

Clerk's Report Emergency Meeting 04.07.11

Proposal

To consider Hatton United girls team using the pitch every other Saturday.

The manager of this team is prepared to mow and mark out the pitch prior to each match. This will mean that the pitch gets weekly cuts at no extra cost to the council or Tutbury Tigers. This decision needs to be made prior to the football season recommencing in August and the Manager having to find an alternative solution. The decision will also have an impact on the budget decisions of the council. In terms of pitch maintenance going forward.

Current use

Last season the junior team played on the pitch every other Sunday and paid for 5 extra cuts to the pitch instead of paying for the pitch. The senior team did not play on the pitch due to pitch size. If the council paid for these cuts it would have incurred an extra £300. However, last season was extremely dry and hot and did not require mowing in the summer and autumn months.

To cut the grass every week would increase the number of cuts from 18 to 30 the current cost to cut £60 per cut £720.

The senior team have been charged £250 in the past for the season, junior team £150.

Please see previous meeting notes.

We have received a pitch review

The main problem I saw at our meeting was to do with the mowing. As only so many cuts are allowed for, then the mowing frequency is dictated by the number of cuts, not by the amount the grass is growing. This then leads to problems because not only is the quality of the cut compromised, but also a lot of clippings are generated.

When this amount of clippings is generated then it makes marking out of the pitch very difficult as you are marking over clippings rather than the actual grass that is growing. Thereby if the clippings move, the white line moves. Also, it has to be said that on the day of our visit it conceivably would have been difficult to play football due to the amount of clippings.

My first recommendation would be to increase the amount of mowing over the surface to prevent or improve the above as all of the above will give the manager of a football team cause to complain.

Goal Mouths - The wear in the goal mouth at one end was worse than the other, a problem that we see on lots of community sports pitches. This problem is seen more so when the

goalposts are left up during the closed season. This problem could be rectified quite easily by installing a 40mm thick lay and play turf.

With regards to end of season renovations, whilst we have a general recommended practise that is followed, i.e. sand top-dress, decompact (vertidrain) fertilise and overseed together with a possible selected herbicide, the results seen from these actions do depend upon rainfall or irrigation. At a community level irrigation is obviously something of a luxury, therefore following this broad description is fine at a football league level, due to irrigation being present, some of it at a lower league level when irrigation isn't available and this work is being done during the closed season i.e. summer, is when you will not see a benefit from your financial investment.

Also, to do little bits more often enables you to keep the playing surface to a better standard.

So, my recommendations would always be to keep things simplest and cost effective.

This can be done quite easily by monitoring the pitch throughout the year and carrying out operations when the weather conditions are conducive. I certainly don't mind assisting you with this.

As for your immediate requirements, I think turning the pitches around will certainly alleviate some of the problem i.e. damaged goalmouths. This is possibly the best way forward immediately because we are starting with a blank canvas rather than the existing playing surface.

Grass coverage overall was not bad, so I wouldn't be under too much pressure to start overseeding. De-compaction would be better carried out just prior to the winter so you see more of a benefit with regards to surface drainage.

Also, I would look to put fertiliser on later in the year once the grass growth has slowed down slightly and therefore you are able to keep on top of the mowing.

Moving forwards, it would be better to get approved end of season works during February then overseeding could be carried out in April, prior to the end of the season and when moisture levels are higher, and you will see more benefit from your investment.

Pitch use

Lichfield District council who manage many pitches across the district and depending on weather conditions they have games on Saturdays and Sundays every week 3 to four matches will be played every week on one pitch.

Their pitches are in a good condition at the start of the season so should be able to withstand this use.

However, they advised if the pitch is suffering then it would be up to the parish council to cancel play on it for a week and ask the teams to cancel their matches or rearrange elsewhere. That's what they do if conditions are particularly wet.

Drainage on a pitch is important and the problem we have is that it can get quite boggy near the edges of the grounds, so the pitch position is [paramount. So, to Vertidrain it in the winter as suggested would be advisable

Stretton have two pitches which are used by 8 teams – girls / boys / adult

There are usually 2 matches on a Saturday, 2 on a Sunday morning and 1 Sunday afternoon – but not every week.

Stretton pitches have fared really well this year with the increased use but then the weather has not been too bad which helps.

Marston's grass pitches are used for junior leagues by multiple teams Saturdays and Sundays every week

Hilton harriers have one pitch and 4 senior teams.

Moveable goal posts

Last season we were asked to move the pitch on two occasions, due to position size and wear on the unmaintained area of the pitch. We were not able to do this because the goal posts are concreted in. Not only is there a cost to getting them moved, but the damage that this does to the ground is significant. The council have received a quote to sandblast and repaint the existing goals which would be approx. £500 depending on dismantling and transportation costs. To take down the posts and to re-erect is £200. Due to the current condition of the posts being welded together and the manpower costs in moving them.

Moveable goal posts are on wheels and can easily positioned in a different pitch position and moved away after each game protecting the pitch from interim use.

If the existing goals are replaced, then the wear on the pitch will be more due to the use of children using the pitch in the interim.

If the council invested in moveable goal posts, the pitch position could be rotated easily throughout the season to avoid the wear on goal mouths in the same place all the way through the season. Therefore if the pitch was suffering then the position could be marked out in a different place or multiple pitches could be marked out and the goals are then easily positioned on alternate pitch, marked out in blue.

An alternative to movable goals would be portable goals which require sockets being installed these are then erected and taken down after each game in the same position where the sockets are installed.

The council have passed a resolution to purchase new goal posts.

The following FA PDF guidance has more information.

<file:///C:/Users/Parish/Downloads/the-fa-guide-to-pitch-and-goalpost-dimensions.pdf>

Considerations

For

The pitch would benefit from extra maintenance at no extra cost

The opportunity for the pitch to be used by a girls' team is a good use of the facility and will help with funding application for new goal posts as the pitch is more accessible to a variety of users.

The pitch will be marked out for the Tigers games.

This will save the council/ Tigers in grass cutting costs

Against

There may be extra wear on the existing pitch that will need closely monitoring. If the pitch suffers then the arrangement would have to be reviewed. Matches May need to be cancelled

The key access will need to be collected from the clerk each game.