

**MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS TRUSTEES SUB-COMMITTEE (UNTIL MAY 2022)  
MEETING MINUTES - 7 APRIL 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Edwards (Chair);  
Councillors Ayub (Vice-Chair), Rynn and R Singh

**Apologies:** Councillors Gittings and Leng

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2. MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS ACCOUNTS AND UPDATE ON WORKS UNDERTAKEN / SERVICES OPERATING**

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report presenting the Mapledurham Playing Fields revenue accounts for 2020/21 and updating the Sub-Committee on the re-opening of the Pavilion and the near completion of the landscape improvements to the playing fields. The report also sought authority to complete proposed works relating to the Chazey Road entrance, wi-fi network, CCTV cameras and acoustic panels. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Mapledurham Transaction Summary 2020/21
- Appendix 2 - Mapledurham Pavilion Hire Fees
- Appendix 3 - Mapledurham Playing Fields Landscape Plan

The report noted that the last major phase of sports turf works had been completed in 2021 and that the external sports turf consultant had inspected the finished works and confirmed that the pitches passed the FA's Performance Quality Standards. The landscape improvement plan was now largely complete and a plan showing the extent of the landscape works was shown in Appendix 3. The only remaining items were the addition of sand to the improved sports pitches and to tidy up the pedestrian entrance into the playing fields at Chazey Road. The entrance was through a space between failing and rusted chain link fencing and poor-quality concrete posts; a path then ran through a woodland before emerging into the playing fields. It was proposed to replace sections of the fencing and improve the ground immediately at the entrance, with an allocated budget of £5,000.

The report explained that details of management arrangements for the use of the football pitches were still to be completed with Caversham Trents, as well as agreements relating to the use of the compound, shed, and changing rooms. As per the previous arrangements the Trents would manage bookings for matches ensuring that pitch use did not exceed standards set out by the FA's pitch quality and carrying capacity recommendations. Outside these matches the sports areas were available for general recreation including events and sports training. Works to the Community overflow carpark had been largely completed by Kier as an in-kind payment for space being

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provided for their cabins, and the £35k of enhancement funds originally allocated could now be re-used elsewhere.

The report explained that the pavilion works had been completed on budget in November 2020, but that due to the Covid-19 pandemic the pavilion had not reopened for use until September 2021 with the first event being the Caversham Trents FC awards. The kitchen had been completed ahead of opening after WADRA had raised funds to purchase a new cooker and fridge freezer. These had been installed alongside several units and work tops. Terms and conditions of hire for the pavilion and hires fees had been agreed by the Management Committee in 2020 and were attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report noted that there had been enquiries about the lack of availability of Wi-Fi within the pavilion, and the lack of connectivity to internet also prevented the installation of a card system to control door locks and access. The Heights School had offered the opportunity to extend the School's Wi-Fi into the Pavilion at an anticipated cost of £1,500. This would provide a cost-effective option for a service that was seen as a fairly standard minimum level of provision and it was proposed to accept the school's offer.

The report explained that, following a request from the Management Committee and in response to periodic antisocial behaviour and disturbance to neighbours it was proposed to install two CCTV cameras covering the entrance to the car park and rear of the pavilion. These would link to a central monitoring station and would act as a deterrent and support identification of problem vehicles and people who might be present during instances of ASB and subsequent action. The cost was estimated at £12K per camera.

The report also explained that the hall when in use suffered from excessive reverberation negatively impacting on the usability of the hall for some activities and the quality of experience. The school had donated approximately 10m<sup>2</sup> of acoustic boards. It was proposed to mount these at one end of the hall and reassess the acoustic performance of the hall, and that additional panels be supplied and fitted if required.

The report set out the draft accounts for 2020/21 including detailed transaction reports. The cost of electricity did not include a recharge that was to be made from Kier as access to the pavilion electrical supply was provided to allow the generators to be switched off as this was creating disturbance to neighbours. A credit would appear in the current year's accounts.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That it be noted that the Pavilion was now open following completion of the rebuilding works to the pavilion along with support from Warren and District Residents Association and users in equipping the kitchen;**
- (2) That it be noted that the landscape works were now largely complete, with some final work to pitches required over the next five years and to the entrance at Chazey Road this summer;**

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- (3) That the improvements previously authorised and budgeted for at the Chazey Road entrance be undertaken this summer;**
- (4) That the offer from The Heights Primary school to allow the pavilion to piggy-back on their broadband connection be accepted and that equipment be installed to extend the school's public Wi-Fi network;**
- (5) That two CCTV cameras linked into the central monitoring station be installed covering the car park entrance and rear of pavilion;**
- (6) That additional acoustic panels be installed in the pavilion should they be required;**
- (7) That the submission of accounts to the Charity commission be noted.**

### **3. MAPLEDURHAM DEED OF DEDICATION**

The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report updating the Sub-Committee on the progress of a Deed of Dedication relating to Mapledurham Recreation Ground. The agreed revised draft Deed of Dedication was attached to the report at Appendix 1, an alternative Deed of Dedication proposed by Warren and District Residents Association (WADRA) was attached at Appendix 2, and communication from WADRA setting out their current position was attached at Appendix 3.

The report noted that the purpose of a Deed of Dedication was to provide for the Council (as Trustee of the Charity) to undertake that it would not take certain steps in relation to the Ground, including disposal of all or part of the Ground by way of sale or the grant of a long lease to a third party, or building new buildings on the Ground for anything other than the Charitable Purpose, without the consent of Fields in Trust (FiT). The report summarised the previous reports submitted to, and decisions made by, the Sub-Committee relating to the process of agreeing a Deed of Dedication. At the previous meeting of the Sub-Committee on 10 February 2020 the Sub-Committee had noted that a revised draft Deed of Dedication had been negotiated and approved by FiT and had authorised officers to enter into the Deed of Dedication, subject to any changes that might be required in order to reach agreement with FiT.

The report explained that an alternative Deed of Dedication ('the WADRA draft') had subsequently been proposed by WADRA as an alternative to the one negotiated and advised upon by Veale Wasbrough Vizards (VWV) and agreed to by the Sub-Committee. A copy of the WADRA draft highlighting the proposed changes was attached to the report at Appendix 2. WADRA felt that more protection for the recreation ground was needed than that afforded by the agreed Deed of Dedication and that the Deed should prevent anything being added to the recreation ground in the future. Their draft therefore had a number of amendments which included: adding a clause not permitting use of the property exclusively by and for the benefit of the Heights Primary School; removing the section referring to the erection of any buildings or structures on the property that would

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result in the total area of such buildings or structures exceeding 4% of the total area of the property and instead specifying no new buildings or structures beyond those existing at the date of the deed and no fencing off any part of the property; involvement of members of the Management Committee in a number of clauses, and amendments to the section on replacement property.

The report noted that the WADRA draft had been sent to the Trustees on 29 September 2021 and submitted to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee meeting on 13 October 2021. The report summarised the discussion held at the Management Committee meeting and set out the Committee's decision, which had been that the alternative Deed of Dedication submitted by WADRA not be supported in its current form, but that a meeting with WADRA and VWV be arranged to discuss the suggested amendments to the Deed of Dedication. This meeting had taken place on 28 February 2022.

The report set out detailed officer comments on each of the amendments to the Deed proposed by WADRA and concluded that officers were not able to accept or recommend to the Sub-Committee the proposed amendments, on the basis they were not required by FiT and were not appropriate given the position of the Council as Trustee of the Recreation Ground Charity. It was considered that WADRA were seeking a prohibition of matters that should reasonably allow some degree of flexibility, as well as introducing the Management Committee and/or WADRA into the document which was considered unacceptable for the reasons explained in the report. Officers had written to WADRA and a response setting out their current position had been received on 24 March 2022, which was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report noted that there were reservations and concerns held by WADRA in respect of FiT and in response to these set out the objects of FiT, which they were legally obliged to comply with, as well as an extract from the FiT website. The report explained that the Deed of Dedication as previously agreed by the Sub-Committee, alongside the objects of FiT, should provide confidence in the additional protection for the Recreation Ground. It was important that flexibility was built into the Deed of Dedication, as envisaged in the extract from Fields in Trust website; a total lack of flexibility and the prohibitions as envisaged by the WADRA draft might mean that the Trustees were not able to act in the best interest of the Charity, which was a fundamental charitable responsibility.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the amended Deed of Dedication proposed by WADRA as set out at Appendix 2, the officer comments in response to the proposed amendments as set out in the report, and the current position of WADRA as set out at Appendix 3, be noted;**
- (2) That the Sub-Committee reaffirm the decision of the Trustee Sub Committee of its meeting of 10 February 2020 to approve the Deed of Dedication as negotiated and agreed with Fields in Trust.**

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**4. MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Chair invited Councillor Ballsdon, Chair of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee, to make a statement to the Sub-Committee. The statement included feedback on the completed works at the Pavilion and playing fields, and clarification of the discussion and decisions made at the meeting of the Management Committee on 29 March 2022 with particular reference to the use of the Pavilion by WADRA for a community café.

(The meeting closed at 7.13 pm)