town Council and how they are maintained.

**Reports To:** ~~Open Spaces Committee~~ Council

**Membership:** Chair of Open Spaces Committee (Carol Goodall)  
Vice-Chair of Open Spaces Committee (John Pallister)  
~~2-3~~X ITC Councillor nominated by Chair of Open Spaces ( S Austin vacancy)  
Senior Open Spaces Warden (Tony Jones)  
Deputy Town Clerk (Marilyn Shelley)  
Town Clerk (Joy Norris)  
Regeneration Officer (Zoe Harris)  
Project Officer  
~~SSDC Play Officer~~s (as appropriate)  
~~SSDC Sports Officer~~-(TBA)  
SSDC Local Councillor  
Representative of the each of the Cricket and Football Clubs

**Output:**

- (i) A report to the Open Spaces Committee (which in turn will make recommendations to Council) providing a vision for the Council's Open Spaces / Playing Pitch Strategy and an action plan to achieve it.
- (ii) Provide a firm lead on the implementation of the vision for the Council's open spaces / Playing Pitch Strategy and its associated action plan

**Delegated Powers / Decision making:** None

**Specific Tasks:**

- A) Obtain information on current usage of the open spaces
- B) Liaise with the Committees of the users of the Rec e.g. cricket club, football club, angling club to discuss their aspirations for future use
- C) Consider the equipment in the play areas and make recommendations for replacement and development
- D) Consider the layouts of the areas used for sport use and make recommendations regarding future layout
- E) Consider what machinery is required to maintain the open spaces in an acceptable manner (taking into account tasks D & F)
- F) Consider if any amendments are required to the existing licences offered to the sports clubs and if it would be appropriate to issue any other licences.



## **SSDC Market Town Investment Group Portas Project Proposal**

Earlier this year the SSDC Market Towns Investment Group made some funds available based on the recommendations from the Mary Portas report on High Streets. Market towns were invited to bid into these funds for a project that fitted one of more of the following themes:

- **Community Facelift**
- **Meanwhile Use**
- **Rents & Rates Package Incentive**
- **Markets**
- **Town Image**

Of those it is suggested that the Ilminster bid for Portas money should focus on just two, Town Image and Community Facelift.

The District Council, the Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce have already supported, financially, the work of the Ilminster Forum to promote and market the town as ideal place for tourists to visit and enhancing the town's image would help consolidate that work.

A number of prominent areas in the town, which are located on the main access roads and walkways into the town centre, would benefit from a facelift. Making these areas more attractive would help enhance the visitor experience, by providing an attractive and appealing impression to people driving into the town centre and towards the main car parks and shopping area. The areas being considered for treatment are the:

- Triangle
- Strawberry Bank
- the flower bed at top of North Street
- the Roundabouts at either end of Reic-sur-Belon
- junction of Wharf Lane and Orchard Vale
- Swan Precinct/Ditton Street.

The 'Portas pot' is not limitless so solutions need to be fairly simple but easy to repeat year on year. This Town Council has never had the desire to enter the Britain in Bloom competition but it is amazing what a positive effect a floral display can have in a town. So the proposal is that our focus should be on what can be achieved with well placed floral displays. The work will be phased, the reasons for which will become clear, and we will receive some assistance from the District Streetscene Department.

We as a Council will need to

- Make a contribution to this project, but it can be work in kind.
- Be pro-active in seeking sponsorship from businesses in the town.
- Recognise that certain colours are more suited to the building colours (hamstone, oolitic limestone and brick).

- Seek to get uniformity in the displays to create a coherent whole.
- And finally to be prepared to expand the work of the wardens to ensure the scheme continues year on year.

It is proposed that the project is phased in the following way:

#### Phase 1

- The Triangle - this will be cleared by volunteers; a planting scheme devised and planted up for the autumn 2013.
- Flower Bed at the top of North Street - this too will be cleared by volunteers; a planting scheme devised and planted up for the 2013 autumn.

#### Phase 2

- Strawberry Bank -an increased number of slightly bigger baskets to be fixed to the railings along Strawberry Bank. The Belfast sinks to be refurbished and planted. The growth of plants in the stonework below the rails to be managed so that it does not detract from the visual impact of the baskets.
- Junction of Wharf Lane and Orchard Vale - consideration to be given to using baskets on the railings at this junction similar to those proposed for Strawberry Bank.
- Roundabouts at either end of Reic-sur-Belon - a planting scheme for the roundabouts to be prepared by a District Officer and submitted to Highways on our behalf. Doing it this way may help speed up the process.

#### Phase 3

- Swan Precinct - It is proposed that we attempt, through the planning officers, to negotiate with the developer to ensure that any scheme put forward for the precinct complements what we hope will happen in the rest of the town.