

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY HEAD OF ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS TRUSTEES SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	30 JANUARY 2018		
TITLE:	MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS LANDSCAPE UPDATE (amended 25/1/19)		
LEAD COUNCILLORS:	COUNCILLOR EDWARDS	PORTFOLIO:	MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS CHAIR OF TRUSTEES
SERVICE:	TRUSTEE OF CHARITY	WARDS:	MAPLEDURHAM
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report updates the Sub-Committee on the following matters relevant to the operation of the Mapledurham Playing Fields and the development of the Landscape Master Plan:

- Work to Pavilion
- Tennis Club Planning Application
- Archaeological; Investigation
- Playing Field Archaeology and Grading
- Football
- Play Area
- Access
- Trees, Tree Removal and Bird Nesting

1.2 At the last Trustees' Sub-committee on 22 October 2018, it was reported that Roman archaeology being found in the north west of the site would require the Landscape Master Plan to be amended. This report identifies the changes proposed to the original plan, which will form the basis of a planning application to be submitted in February 2019.

1.3 The report specifically brings to the attention of the Sub-committee:

- a) the work to the Pavilion funded by Warren and District Residents Association (WADRA) and thanks them for their support;
- b) a planning application from the Mapledurham Tennis Club to extend floodlighting to the two remaining unlit tennis courts;

1.4 The original Landscape Master Plan adopted by the Sub-Committee at the meeting on 20 June 2018 is attached at Appendix A.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Landscape Master Plan be amended to:

- Move the sport pitch drainage to the eastern side of the axial footpath (see para. 4.4.2)
- Adopt the proposed design for the children's play area and locate it to the south of The Heights School, (option E in para. 4.6); if this location cannot be implemented to site the play area to the south of the pavilion (option B in para. 4.6)
- Retain the Lombardy poplars point as per para. 4.8

2.2 That the enhancements identified within the Plan be funded from the £1.36m premium from the ESFA.

2.3 That the amended Landscape Master Plan be used as a basis to submit a planning application in February 2019.

2.4 That the works to the Pavilion be noted, and WADRA thanked for their support (see para. 4.1).

2.5 That the Tennis Club Planning application be noted (see para. 4.2).

2.6 That 16 trees around the play area and within the line of Lombardy Poplars be removed in February 2019 as identified in para. 4.10 to facilitate the start of construction of the new The Heights School on the site.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Reading Borough Council holds the Ground in its capacity as charity trustee ("Trustee") of the Charity. The Charity is registered with (and therefore regulated by) the Charity Commission. The charitable object of the Charity is:

"the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Mapledurham and the Borough of Reading without distinction of political, religious or other opinions. "

The beneficiaries of the Charity, therefore, are the inhabitants of the Parish of Mapledurham and the Borough of Reading. The Ground is an asset of the Charity and is held "in specie" i.e. specifically in order to advance the Charity's object.

3.2 The Sub-Committee has delegated authority, with the support of the Officers, to discharge Reading Borough Council's functions as charity trustee of the Charity. The Sub-Committee has a duty to make all decisions in what it considers to be the best interests of the Charity and in order to advance the object referred to above and any such decision must be in line with all relevant charity law and other legal restrictions.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Work to Pavilion

4.1.1 The work undertaken on behalf of WADRA to the pavilion was due to be completed in January 2019. This consists of:

- Replacement of structural steel work to southern hall wall;

- Replacement of affected wall skins (internal and external);
- Repairs to external faces of western wall;
- Making good all areas impacted by these works.

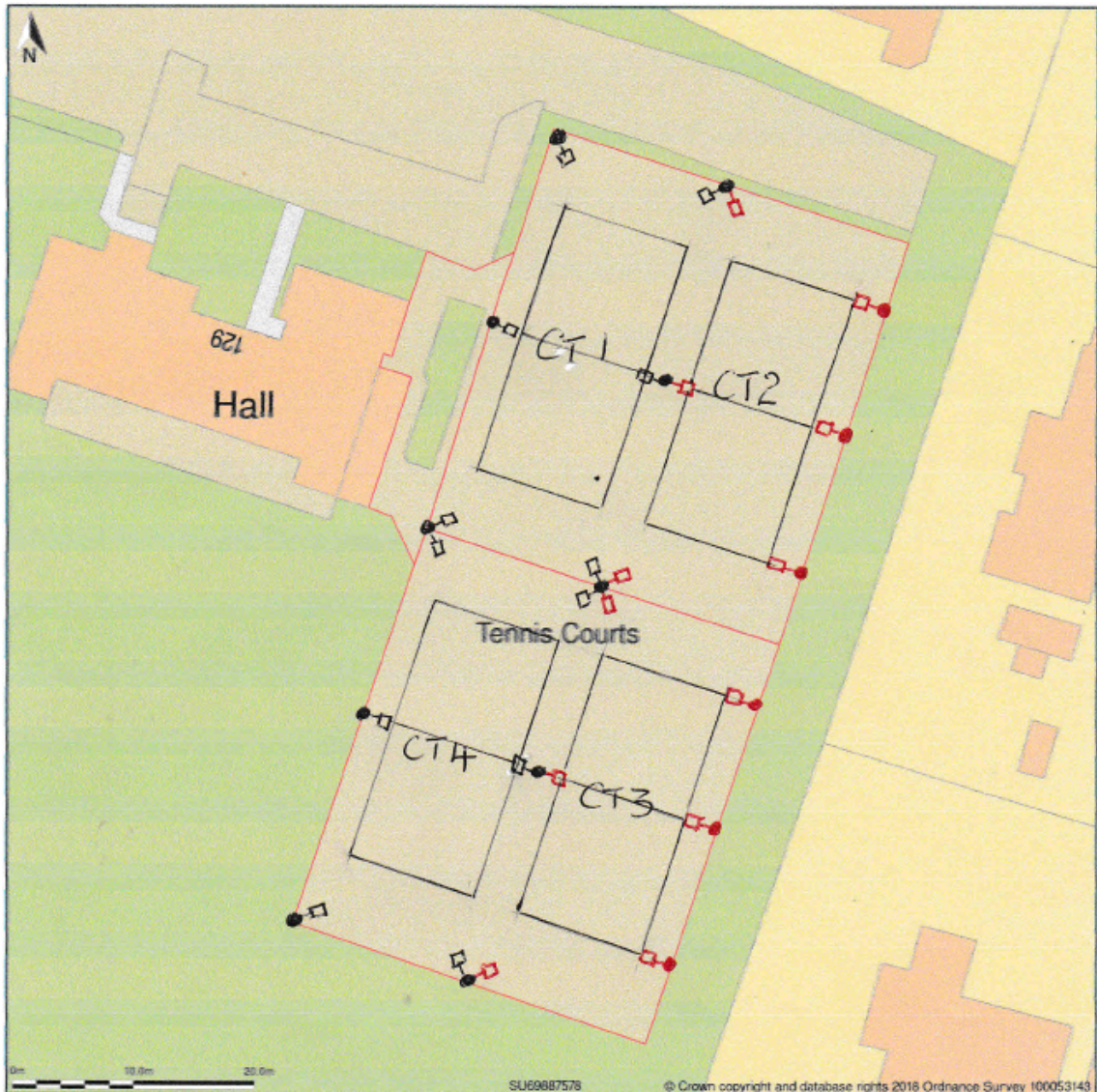
4.1.2 The pavilion is due to reopen in February. More detail is provided in the Mapledurham Pavilion Update and Draft Accounts report.

4.2 Tennis Club Planning Application

4.2.1 Mapledurham Lawn Tennis Club is applying for planning permission to floodlight the remaining 2 unlit courts of their total 4 courts. Two courts are already floodlit and no complaints have been received about the use of the tennis courts in the last 2 years.

4.2.2 The proposal is to install 6 new lighting columns - 6.7m high mounted LED floodlight panels. A further 6 floodlighting panels to be added to 5 of the existing panels. Additional lighting will allow increased use of the facilities outside peak times, complementing the objects of the trust.

4.2.3 The 2 courts proposed to be illuminated are those closest to properties in Knowle Close (See plan below). The club are proposing that the lighting may be used until 10pm each evening in line with the hours of use of the courts that are already lit.



Block Plan shows area bounded by: 469641.66, 175739.94 469931.66, 175829.94 (at a scale of 1:500), OSGridRef: SU69887578. The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way. The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.

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KEY: EXISTING COLUMNS ● PROPOSED COLUMNS ●
 EXISTING LIGHTS ◻ PROPOSED LIGHTS ◻

4.2.4 While the increased use is in line with the objects of the trust there may be an impact on the adjacent properties. A consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning process and an evaluation of the impact of the development undertaken. It would be appropriate to use the consideration of the planning committee to inform the trustees in coming to a decision on whether to agree the increased floodlighting on its playing fields.

4.3 Archaeological investigation (EFSA)

4.3.1 The EFSA undertook archaeological and structural soil tests over the 2 weeks leading up to Christmas within the area they propose to lease. This coincided with an extremely wet period of weather resulting in the ground becoming very churned up and boggy. Much of the area has been turfed but ongoing renovation work by the ESFA is being undertaken to bring the area into a usable condition as soon as possible. This will however be dependent upon weather conditions supporting grass growth.

4.3.2 It should be noted that it had been reported that ground reinforcement (to support vehicle use) had been installed in this area of the field. However Council officers have no knowledge or record of such structures. Given the confidence in the reports of their presence extra care was undertaken when excavating the area. No evidence of any ground reinforcement was found which would have been evident during a careful archaeological investigation and inspection by Council officers.

4.4 Playing Field Archaeology and Playing Field Grading

4.4.1 The archaeological surveys undertaken by the Council in 2018 identified towards the north-west side of the Playing Fields a large D-shaped Roman enclosure. In the area within the enclosure 2 post holes measuring 0.45-0.48m in diameter were found and contained later Iron Age pottery. The enclosure ditches also contained pottery dating from the 1st-2nd Century and were dated later than the post holes. The presence of a samian ware mortarium fragment suggests a date c.AD 170. The D-shaped enclosure may have been associated with several phases of occupation and potential industrial activity. In 1998 similar Roman features were discovered approximately 250m northwest of the site and rectangular cropmarks suggest this area could be part of a substantial late Iron Age / Roman rural settlement.

4.4.2 To protect this archaeology the area of the playing fields to the east of the axial path it is now proposed that it should not be graded or drained. This would also allow the mature Lombardy Poplar trees and their strong landscape features to be retained, see plan below of hatched area of archaeology and plan of proposed re-profiled and drained sports area.





4.4.3 Lombardy Poplars are relatively short lived. At around 40 to 50 years these trees start shedding branches and are very likely to be blown over in high winds, each successive tree lost exposing neighbouring trees creating a domino effect. Poplars also have spreading invasive roots that negatively impact on sports turf. One tree has been lost in recent years. As the Lombardy start to fail it is planned to replace this entire line of trees (as they reach the end of life) with a line of 10 fastigate (tall thin columnar) oaks.

4.4.4 In addition, four poplars have been planted in recent years which will in time over hang the playing pitches. These will be removed along with the trees around the play area. These are young trees and as they mature will overhang the sports pitches.

4.4.5 Maintenance work to the west boundary trees and shrubbery will also be undertaken. This will include raining the crowns of trees and removing undergrowth encroaching into the main playing fields.

4.5 Football

4.5.1 The consequence of draining the area to the east of the axial path rather than the west will necessitate a slight alteration of the pitch configuration and change the capacity of the playing fields to host football.

4.5.2 The previous proposed pitch configuration provided

- 1 x senior football pitches
- 2 x undersize senior pitches
- 1 x junior 11-a-side pitch
- 2 x 9-a-side pitches.
- 3 mini soccer areas matches until October training thereafter.
- (All standard quality at best)

4.5.3 This accommodated the following games per week

- 6 x senior games (or substituted junior games)
- 3 x junior 11-a-side
- 4 x 9-a-side

Multiple training sessions on mini soccer areas and across pitches

4.5.4 The landscape plan identified the following need for football pitches:

Pitch size including run-off	Weekly equivalents	Peak use	Pitches required		
			Good	Standard	Total
Adult U17/18 11v11 106mx70m	4.5	2	1	1	2
Youth U15/16 11v11 97mx61m		2		1	1
Youth U13/14 11v 11 88mx56m	3.5	4		2	2
Youth U11/U12 9v9 79mx52m	3	3		1	1
Mini Soccer U9/U10 7v7 61mv43m					2

4.5.5 In addition to the demand identified above, it was anticipated at least one of the football clubs who have recently left will return when facilities are brought up to an adequate standard. The provision of pitches to be made in the amended plan is:

Pitch size including run off	Pitches provided		
	Good	Standard	Total
Adult U17/18 11v11 106mx70m	1	1	2
Youth U15/16 11v11 97mx61m		1	1
Youth U13/14 11v 11 -88mx56m	2		2
Youth U11/U12 9v9 79mx52m	1		1
Mini Soccer U9/U10 7v7 61mv43m	1	1	2

4.5.6 This provides an overall increase in capacity for football over existing arrangements. There is considerable flexibility to move pitches between the drained and non-drained sports turf areas.

4.5.7 The opportunity subsequently to build an artificial turf pitch (an aspiration of Caversham Trents F.C.) is not constrained by these alterations.

4.5.8 The pitches to the west of the axial path will be improved by top dressing the surface of the pitches and filling any low points.

4.5.9 The total area planned to be drained is unchanged and therefore the budget cost of enhancements to the Trust remains unchanged.

4.6 Play Area

4.6.1 The Landscape Master Plan identified moving the play area close to the pavilion but acknowledged that further consideration of exact location was required.

4.6.2 Three areas (Options A, B, and C) have been considered in detail. Two suggestions were made through the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee on 23 January 2019 and have been briefly evaluated. Some further evaluation is required including detailed measuring on site.

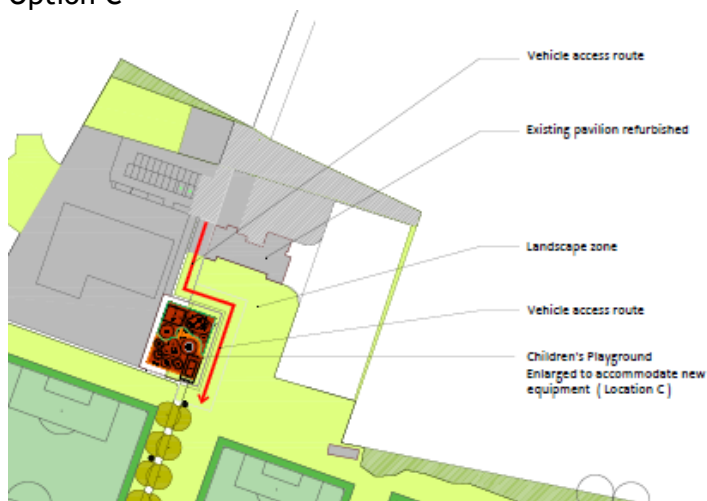
Option A



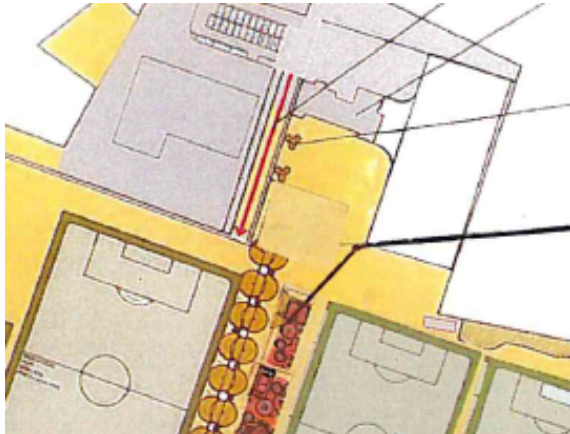
Option B



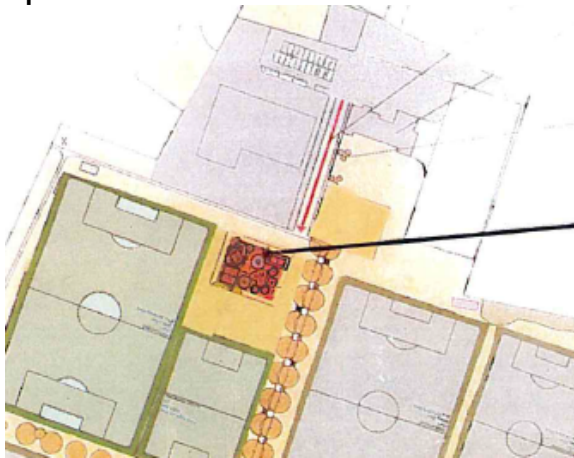
Option C



Option D



Option E



4.6.3 The following advantages and disadvantages have been identified:

Option A

Advantages

- a) Maintains open views from the pavilion into and across the fields. (WADRA have expressed strong concerns that not having this will limit the ability to host wedding and other similar activities in the pavilion).
- b) Can utilise the space behind the pavilion for formal play/activities
- c) During events a continuous and interrupted piece of open space flows from the pavilion into the playing fields providing uninterrupted event space

Disadvantages

- a) A minimum recommended distance (buffer zone) from a large play area (NEAP) to the nearest property boundary is 30m. This standard is identified by Fields in Trust and adopted by the Council. This buffer zone is not achieved using location A. There is a risk that if noise nuisance were encountered the play area would need to be moved.
- b) Negative evaluation by environmental health (noise) during the planning process is

expected.

- c) There is a risk of the play area being used by young people in late evenings resulting in disturbance to neighbouring properties if youths congregate in the play area
- d) Slight cost increase to provide extended path to play area.
- e) Close proximity likely to introduce conflicts with football pitch use to immediate south
- f) Least passing surveillance /policing by playing field users of the 3 options
- g) Longest distance from the parking area to walk with small children of the 3 options
- h) Potential disturbance to tennis players
- i) If desired further extension of the tennis courts to the south in the future would be constrained

Option B

Advantages

- a) Appropriate buffer zones to residential properties provided (reduced noise disruption)
- b) Proximity to car parking for parents with small children
- c) Proximity to the pavilion allowing use when the pavilion is hired out for family events or refreshments available
- d) Proximity to the school providing activity for use by siblings awaiting brothers/sisters at the end of the school day and after school use
- e) 'Contains' a garden area between the pavilion and the play area, which can be used for summer time events and included as an outdoor space attached to the pavilion for private hire
- f) Adjacent to main access into playing fields
- g) Visually attached to the public recreation facilities rather than to the school
- h) Allows direct vehicular access onto playing fields
- i) Close to Multi Use Games Area and tennis courts.

Disadvantages

- a) Interrupts view into field from pavilion
- b) Large events will need to be organised around the play area (If centred on the pavilion)
- c) No buffer zone between school and playground

Option C

Advantages

- a) Appropriate buffer zones to residential properties provided (reduced noise disruption)
- b) Proximity to car parking for parents with small children
- c) Proximity to the pavilion allowing use when the pavilion is hired out for family events or refreshments available
- d) Proximity to the school providing activity for use by siblings awaiting brothers/sisters at the end of the school day and after school use
- e) Garden area between the pavilion and the play area can be used for summer time events
- f) Adjacent to main access into playing fields
- g) Adjacent to Multi Use Games Area and tennis courts

Disadvantages

- a) Interrupts direct vehicular access onto playing fields
- b) Interrupts direct pedestrian access, forcing park visitors to dog-leg around the play area
- c) Immediate proximity to school may create conflicts between play area use and school
- d) Being adjacent to school may create impression of being a school facility
- e) Partially interrupts views from Pavilion into playing fields
- f) Intrudes into the zone behind the pavilion, reducing the usefulness of the grassed area without adding any substantial benefit

Option D

Advantages

- a) Maintains open views from the pavilion into and across the fields. (WADRA have expressed strong concerns that not having this will limit the ability to host wedding and other similar activities in the pavilion).
- b) Can utilise the space behind the pavilion for formal play/activities
- c) During events an uninterrupted piece of open space flows from the pavilion into the playing fields providing continuous event space
- d) Appropriate buffer zones to residential properties provided (reduced noise/disruption)
- e) Adjacent to main access into playing fields
- f) Visually attached to the public recreation facilities rather than to the school
- g) Allows direct vehicular access onto playing fields
- h) Adjacent to main access into playing fields

Disadvantages

- a) Close proximity to pitches likely to introduce conflicts with football pitch use to immediate east.
- b) The width of the play area is severely restricted to allow 2 junior pitches next to it. This is to the extent it adversely affects the effectiveness of the play area
- c) Partially interrupts views from Pavilion into playing fields
- d) Restricts flexibility of use of improved sports turf area. Rotation of pitches is compromised, adult and junior pitch cannot be laid out side by side in northern half of playing area.
- e) Likely to necessitate relocation of drainage soakway, implication of resiting currently unknown.

Option E

Advantages

- a) Maintains views from the pavilion into the Playing Fields.
- b) Appropriate buffer zones to residential properties provided (reduced noise disruption)
- c) Proximity to car parking for parents with small children
- d) Proximity to the pavilion allowing use when the pavilion is hired out for family events or refreshments available
- e) Proximity to the school providing activity for use by siblings awaiting brothers/sisters at the end of the school day and after school use
- f) Continuous open space from the Pavilion, which can be used for summer time events and included as an outdoor space attached to the pavilion for private hire

- j) Adjacent to main playing fields through route
- k) Visually attached to the public recreation facilities rather than to the school
- l) Allows direct vehicular access onto playing fields
- m) Close to Multi Use Games Area

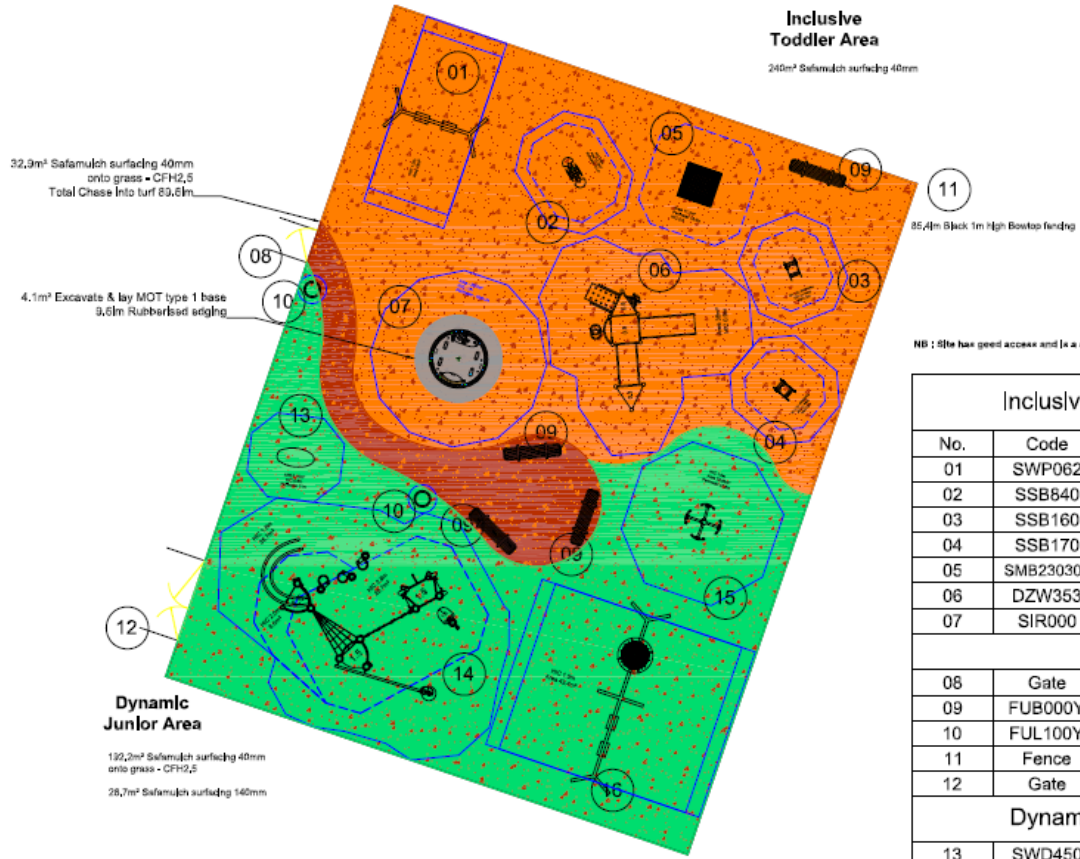
Disadvantages

- a) Run off space between adult pitch and 7 a side pitch is likely to be compromised. 7 a side and adult games can be timetabled to not coincide to minimise this problem
- b) Limited space behind goals of adult pitch
- c) Low risk that archaeology may limit ability to relocate pitches.

4.6.4 Option E is therefore considered to be the best location and is recommended as the appropriate location for the play area. Option B should be retained as a fall-back position if it is found either the archaeology or space constraints result in a material reduction in carrying capacity of the sports areas.

4.6.5 Designs from 4 playground manufactures were sought and compared. A direct comparison purely on cost is not possible as playground manufacturers do not supply interchangeable items. They compete on the basis of different specifications and designs, the Parks Team have identified Sutcliffe Play as the chosen play equipment manufacturer for the following reasons:

- The majority of the existing play equipment at Mapledurham is Sutcliffe Play and other local playgrounds around Reading are provided by other manufacturers.
- Using different suppliers around Reading ensures each playground continues being distinct in its design and specialism from other designated play areas in the Caversham/Mapledurham area giving the broadest range of facilities for beneficiaries.
- The added play value of specifying inclusive play equipment. Sutcliffe Play is one of the leading companies in inclusive play through innovative design. This provides a range of activities for children with mobility problems which allow children with disabilities and special needs to be active side-by-side with able bodied children.
- There is no other fully accessible/all-inclusive play area north of the River. The Mapledurham play area will be served by car parking, footpaths and not have loose-fill (bark or sand) surfaces which is difficult to use by children with limited mobility.
- The equipment also provides a broad range of play opportunities for able bodied children.



NB : Site has good access and is a soft dig.

Inclusive Toddler Area - Equipment

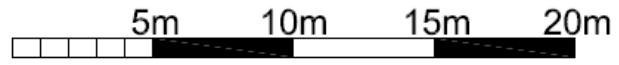
No.	Code	Description
01	SWP062	1.8m High Pod Seat Swing
02	SSB840	Pablo Penguin Seesaw
03	SSB160	Inclusive Ladybird Springie
04	SSB170	Inclusive Bee Springie
05	SMB230302	Small Trampoline
06	DZW353	Inclusive Toddlerzone Pull-Up
07	SIR000	Flush level Inclusive Roundabout

Furniture

08	Gate	1.2m wide Hydraulic Pedestrian Gate
09	FUB000Y	Bench seat x 4
10	FUL100Y	Upright Litter Bin
11	Fence	1m high Black Bowtop fencing
12	Gate	Double leaf drop bolt, lockable combi gate

Dynamic Junior Area - Equipment

13	SWD450	Wipe Out
14	CZU212	Mission Foxfire
15	SWD350	Dynamic Quad Flyer
16	SBN065	2.4m high Inclusive Rubber Nest Swing with 2 x Bumper seats



Mapledurham Playing Fields



- Equipment List**
- 01. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 02. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 03. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 04. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 05. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 06. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 07. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 08. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 09. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 10. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 11. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 12. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 13. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 14. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 15. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep
 - 16. SWING - 15m high, 10m wide, 10m deep

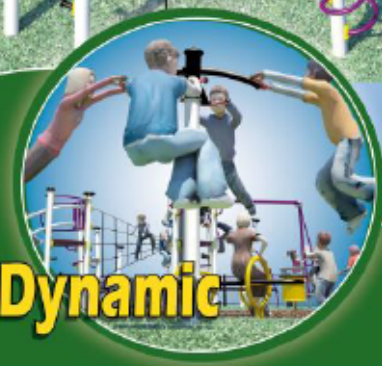


Through innovative design, our aim is to provide opportunities for children of all abilities to play together.

The benefits of using a British manufacturer **5 Week Lead Time!** **GUARANTEED**



Inclusive Roundabout



Dynamic



Toddler Multi-Climb

www.sutcliffeplay.co.uk

Quote No. 181/1251A Date: 17/11/2014 10:08:00 AM
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4.7 Access

4.7.1 A 3m wide asphalt stone chip path with reinforced turf either side will connect the car park to the main path network. This will provide good pedestrian access and support vehicular access for events or emergency vehicles. Details of levels are still to be determined. This will be lit as part of the main axial path across the playing fields.

4.8 Trees

4.8.1 As described in section 4.4.2 the Lombardy Poplars separating the pitches on western side of the playing fields will be retained and in the long term replaced with 10 fastigiate oak trees. In the short term the 4 white poplars will be removed.

4.8.2 Five specimen trees, 3 scots pine and 2 Holm oak will be planted as part of the overall tree planting strategy for the Playing fields. There are very few evergreen trees in the playing fields and these will provide winter interest and cover.

4.8.3 Depending on the playground location 6 small ornamental trees such as Cornus 'Norman Hadden' will be planted on the periphery of the garden/overspill space to the south of the pavilion.

4.8.4 This would result in total loss of 16 trees - 12 from around the play area and 4 within the line of Lombardi Poplars. 51 trees will be planted - 40 along the avenue, 5 specimen evergreen trees and 6 Cornus. The subsequent planting of 10 oaks will provide a further net increase of 4 trees, 35 in total.

4.9 Tree Removal and Bird Nesting

4.9.1 The ESFA is proposing to remove trees February 2019 from within the Heights School Site, subject to obtaining planning permission and the lease being completed.

4.9.2 If birds are nesting in trees these may not be removed until birds fledge and the nests are no longer in use. This is often not until August, with nesting season starting in February/March.

4.9.3 In order to commence building work, trees removal is required. Delaying the start of work until August/September (post bird nesting season) is likely to result in the school not being completed for September 2020.

4.9.4 The same constraints apply to the work identified within the Landscape Master Plan. The work proposed within the plan is dependent upon weather and growing seasons. Failing to commence work early this summer is expected to delay the completion of ground works, and reopening the playing fields, until many months after the school opens. This would result in reduced facilities being available just as the demand from beneficiaries increases.

4.9.5 It is therefore proposed that if the ESFA obtain planning permission and undertake tree works, the Trust should also remove the 16 trees (identified in 4.8.4 in February 2019).

4.9.6 This will be before planning permission for the Landscape Master Plan is obtained. It is also proposed that should the Landscape Master Plan not be implemented, replacement trees would be planted.

4.10 Planning

4.10.1 Subject to approval, a planning application will be submitted by officers based upon the

amended Landscape Master Plan.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 A comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken in the summer of 2017 to establish the views of beneficiaries, which generated 3,313 valid responses. This was reported in detail to the Sub Committee on 9 January 2018.
- 5.2 A further round of consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning application for the Landscape Master Plan.
- 5.3 This report will be considered by the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee on 23 January 2019, and their comments will be reported orally to the Sub-committee.
- 5.4 Comments on the landscape plan relating to both the proposed changes and the substantive plan have been received in the lead up to management committee. These are provided in Appendix 1 along with an officer response where they relate to the Landscape Master Plan.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to-
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 6.2 In this regard you must consider whether the decision will or could have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief.
- 6.3 An updated equality impact assessment (EIA) was undertaken and reported to the June 2018 Sub-Committee. There has been no material change to the proposals being made and the EIA remains valid.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The majority of the changes to the Landscape master plan, with exception of the area of sports turf drained, are mitigation rather than enhancement.
- 7.2 The quantity of sports turf being drained remains unchanged and therefore the budget cost of works to the Trust remains unchanged.
- 7.3 The Landscape Update Report to the subcommittee on 22nd October 2018 identified that of the £1.36m premium, after identified works were completed a sum of £138,000 remained use as contributory or match funding for grants or similar funding. This remains the case

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has powers to provide and maintain recreational facilities within its area under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The 20th June Sub Committee approved the proposal from the Council to spend the £375k of S106 mitigation funding for works to the playing field to mitigate the presence of the proposed school on the site.
- 9.2 The exclusion of the additional changing rooms from the pavilion refurbishment will result in a sum of £138,000 being allocated to use as contributory or match funding for grants or similar funding. This may be used by either the Charity or partner organisation(s) to lever in further monies to provide new or improve the facilities within the playing.
- 9.3 Archaeology investigation costs of £43,091 and £7,492 of drainage investigations have been expended to date as part of the approved pre-planning preparatory works. These costs totalling £50,583 are allocated equally between mitigation/enhancement (Council Section 106/Trust) funding basis. The expenditure is currently at risk and has been funded by the Council pending the outcome of the Judicial Review and receipt of the £1.36m premium.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 20th June 2018.
- 10.2 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 9th January 2018.
- 10.3 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 22nd October 2018.
- 10.4 Oxford Archaeology report - August 2018
- 10.5 Landscape master plan 2018

Comments relating to the Landscape Master Plan

Feedback relating to the Landscape Master Plan has recently been received from Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields, Robin Bentham, Elisa Miles and Caversham Trents. This is laid out below.

1.0 Friends of Mapledurham Playing Field

There has been some recent correspondence from the Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields including 8 questions. These, and officer responses, are laid out below. A 2nd response to the follow up questions was made by the Landscape architect (at 1.9)

1.1 Question 1

Who asked for the new path, that is to be created across from the Pavilion car park across to the Chazey Road access near River Road, to be lighted?

1st officer response

In the consultation undertaken in 2016 identified a number of options. In addition to options proposed the following items were requested by respondents to be provided on the Playing Fields: Swimming Pool, Increased Car Parking, Lighting, Café, Cricket, Tree Planting and Toilets.

Follow up question

A summary of the 2016 consultation is included on page 3 of the Landscape plan originally issued May 2018. Whilst Lighting does appear in this table it has a very low rating on par with wanting a swimming pool, café or the reintroduction of cricket. On these results there is insufficient evidence to support the introduction of lighting for the Park user. We must therefore surmise that its inclusion is for the benefit of the school, with the lighting affording the pupils easier access at start/end of day in the shorter day-length months. The proposed lighting is unnecessary for the Park users, will create a visual nuisance for the surrounding householders and create light pollution thus affecting the natural darkness.

1.1.2 Question 2

Will the lighting be low level? If not, please will it be amended to being low level to minimise impact on wildlife?

1st Officer response

The lighting will be installed on 5m high columns to ensure effective coverage of the footpath. Lighting design (spill and wavelength) will reduce its impact and an ecologists advice is that the impact to wildlife will be low

Follow up question

There is abundant evidence that lighting adversely affects bat roosts, access points and foraging pathways. Previous bat studies on the MPF site have shown that several species use MPF, especially for feeding, so it is imperative that the lighting is designed to take their needs into consideration.

1.3 Question 3

Concerns were raised about Liquidamber trees being planted along the above path. Following the meeting, Ken Macrae sent me the following: 'The trees drop their hard, spiky seedpods in the fall by the hundreds, and these can become a serious nuisance on pavements and lawns. Some cities have expedited permitting for removal of liquidambar trees.' I know that my colleague Cllr Ed Hopper asked officers to consider using a native tree and ask that the following alternatives are given serious consideration: Field Maple, White Beams, Hawthorne and Cherry.

1st officer response

The 14 existing trees that are to be removed are mixed sycamore, ash and lime, 5 of these are native trees. The perimeter trees are mixed lime and sycamore, although the woodland on the site is richly varied. Given the large number of sycamore and lime on the site, and the current ban on moving ash for planting, it is not proposed to replace the trees like for like. The 40 new trees are to be planted in an avenue across the site, which will be a strong landscape feature. It would not be appropriate to plant small trees, as the size of the site presents a superb opportunity to plant large avenue trees. The planting of ornamental trees has been proposed, as the avenue is as much for visual beauty as for summer shade, and the rest of the site - and the wider location - is well endowed with large trees with wildlife value. Liquidambar do well in the locality, and were proposed as being of suitable profile and size, as well as having lovely autumn colour. In addition to the Liquidamber avenue addition specimen tree planting is proposed which will include native trees.

Follow up Question

The reply is unacceptable, and we are in agreement with Cllr Hopper. Liquidamber are American trees and as such are a poor relation in terms of biodiversity. RBC Tree Strategy states . . . **'Native species support a greater diversity of wildlife than non-native species. Native species should be planted in preference to non-native species where appropriate.'** Given that the proposed school and Landscape plan will remove at least 50 existing mature trees, it is wholly appropriate for the new MPF path to be planted with native trees. Without them, the wildlife value would be primarily around the boundaries, leaving a wildlife desert throughout the rest of the site. An unsolicited response has been received from Adrian Lawson (ex Parks employee) who said why not native oak, black poplar or small leaved lime. The exact species can be determined in due course, but the agreement to utilise native species is vital.

1.4 Question4

The FofMPF would like the beautiful (silver leaf) Lime tree (on the east side of the central circle of trees) to be retained.

1st officer response

Trees that are proposed to be removed are being done so to ensure the same level of sport can be accommodated on site. Replacement tree planting is being proposed and it is not possible to retain the lime.

Follow up Question

Please reconsider !

1.5 Question 5.

They would like a rethink on the felling of trees in the middle of MPF. They would like to retain as many of the trees - including some of the poplars and some of the circle of trees - as can be spared around the football pitches. The feeling is that it was easier for RBC to clear all the trees, carry out the shifting of earth then put in new trees than to think about how the works could be done around existing trees. Please can you respond on this point?

1st officer response

Consideration of the site as a whole and how to best accommodate the varied needs of the users is being made. If we are able to retain trees as we undertake more detailed assessment of course we will.

Follow up Question

This is far too vague a response. The plan should be properly researched and contain definitive statements so that we can see the true impact of any work. We would expect the plan that goes for formal Planning Approval to be precise on the matter of tree felling. In all the plans to date, the row of Lombardy poplars will be removed. These are iconic of the site, and within the Landscape plan (or perhaps it was the school planning application) a few column-shaped trees are being planted to imitate their shape. This is ironic in that they are being felled!

1.6 Question 6

Why does the clump to the south (west?) of the orchard need to be removed?

1ST officer response

There are no plans to remove any trees around the orchard area.

Follow up question

The concern is about the two most southerly of the 'clumps' of mixed native plantings adjacent to the Chazey Rd boundary. Creation of football pitch 8 necessitates the removal of these 2 groups of planting, thus reducing the effectiveness of this green wildlife corridor

1.7 Question 7

They favoured new planting to be in the lower dip in the north east of the plain fields rather than the south east dip near the orchard

There is no planting proposed around the orchard area, either in the SE or NE.

Follow up Question

We are suggesting that there should be planting in the NE section thereby increasing the existing wooded area. Informal (i.e. not hard surfaced) footpaths can be created through the new trees thus maintaining public/dog walker access to the area. Over the years we have improved the margins with native plantings and it would be advantageous for the wildlife to create a new area of mixed woodland trees. This is a gently sloping area that cannot be used for football.

1.8 Question 8

Where is the earth going to be moved to? There were objections to it being put down near the orchard.

We will be moving it around the sports pitch area. This will be identified in the forthcoming landscape plan?

1.9 Further response from Landscape Architect.

I have been asked to draft a response to your email to Cllr Ballsdon about your concerns over the landscape plan. I would actually have suggested meeting with FoMPF, but I am leaving on Saturday to visit my mother in Australia, and will be back only in February. There is no time before I go away.

The landscape plan for the playing fields was generated by me, so it makes sense for me to answer your questions directly. What I was attempting to address was making a coherent landscape with what is left of the site after the school has imposed its character on it. This meant trying to find a way of creating a strong landscape feature that draws the eye away from the car park, pavilion and school across the site. An avenue of large trees was one way of achieving this. The alternative, which we rejected, was a tree lined perimeter path that goes all the way round the edge of site. I deliberately created the avenue with generous proportions: 3m wide walkway to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, with trees set back 5m from the path edge, so that, once the trees approach maturity, the entire feature takes up a band over 20m wide.

Lighting: I proposed the lighting. The reason is that I have observed, as a dog walker who uses the site several times a week, that cyclists and pedestrians use the site as a cut-through from Upper Woodcote Road (including people who use the bus stop) to

Chazey Road and that this goes on after sunset. Also, lots of women walk dogs there on winter evenings, and they tend to stick to the Hewett Avenue side where there is overspill lighting and where they feel safer. A lit path through the site has value for all those people. Of course the path will be used by school children, and, yes, we want them to have safe passage when it is dark, but that was not my starting point. Low-level lighting does not create a sense of safety - quite the reverse. It lights the pedestrian, and throws the surroundings into gloom. It works well in urban areas where there is general ambient light and you want specific light on a pathway; it does not work in a dark setting to make people feel safe. Overspill lighting will not be a problem for neighbouring properties. The LED street lights direct light downwards not outwards, and pretty much every neighbour is shielded by trees anyway. Interestingly, the ecologist did not feel the lighting would be a particular problem for bats. He and I have had differences on other issues, but not that. I would suggest, anyway, that the lights are switched off after midnight; we do that in other parks.

Tree varieties: in 2007, I wrote a paper for Scottish Natural Heritage (with others) on gardening for biodiversity. I attach it. I researched and wrote pretty much all of it - with the exception of some of the first section - with a research assistant who was doing a higher degree at the University of Sheffield at the time. Marian's work involved reading the extensive bibliography attached to this paper. I am absolutely persuaded that the native vs non-native debate is oversimplified, and that the burden of serious research (at least up till 2007) is summarised by the rather more complex argument on pp. 11 and 12 of the paper. Yes, natives matter, but, no, they are not necessarily better for biodiversity generally. At the end of the day, pollen, nectar, water and a variety of habitat types is more important than provenance. All of the best trees for biodiversity are native, and some of the worst trees for biodiversity are native. So I do not feel compelled in this instance to use native trees. My response to Adrian's list is that there is lots of oak on the site; black poplar is too large to act as a good avenue tree (and, quite honestly, would look oversized for that location), and lime is suitable as an avenue tree, but well represented across Reading, and the aphid problem means that one would not want to site seating underneath. The other native trees offered to me as alternatives (cherry, hawthorn, field maple and whitebeam) are too small for an avenue of that size. I chose liquidambar for the reasons you have already been given: they do very well in Caversham; their conical shape is tidy for use adjacent to sports fields (they won't overhang); and they look fantastic at all times of year. It really is both incorrect and an overstatement to refer to a double avenue of large exotic trees as 'a desert'. If there is an objection to their fruit, then I will change them for scarlet oak (also American, but there are some lovely ones in Chazey wood, so I think they will do ok).

The removal of the trees and the playground in the centre of the playing fields is an imperative imposed by needing to fit all of the football pitches on the site, not by the laziness of not being willing to move earth around them. I agree that that lime is lovely. I did not suggest replacing it, but we can do that as we don't plant any of those anywhere else. It is north American ... !

It is not necessary to remove the fastigate poplars, and we have revoked this. Please be aware that they are not long-lived, and the original reason for felling them was that they are getting on, and have a tendency to snap out. I would, however, still like to take out the three out of place poplars in that line, because they actually spoil the line and are rather rubbish specimens. But I don't feel strongly enough about them to make an argument for their removal.

I cannot comment on your concern about the clumps behind the Chazey Road houses. It is my understanding that no trees are being removed from there. If I am wrong, then I will need to change the arb report.

Your planting in the NE area is great, but I am sure that you know that trees and more trees does not create diversity, and that some scrub and long grass is good too.

If I have not explained the reasons behind everything clearly enough, then you are welcome to get back to me. I don't expect you to agree with everything, but at least accept that this has not been put together without thought or care. As much as we value you for all of the work you put into MPF, it would be nice if you also believed that we actually care about this too, and that I made a self-conscious decision when I left economics to take up landscape because I thought it matters. But landscape is not ecology, and our job as managers of the landscape is to balance the competing needs of different users and wildlife and sometimes compromises are inevitable.

1.9.1 Further comments

There are 4 trees within the line of poplars that have been identified for removal not 3 as stated above.

While poplars do snap out the reason for the felling was to undertake improvements to the sports turf across this area of the playing fields. There is significant undulation across the playing surfaces near the poplars. As described within the landscape report work to the area to the west of the axial path can not be undertaken.

1.10 Caversham Trents FC

1.11 Caversham Trents wished to address the Management Committee, below is an outline of their proposed presentation

Firstly I would like to do a quick update of CTFC.

When both Steve and I became committee members we were representing just over 100 young people and now 8 years later we have over 500 members and girls football continues to grow at a fast pace.

The Club is held in high regard with Sport England and the FA for being an all inclusive grassroots football club.

Before we look forward at the Landscape Plan we would like to place on record that we don't believe that the RBC members of the Management Committee have, over the past few years, worked in the best interests of the MPF users for the following reasons:

1. The systematic running down of the Pavilion over a number of years that lead to its closure three years ago. Despite funds being made available for its renovation and plans by users to enact improvements works.
2. The fact that a user initiative, rather than RBC and this Management Committee, Have eventually opened up the Pavilion at a cost of £40,000.
3. In conversations that I had with Councillor Ballsdon, before MPF was chosen as the location for The Heights School, I made it clear that the school proposal would only work if the whole community was involved with planning. Community / User engagement has been poor and there have been clear signs of divide and rule, I will talk more about this later.

4. The placing of an ATP, clearly ticked on the public consultation plans, clearly supported by Caversham Trents and its membership, but not showing on the current landscape plans.

The Community has been divided; all of whom believe they are doing the right thing for MPF, but unfortunately not all have been in the one room together to contribute to the Landscape Plan. Hence, at a recent meeting of MPFAG it was clear that the local community / other users are beginning to turn against / blame the football club for the current Landscape Plan, which is clearly in place to try and overcome the Sport England objections rather than unite the Community in a development we can be proud of. As a committee you have the mandate to look after the day to day running of MPF and its pavilion but this has not happened for a number of years to the key facilities. As previously stated we will work with RBC and other users to get the best possible MPF set up that

will benefit future generations and obtain the best possible value for money.

Looking forward the club sees some positives in the current Landscape Plan, but has a number of reservations:

1. The club welcomes the fact that some of the poplars will be retained and support the views of Friends of Mapledurham with regards tree choice, but fail to understand why the School Build now requires more trees to be felled, this is extremely disappointing.
2. We welcome and support the Tennis Club proposals for additional lighting, that will increase court usage. After all, the Trust is all about sport and recreation. CTFC Presentation to MPFMC 23rd January 2019
3. We also welcome the fact that RBC are trying to ensure that pitch capacity is maintained and/ or increased. However, there is a clear difference in opinion between ourselves and RBC as to what is mitigation and what is enhancement.
4. The missing ATP is a big disappointment for the club and the lack of ATP facilities North of the river has been well documented. Following our submission to the Trustees in October we welcome their decision, to put aside monies for matched funding and hope that this Committee, the Trustees and RBC Parks and Leisure will support sports clubs to bring a much needed ATP facility North of the river.
5. Some pitches continue to look extremely close together, so it will be important to understand what the actual distances are between pitches.
6. We don't see the need for a fence along Hewett Avenue, but do see the need to remove the current old and unsafe fence posts etc. We believe this is in line with other users e.g. Friends of Mapledurham.
7. Having only two access points off Hewett Avenue will see parents, pupils and others use the access points and not the paths. They will cut straight across pitches 1 and 2 to the school / pavilion entrances; Christchurch Meadows shows two good examples of this behaviour.
8. The current plan shows no storage facilities, with the current storage facility being removed to accommodate the Pitch Configuration in Pages 4.4.2. We would like to see:
 - a. A larger storage shed, with electricity / water, especially if the playground is sited in front of the Pavilion.
 - b. A second storage point for removable goals (positioned far side of MPF, possibly small fenced off area, not a shed). The intention being that there would be continued investment in removable and roll-on/off goals, thereby reducing overheads against MPF.
9. The proposed "B" position of the playground is not acceptable. The club, majority of other users and Councillor Ballsdon have all raised specific concerns with regards to the siting of the playground in front of the pavilion, in the past.

A red line being that the playground must not cut off the pavilion from MPF. This has a negative impact on the CTFC

Presentation Day and MPF users in general, especially for large community events. This is not what users want and is not fully recognised in the advantages and disadvantages which have been poorly pulled together and are extremely selective in the way they have been written.

10. With reference to the above the club is very concerned at the selective use by RBC of their Planning Policy. A disadvantage of Option A is given as "A minimum recommended distance (buffer zone) from a large play area (NEAP) to the nearest property boundary is 30m. This standard is identified by Fields in Trust and adopted by the Council. This buffer zone is not achieved using location A. There is a risk that if noise nuisance were encountered the play area would need to be moved. Does this not apply to the school MUGA and play equipment in the grounds, where there will be a lot more noise nuisance for 13+ hrs a day to residents in close proximity if we go on the Community Use Agreement.
11. In addition the Landscape Plan fails to show why other areas of MPF have been discounted, when with a bit of community input and liaison we believe there are viable alternatives. The Club also has reservations with regards to the Community Use Agreement (CUA) and exactly what usage will be afforded to the school on the playing fields and it's impact on the pitches:
 1. It would be good to understand what influence, if any, we can have on the CUA.
 2. It would be good to understand what the Committee make-up will be and influence the school is being afforded on future MPF decisions. CTFC Presentation to MPFMC 23rd January 2019
 3. The club fails to understand why the school needs exclusive use of their car park and MUGA on Saturday mornings. It currently notes that the School car park will not be released for community use until 1pm on Saturdays. Peak usage at MPF is Saturdays 0830 - 1300, with the pinch point being 1000 - 1100 as early games / training end and late games commence. All our away teams need to use cars to travel and some travel from as far as Twickenham. We regularly have 70+ cars in the car park / access road and reducing this will see more street parking leading to community anger / issues. We would like to understand why the school requires 20+ spaces. As an example The Hill School hosts TheaterTrain on Saturday mornings and despite having a membership of 70+ only a few spaces are constantly used, with parents dropping off and picking up children at the start and end only. The MUGA could be extensively used by football parents with siblings during the football hours. RBC seem obsessed with such words for the playground and school parents, but can't see the use that football parents have for the MUGA on Saturday mornings from football parents.
 4. We also fear that Schedule 3 Section 4a will be used to remove free casual use of the MUGA to the Community and would like better safeguards that this can't occur given that the current MUGA will be permanently removed.
 5. The Heights School has mismanaged Westfield Road Park to the extent that they don't use the area that was fenced off for them and now use the area outside the fence as well as Christchurch Meadows. How will the CUA protect MPF from misuse by The Heights School and will their allowed usage be clearly stated in the document alongside any costs they may incur for misuse or overuse. In the same way that CTFC have paid for additional treatments to pitch areas as we continue to grow.

6. We also fear that pitch 1 (or part of) will be lost if the school requests on Health and Safety grounds that they need their PE area fenced off. We would like to understand the Committees / RBC view point on this and what protections will be put in place to stop this. One way to mitigate this risk is to develop the ATP which could be used by the school for PE. The Club believes that the majority of mitigations and benefits should be delivered at the same time as the school and that the planning permission for the school should be explicitly linked to the planning permission of the Landscape Plan and signing of an acceptable Community Use Agreement, where the Trustees have taken on board the concerns of users. No works related to the planning permission of the School should be started without the Landscape Plan being approved and the Sport England objections having been overcome. We have also expressed our concerns to Ben with regards to the use of alternative locations for next season and would note we have raised concerns over the suitability of parts of Christchurch Meadows for football. It is essential that we are based as close to Caversham as possible. The area from the brook to the river, which CTFC/RBC had thought may accommodate small sided football would appear not to be suitable for the following reasons: Too uneven where the tents for various festivals are held;
- Uneven surfaces where the temporary road services have been;
 - The short cut / mud footpath that goes across this area; and
 - It's a duck / swan toilet, the amount of muck is not acceptable.

The area next to Gosbrook Road could temporarily accommodate 2 senior pitches or CTFC's small sided needs. But there would be a need to monitor the mud footpath that is starting to develop across these pitches. CTFC Presentation to MPFMC 23rd January 2019 CTFC's preference is now to base at least part of the club at MPF and part at Christchurch Meadows during any works. This should be possible by:

- Closing the area to be levelled / drained, whilst retaining the areas of pitches 1 and 2;
- Ensuring that the soil from works in the other areas does not encroach onto pitches 1 and 2;
- RBC noted that changing rooms and car park access may not be available. CTFC believe that car park access should be retained, but if we base our small sided teams and possibly a junior pitch here changing rooms would not be required for CTFC, but may be required for other users (e.g. tennis club)
- However, RBC need to liaise with Caversham United and The Rose and Thistle who use MPF Sundays and with Westwood who do use MPF (one team only this season) The above also keeps open more of MPF for other users during the works. The full closure of the pitch areas being a big issue for other users.
-

CTFC have explored other venues including Shiplake College and Shiplake Memorial Ground, but both have no availability. We are working with Ben to see how our requirements can be met once works commence.

Going forward we would like to see:

1. A MPF Representative Meeting comprising of all current users of MPF, including past pavilion users, should be held to ensure that the Landscape Plan best represents all views and ensures that that everyone understand the knock on consequences of their requirements to other users.

2. MPF protected by another organisation (e.g. Fields in Trust), preferably before the build starts.
3. Consideration given to CTFC receiving a longer term lease to the pitches, this will be required for an ATP facility and / or other matched funding.
4. The reconfiguration of the Management Committee so that Users are better represented. As noted previously RBC have effectively blocked the users from making improvements for years and effectively not represented the users views to the Trustees.

In summary and to be clear: CTFC believes no works related to the planning permission of the School should be started without the Landscape Plan being approved and the Sport England objections having been overcome. We will continue to work with RBC's Parks and Leisure department, the FA, Sport England, the Trustees and other users to ensure that when the build goes ahead that we maximise the benefits for all users and retain the many characteristics that makes MPF the park that it is. We hope that MPFMC, especially the RBC representatives on the Committee, will start to represent more strongly and loudly the views of CTFC as the biggest user of MPF currently and the views of the many other users who have put so much into MPF for many many years.

Thank You
Dan Mander (Chair CTFC)

1.11 The following response is made in terms of the landscape plan.

There is no change proposed in the landscape plan to remove the allocation of match funding.

The plans show the locations of pitches including showing the run off areas between pitches. Scale plans will be included in the planning application.

The fence along Hewitt avenue is a simple post and rail similar to the image below. This will provide an improved visual edge to the roadside and encourage use of the 3 formalised entrances on Hewett Avenue.



New storage facilities will need to be provided and provision of water and electricity investigated. Similarly the possibility of providing a second storage area will be considered.

The Landscape plan references that 256 people identified in the consultation that wished to see the play area moved close to the pavilion with 69 against. This was the proposal that attracted the most support during the consultation in 2017. For this reason areas close to the pavilion were examined. The advantages and disadvantages of the options proposed is a specific area of discussion on tonight's agenda.

The Community Use Agreement (CUA) is a planning agreement ,rather than one between the trust and school. A request however will be made to increase public access to car parking. The makeup of the committee overseeing the CUA is a user representative of the schools community facilities, the school and Council. This has an entirely separate remit to the MPF management committee.

The community use agreement will also specify what facilities within the playing fields may be used. This will be monitored and managed by the Council on behalf of the trust. The school will contribute to the maintenance of the sports turf areas.

The planning agreement will require mitigation work to be completed in a timely fashion.

The council will work with Caversham Trents to accommodate the club between Christchurch Meadows and Mapledurham Playing Fields.

It is proposed the closure of the car opark will be as limited as possible, allowing its construction and being open at all other times.

It is proposed to submit a planning application for the mitigation and enhancement works to allow implementation commencing this year.

- 1.11.1 A further representation was received from Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields at the management committee:

Thank you, Isobel, for representing the group's concerns regarding the Landscape plan. Carolyn Jenkin's response was enlightening and we will continue to engage with her on her return from Australia.

Her email summarised the situation she faces "What I was attempting to address was making a coherent landscape with what is left of the site after the school has imposed its character on it. This meant trying to find a way of creating a strong landscape feature that draws the eye away from the car park, pavilion and school across the site". Also, "... landscape is not ecology, and our job as managers of the landscape is to balance the competing needs of different users and wildlife and sometimes compromises are inevitable".

The practical tasks carried out by the Friends of group are not exclusively for the benefit of wildlife, but in this instance our focus is largely on debating the landscape v ecology debate, and to ensure that any proposals are not severely detrimental to the latter.

Some of our ongoing concerns are:

- a) There is clear difference of concept between the council view of landscape and those of the ecology groups, especially regarding the avenue of trees.
Council: An avenue of same specie tree with high level lighting to create a broad path that provides easy access for cyclists, dog walkers (dogs on leads?),

school pupils etc

Ecology: Use a range of mainly native tree species which would be in keeping with the rest of the site and give conservation value. Minimal lighting in terms of height and duration

There is a risk that this path becomes a 'race track' with people simply using it to rush across the playing fields. Perhaps there should be some slight curves with info boards and grouped seating to create meeting places

- b) Concern from the council regarding aphids producing sticky residues on native trees, whilst there is very little/none on liquidamber trees. That is simply because the aphids will not live on the non-natives thus preventing an entire food chain from being established. Aphids are an important food source for other insects that in turn feed birds & bats. The removal of the central group of trees (lime, sycamore/maple) around the playground also removes an existing aphid source. People currently sit under these trees without complaints about aphid residue.
- c) Removal of trees on the site: The Landscape Plan is an evolving document and at any particular moment it is unclear exactly which trees are to be removed. The Poplars appear to have been 'saved' although I suspect this is due to underlying archaeology rather than from aesthetic or wildlife concerns. Removal of trees and the hedgerow along the Hewitt Rd boundary must be minimised, and not done simply to allow easier construction access. Tree protection during construction is the normal expectation of private development, and should be enforced in this situation too. The hedge should be protected too as it supports a population of house sparrows, a species on the endangered Red List, where habitat loss is a critical contributory factor. The hedge should have some additional planting of native species
- d) We would wish to pursue the option of habitat creation in the NE area of the playing fields which is currently cut-grass but not suitable for football. This could be added into the Landscape plan.

If, before Carolyn returns from her holiday, the Landscape plan becomes a formal Planning Application we shall, of course, make our views known through that channel.

Steve Ayers

Task Coordinator, Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields

Officer response

There is a clear difference in view in what the purpose and balance of a playing field's landscape is. A balance is being drawn between maintaining and providing habitat and introducing non-native trees to provide additional visual interest. The officer view is an appropriate balance is struck. It is not accepted that having a straight avenue through the playing fields will encourage a race track to form, it is unlikely that putting curves or interpretation boards would make a material difference. It would however have an impact on the ability of the playing fields to accommodate the desired level of sports use.

Trees along Hewitt Avenue are not proposed to be removed within the Landscape Master Plan.

The poplars are being retained as a result of the Archaeology

Some specimen trees are identified to be planted in the NE corner.

1.12 Elisa Miles

Elisa Miles wished to raise some concerns about the Landscape Master Plan. These are laid out below:

Master plan issues

1. No clear indication of which trees and how many are to be felled. There is also a lack of replacement of mature native trees to ensure that the flora is true to the area and that the fauna return after the tree destruction.
2. The avenue of a permanent pathway with non-native trees and 5 metre high lighting is not in keeping with the open space. MPF is a playing field- NOT a city park. The trees are to native, and their placement, breaks up the openness of the park and will make rotation of use of areas and use of the whole area for events impossible. The lighting will disturb all fauna, especially, birds and bats. The non-native trees will not support fauna. This 'super highway' through the playing fields will ruin the outlook of the playing fields. The delineation of the pathway will make it easier in the future for the school to claim all of the land within the pathway as for the school or restrict community use. The avenue of trees should be 'scraped' and the cost of this be put into the MPF sustainability funds.
3. No commencement of build work - destruction of trees inside the breeding/nesting season.
4. No commencement of build work until the community plans - master plans for the playing fields are approved and are established as a benefit to the park and the community- not just a benefit for the school.
5. There is no SUD's plan to indicate the drainage scheme and how it will not damage the surrounding area- this must be approved before construction starts
6. No commencement of the masterplan work until it is established that a significant amount of money is held back (to be clear £100k is not near enough money to support the needs of the pavilion etc.) in an account for MPF only and has a clear financial management structure. I am still waiting to understand the status of the MPF current account? Could you please forward this information to WADRA and myself.
7. There is no plan provided on how the school will be allowed to use the playing fields to ensure that they do not destroy the pitches as they have done with the Westfield Road Park. Before this can be approved a plan must be put in place.

8. There is no formal plan for the schools use/restricted use of the MPF car park. The manner in which they will be allowed (and controlled) to use the car park without restricting its use by any MPF users has not been documented. Also, the plan must include how they will ensure that there is not back up of traffic onto the A4074. The council may have to install a no parking by non-residents area to ensure that there is as little disruption to the neighbourhood.
9. There is no indication of how the strip of land at the north of the school - originally disingenuously billed as being left for green space, but now being touted as a great place to extend the car park. If this is an overflow car park, will it be used everyday by the school? Is this an overflow car park for the MPF users? will it be gated? If yes, who will have a key? will it be paved over and then essentially a land grab by the school?
10. Essentially the control of the Playing Fields and the MPF car park should remain with the community and the users - not the school
11. There is not plan in place to ensure that when the entrance to the playing fields results in blocking the A4074 at peak times, that the use of the quiet roads (Hewett Ave, Chazey Road, Blagrove Lane, and UWA to not become the 'rat run' of choice.
12. There is a plan that Keir construction will be taking over the MPF car park for the duration of the build - this will restrict the use of the tennis club and the newly reopened pavilion. There must be access to the car park for MPF users throughout the build. How will this be managed?
13. The playground placement, if near to the back of the pavilion or the end of the tennis courts, will have a negative impact on the use of the pavilion and the playing fields for profit making events, rentals etc. Siting it closer to the end of the tennis courts reduces the ability to extend the tennis club if required. The best place for the playground is essentially where it is now (but this is not possible because of the school taking so much land), in the boggy area adjacent to the Orchard, or where the CLTC storage unit is. Where the storage unit is at the moment could be a good place as there is an opening to the playing fields down the side of the tennis court which would provide good access. THIS is REALLY IMPORTANT - we cannot have the playground at the back of the pavilion.
14. The council has adopted the regulation that a playground can not be within 30 metres of a residence. In that case the play area for the school is too close to homes on Hewett Avenue and Hewett Close.
15. There is no provision or plan for a provision of replacement land not just for the loss of land, but also the loss of use of the entire playing fields during construction. This must be established before any construction starts.
16. The Charity Commission has not yet approved the sale of land at below market rates. This will need to be taken to the Charity Commission before the land can be handed over.
17. WADRA will continue to refurbish the pavilion - as the structural work is complete and the certificates/inspections to allow it to re-open should be available soon. Refurbishment of the toilets should be starting soon, followed by the new placement and creation of a kitchen centrally. this will also allow for the planned extension of the pavilion to the school side of the building to

accommodate new changing rooms that are FA regulation and do not compromise the rest of the pavilion for users.

18. We are still awaiting the report from the last archeological dig on site. Has there been a report sent to RBC? If yes, can this report be distributed please.
19. Is there a community use agreement - and if this is to be managed, will representatives of MPF users have a position on which to influence how this would work as the school could significantly damage the sustainability of the pavilion and clubs by providing competing venues or over use of the playing fields.
20. there has been no approval of planning application 182200, no work can commence until this is approved.
21. There has been no clear Construction Method Statement - nor has it been communicated to the users. This will have a huge impact on MPF and Pavilion users- essentially making the entire site, tennis club and pavilion unusable. Has this been communicated to the user community? Are there plans in place to provide alternative parking and or facilities during construction?

It has also been discussed that the school will have a presence on the Management committee. My opinion is that people who have elected to pursue the destruction of the playing fields by opening them up to development should not be allowed a place on the management committee. Ideally Isobel should be removed as well (at least as the chair) due to her current employment and a severe conflict of interest. If the school is allowed a 'seat at the table' then the committee must also expand to a place for Caversham Trents, Mapledurham Tennis, WADRA, Friends of MPF as well as someone to continue to represent the broader set of less formal users and dog walkers.

1.13 Officer response:

1. *The felling of trees on the school site is currently outside the scope of the Playing Fields Masterplan.*
2. *The rationale for proposing the avenue of trees is described in detail in point 1.9*
3. *All developers will need to comply with the law in relation to protecting nesting.*
4. *The building of the school will be conditional on the implementation of the mitigations and is enforced through the planning process. birds. The Landscape master plan clearly identifies what are enhances and which are mitigation.*
5. *A drainage plan will be included in the planning application*
6. *£100k has been agreed as the sum identified for future capital maintenance. Other items will managed through revenue funding streams.*
7. *The Community use agreement will identify level of school use of the playing fields.*
8. *Management arrangements of the car parks is still to be agreed and will form part of future discussions with users and management committee.*

9. *As point 8*
10. *This is will be the case.*
11. *This is not an element of the Landscape plan.*
12. *The car Park will remain in Public use. The school car park will be the work area/Compound for Kier*
13. *The Landscape plan references that 256 people identified in the consultation that wished to see the play area moved close to the pavilion with 69 against. This was the proposal that attracted the most support during the consultation in 2017. For this reason areas close to the pavilion were examined. The advantages and disadvantages of the options proposed is a specific area of discussion on tonight's agenda.*
14. *The Landscape Plan does not address School design. Fields in Trust standards apply to public play area with free unsupervised access.*
15. *It is not possible to re-provide the park during the period of time landscaping work is undertaken. Sport facilities at other venues will be made available. Areas of Mapledurham P F will remain available*
16. *The Trust will follow the relevant process and regulations.*
17. *The work by WADRA is welcomed by all and acknowledged in reports to tonights meeting*
18. *An Archaeological report commissioned by the EFSA would not as a matter of course be provide to the trust but will be needed for their planning application.*
19. *We would wish to see school facilities made available to the public as much as possible. The Level of use of the playing fields will be stipulated and monitored/controlled through the Councils leisure or Parks Teams.*
20. *This will be managed by the Local Planning Authority*
21. *The Construction Method Statement is still to be agreed. Continued access to car Parking and facilities will be a key part of this.*
22. *There is not currently a proposal for changes to the management committee.*

1.14 Alternative Play area location proposal

The following proposal has been made by the Chair of WADRA

Item 4 Landscape Master Plan

- a) **Location of playground Option D.** The playground does not need to be a rectangle or any particular shape. The football pitch just south of the tennis courts can readily be moved east or rotated some 5 degrees clockwise to widen the north end of the central pathway. This allows the playground to be moved south into the widened space and away from houses and the pavilion frontage.
- b) **Option D.**

- c) Advantages
- a) Maintains open views from the pavilion into and across the fields. (WADRA have expressed strong concerns that not having this this will limit the ability to host wedding and other similar activities in the pavilion).
- b) Can utilise the space behind the pavilion for formal play/activities
- c) During events a continuous and interrupted piece of open space flows from the pavilion into the playing fields providing uninterrupted event space
- d) Appropriate buffer zones to residential properties provided (reduced noise/disruption)
- e) Adjacent to main access into playing fields
- e) Visually attached to the public recreation facilities rather than to the school
- g) Allows direct vehicular access onto playing fields
- h) Adjacent to main access into playing fields
- h) Visually attached to the public recreation facilities rather than to the school
- i) Allows direct vehicular access onto playing fields
- j) Adjacent to main access into playing fields

Disadvantages

- d) a) Close proximity likely to introduce conflicts with football pitch use to immediate east
- e) b) Longest distance from the parking area to walk with small children of the 4 options
- f) c) Partially interrupts views from Pavilion into playing fields
- g) Amelioration of exotic avenue and its lighting
- h) The proposed straight avenue of liquidamber trees right across the Playing Fields is inconsistent with the general feel of MPF and too like a “garden makeover”. It bisects the Playing Field and places undue emphasis on this secondary approach to the school, It is inconsistent with “Tree Strategy for Reading 2010” which encourages biodiversity and the replanting of native species. These exotics are not equivalent and poor in biodiversity which will take a big hit from the removal of 55 mature native trees from the school site. We recommend substituting a mix of natives of modest size, planted in groups to the left and right of the path to give a natural sinuous effect. Similarly the proposed lighting should also alternate side to side and be sited to be screened from Hewett Avenue.

1.15 *In order to accommodate the playing pitches a very long thin play area would be required which would compromise how the area is used. It should be born in mind that the play area was the facility that attracted most interest in the consultation and is a key contributory to recreational activity.*

There will considerable loss of flexibility in the provision of the football pitches resulting in the best adult pitch being furthest from the changing rooms that are required to service it. Most junior football participants do not use changing rooms.

The trees around the current play area are predominantly ornamental. Another major contributor to Parks as a diversity of planting or trees and strong visual amenity. Selection of all trees to be local natives does not contribute as significantly to this feature. This is described in more detail at point