

***NOTE:** In the case of non-members, this agenda is for information only

DEREHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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21st September 2023

To All Members of the Recreation Committee

Councillors A Brooks, K Cogman, P Duigan, A Greenwood, H Jones-Seymour and P Morton.

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Recreation** Committee at the Memorial Hall on **Tuesday 26th September 2023** upon the rising of the Planning Committee to consider the items on the Agenda below. All Councillors are welcome to attend the above meeting even if they are not a member of the particular committee.

Yours faithfully

A N Needham

**Mr A N Needham
Town Clerk**

Members requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting. If the information requested is available, this will be provided, and reported to Council.

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. **Declaration of Interest**
In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Members are asked at this stage to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Registerable Interests; as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council. Councillors shall declare such interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the nature and extent of those interests. Failure to disclose any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or to knowingly give false or misleading information is a criminal offence under section 34 of the Localism Act 2011.
3. To consider refining the draft site selection report for new sports pitches.
4. To consider delegating authority to the Clerk to confirm final design for the Play areas.

5. To consider drainage issues for Toftwood Recreation Ground.

Dereham Town Council

Recreation Committee

26th September 2023

Agenda Notes

3. To consider refining the draft site selection report for new sports pitches.

The Council has agreed to prioritise the work to try to identify additional land for sports, and resolve the deficit of open space in Dereham.

The Council has already commissioned work to look in detail at the type and number of sports pitches the Town is likely to need in the future. The next stage is to identify land which may be suitable for sports pitches.

An initial site selection report was commissioned and completed in 2020. This report looked at nearly all the possible sites for sports pitches around Dereham then assessed each site for issues relating to establishment, access and planning.

This initial assessment gave equal weight to all three categories, however on reviewing the report it is felt that greater weight should be given to the establishment factors because these would have the greatest impact on the cost of any scheme. Any land could be made suitable for sports but the difference in establishment costs between suitable land and less suitable land could be between £50k and £350k, it therefore makes sense to eliminate those sites with the highest cost to establish. In addition to the cost of establishment, good quality land affects the 'carrying capacity' of any sports pitch, good quality soil could accommodate 3 matches per week throughout the winter, poor quality land on the other hand may only be able to accommodate 1 match per week. So with good land, less of it is needed in the first place, plus it saves the ongoing maintenance costs if there are less pitches to maintain.

With this in mind it is recommended that the following example is used to filter out less suitable sites and sites which could result in very high establishment and maintenance costs. The criteria will be finalised with the consultants, but the primary objective at this stage is to identify potential sites with the minimum establishment cost and highest carrying capacity.

For sites not already excluded because of flooding and biodiversity, the following could apply:

1. Removing sites with a flood risk score of less than 4 – (justification, sites that flood will be unusable at times of heavy rainfall)
2. Remove sites with a soil type score of 3 or below. (Justification – greater 'carrying capacity' on better soils so less land required and potentially less drainage required)
3. Remove sites with groundwater score of less than 3 (justification – could be water logged and difficult to drain)
4. Remove sites with a topography score of 2 (justification - cost of correcting any slope would be expensive)
5. Remove sites with no water course (justification if drainage is needed in the future it would be costly with no water course nearby)
6. remove sites with planning permission or where a planning application is about to be made.
7. Remove sites which clearly have difficulty with vehicular access.
8. Remove sites that are too small and could not be grouped or bring a site back in to join another site if it were excluded for a minor reason.

The sites left following this process will be those which are most suitable for sports, these would then be assessed for accessibility and planning factors. If following this process no sites are left then sites would be added back in based on the criteria with the least cost to resolve any establishment factors.

The aim of this exercise is to identify the one or two sites that would be most suitable for sports with the least establishment or maintenance costs. The cost of this work will be around £4,000 (awaiting final cost).

Councillors are being asked to consider refining the draft site selection report for new sports pitches.

Once this stage is complete further work would need to be commissioned to produce a master plan for each site – this would cost £3,250 per site. Once the master plans are completed a public consultation exercise can take place.

There is currently a budget of £8,000 for advice on acquiring additional land for sports, this budget will need to be revised when budgets are reviewed at the end of the year.

4. To consider delegating authority to the Clerk to confirm final design for the Play areas.

The Council has appointed Kompan as the contractor for the new play areas, Kompan have been working on the revised design following comments made by this Committee. It was hoped to have the revised designs ready for this meeting. Rather than wait two months to the next Committee Councillors are being asked to delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with Councillors, to approve the final scheme and progress the project to the planning application stage.

5. To consider drainage issues for Toftwood Recreation Ground.

Following concerns raised by Dereham Saints Football Club relating to the drainage of the site, a site visit was arranged with a drainage engineer. The Engineers observations were that while the underdrains are of an age where it would not be a surprise if they were failing, it was felt that even if new drains were installed, the effectiveness of any drains would be dependant on the effectiveness of the ditch network, particularly down stream of the site. Down stream of the site, the ditch network is not being effectively maintained and in places is being deliberately blocked (see report enclosed). The advice from the engineer was:

- 1) Over the winter observe the water levels in the ditch, relative to the level of the underdrain outfall and how well the ditch network functions.
- 2) Take action to ensure that the ditch network down stream of the site is functioning properly. If the ditch network functions as it should, then it will benefit all the properties in the area as well as the recreation ground.

At the time of writing, it is not known what powers (if any) are available to the Town Council with regards to maintaining ditch networks where it does not have riparian responsibilities. Both the District Council and the Council have powers to force properties with riparian responsibilities to maintain water courses. Advice would need to be taken as to what action, if any, they would be prepared to take.



1.



2.



3.



4.



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