

Rev Cobley Playing Fields – Draycott

Report for Annual Parish Meeting of Rodney Stoke Parish Council – 21st March 2024

The Rev Cobley Playing Fields Management Committee consists of 5 members, 3 from the football club and 2 from the Memorial Hall. The AGM was held on 7th November 2023, Dave Craddock stood down from the committee and his place was taken by Matt Sweeting, the rest of committee was re-elected with no other nominations coming in. The meeting was also attended by the vice chairman of the parish council and the chairman of the Memorial Hall Management Committee.

The playing fields are also registered with Sport England via their Active Data Places platform and we get regular updates from them.

The current balance of the 2 accounts held with NatWest Bank stands at £3,148.15. Funding continues to come in from the parish council (£1000) and Draycott Charities (£1300) in 2023 - income was also received from users - the football club £195 and £70 from RW Fitness for outdoor fitness classes. Expenditure exceeded income by £287.60 in the year's accounts which were accepted at the AGM.

The football club continue to pay the expenses on the pavilion. The parish council cover costs for the play area and insurances.

Grass cutting is the largest cost we incur and West Country Ground Care still take care of grass cutting, We have looked for an alternative supplier for this service but were unable to find any company which could meet our needs. The standard of grass cutting improved last summer from the previous one which always enhances the appearance of the field. West Country Groundcare will continue to cut the field and the first cut took place in early march. The grass at present looks quite healthy, although a continuous period of dry weather does show that the grass can become quite sparse.

Hedge cutting is the other expense which is shared between the playing field and Memorial Hall committees. The parish council undertake some maintenance on the surrounds of the fields when required via their own contractors.

The football club continue to use the field for their matches in the Somerset Senior League division 3, a local exercise class used the field for kettlecise training last summer and has hinted that they will continue again this year. The school also held their sports day on the field and are looking to use the field again in 2024.

We do get occasional enquiries for use and are always keen to get the field used as much as possible which in turn will increase the income we get. We have been advised that there will be no Strawberry Fayre this year.

The parish council planted a 9' oak tree sapling as part of HM Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee celebrations but unfortunately due to the drought conditions we experienced last summer, the tree did not survive the ordeal. I believe the parish council plan to re-plant another tree in the autumn when seasonal and conditions are more favourable. We also received a quantity of small trees from the Woodland Trust and these were planted in early March to fill in some gaps in the hedge alongside the main road.

The parish council are at present looking at providing additional recreational equipment for the community somewhere on the playing fields, a multi user games area (MUGA) has already been discussed and another idea is a pump track but both items are in the early planning stages and a long way from fruition.

The Rev Cobley Playing Fields Management Committee were consulted by the parish council on a proposed development to the south and east of the playing fields and the possible use of the overflow car park area for an entrance and the existing hall drive as a thoroughfare for down traffic into the development.

The management committee views are: -

- Use of the hall driveway as the down road, parallel to Latches Lane would have serious effects on the Cheddar end of the playing field and would bring the possibility of road traffic very close to the playing field thus putting users in potentially more danger.
- The difference in levels of Latches Lane and the hall drive would also pose problems. Would one be raised or the other dropped to have 2 level carriageways? Either way the stability of the playing field would be put at risk.
- There would also be a small loss of area to accommodate new fencing or hedging which would be needed to protect the playing field area and it's users.

The Management Committee are not in favour of any attempt to use either the overflow car parking area or the hall driveway as entrances to the development site and would oppose any application to use it.

Stephen Young

Stephen Young
Secretary and Treasurer – Rev Cobley Playing Fields Management Committee

19th March 2024