

3g all- sports working group Minutes of meeting 20.6.2023

Present: Louise Brice, Cllr McLaughlin, Lee Seal, Steve Downey, Paddy Riordan, John Stonebridge, Nicola Stonebridge and Richard Griffiths – on “Teams” Lee Sutter (Football Foundation), Jeff Davis (Kent FA) and Caroline McRoyall (Bid Consultant)

- 1. Apologies:** Cllr Arger, Cllr Sharp and Mike Evans (MBC)
- 2. Declarations of interest** – no pecuniary interests
- 3. Minutes of last meeting** – agreed by those present an accurate reflection of the last meeting
- 4. Discussion on issues raised by SMYFC**

1. The configuration of the proposed 3G and grass pitches?

The Junior Football club confirm that the Football Foundation plan (email 25.5.2023) 3G and grass pitch location are good to go.

2. Drainage for the proposed grass pitch?

Appreciate that there is some drainage at one end of proposed grass pitch, but not whole playing area. RG invite Steve and Dean to the 13th July Kent FA pitch power online training – initial survey and review of maintenance but will need an agronomist to pull together a drainage specification (@£5k)

Note ongoing surplus from the project is ring fenced to go back into the site – such as grass pitch drainage and can apply for grants in future.

3. Will SMYFC bookings for the 3G pitch be block booked for our use on weekends during the football season?

Priority booking and discount fees for matches and training – yes as Key Partner Club and part of SLA. This is the agreement between the Football Foundation, the Parish Council and football club which we all sign up to, feeds into Business Plan and part of final bid submission. It gives you greater certainty (5 years plus) than you currently have and is updated through the 21 years of the Football Foundation funding agreement T and C's.

4. Will SMYFC have a preference as regards booking for training/matches during week days?

Priority booking and discount fees for matches and training – yes as Key Partner Club and part of SLA. This is the agreement between the Football Foundation, the Parish Council and football club which we all sign up to, feeds into Business Plan and

part of the final bid submission. It gives you greater certainty (5 years plus) than you currently have and is updated through the 21 years of the Football Foundation funding agreement T and C's.

5 The financial commitment from our club regarding pitch hire for both matches and training?

Club are concerned about increase in fees – their calculations for matches are **rise from £438.90 to £983.22 an increase of £544.32pm**

JFMC fees are low compared to other grass pitch hire fees in the area. Therefore starting from a low base, the draft 3g fees are based on market comparisons in the area and this is a significant increase.

Parish Council appreciates this is a step change.

The key is "usage" need to chat through and clarify the club usage – example pitch plan at meeting. Group discussion on usage and how the club would use the 3g all-sports pitch.

Club will need some flexibility and firm up their proposed usage to get to an average usage then we can work through fees;

Council happy to discuss flexible approach to fees: increased discount for Key Partner club, phased increase in fees and option of grass pitch free until drainage issue resolved.

Note needs to balance, as the Football Foundation submission needs a sustainable business plan.

Jeff Davis felt a lot of the points are basic programming issues on a 3g pitch – i.e. adult football would not be at the same time as children's football, how the club divides up the space is down to them etc

Louise Brice raised the point about the impact on parents' costs – as they ultimately pay for the usage (matches / training / travel etc)

What were the total costs in 2022/23? – Currently hiring JF grass pitches, plus other grass pitches / 3g pitches for matches and training all over Kent – extra travel cost and time

What were the average costs to the parents in 2022/23?

What would be the total cost using 3g pitch at Jubilee Field?

What would be the average cost to parents if using the 3g pitch?

Agreed meeting Friday 23rd June 2023 – 3pm LS, JS CM and RG work through the details of usage and fees

6. A firm commitment in respect of the extra car parking spaces which will definitely be needed. This is of great importance to us as we like to maintain good relations with our neighbours which may be an issue if we expect parents/supporters to park on the new estate. There is also the safeguarding issue of children having to walk to the field rather than being dropped off, especially on dark evenings?

Car parking has always been in the project. This will not be firmed up until the planning process and from past experience the designers / architects can refine designs into the project. Circulated Kent Vehicle Parking document.

Agreed MA, NS and RG will work though to give an indicative idea of car parking figures

7. Health concerns over use of rubber crumb on 3g pitches?

This is a national issue – two factors health and environmental. Football Foundation leading research, if changed required would be a phased in over a number of years.

<https://sapca.org.uk/guide/position-statement-on-3g-pitches/>

“This question has been the subject of significant investigation since first being raised in the USA in 2015.”

The concerns identified relate to the potential risk of exposure to polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) that are contained in ELT granulate.

PAHs are a widely occurring group of chemicals that people are most commonly exposed to through breathing air contaminated with motor vehicle exhaust, cigarette smoke or wood smoke.

People also digest PAHs when they eat grilled or charred meats or foods. High or prolonged exposure to PAHs can cause cancers. In 2016 the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) launched a study to assess whether the concerns were justified and if restrictions on the use of ELT infill were required. In 2017 ECHA published their report¹ which concluded: “ECHA

has found no reason to advise people against playing sports on synthetic turf containing recycled rubber granules as infill material”. In 2020 the results of a major pan-European scientific study undertaken by internationally respected independent researchers, and published in the scientific journal Science of the Total Environment², concluded:

- No health concerns were found for AGPs with ELT-derived infill material.*
- Cancer risks for exposure to PAHs were below 1 in 1 million.*
- Risk characterisation ratios (RCRs) for non-carcinogenic substances were below 1.”*

Further information below

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/position-statement-on-3g-pitches>

Football Foundation regarding the proposed 3g all-sports pitch at Jubilee Field

1. The 3g all-sports pitch at Staplehurst will have a rubber shock absorber
2. This is a better playing surface and reduces the pile on the "carpet"
3. Therefore there is less rubber crumb
4. In addition there will be boards surrounding the surface to reduce any spreading of rubber crumb

These are important health and environmental issues need to feed into design stage as proposed 3g all-sports pitch is located in a rural area near River Beult SSSI

8. Is it genuinely possible to have 4 x 5v5 pitches in action at the same time? How big are they and what is the run-off between pitches? I'm not sure if 1/4 pitch is big enough for older teams so perhaps we're really only looking at booking half or full pitch for training?

Yes – example pitch plan at meeting from another project illustrated this and programming issue. Also standard programming issue. Note already approached by "professional small sided league" would need to go through tendering process. Local groups can hire.

In addition programme for adult social hire or youth / junior social hire.

9. If it is possible to hire 4 x 5v5 pitches I assume this means there will be 8 x goals, plus 2 x 9v9 goals and 2 x 11v11 goals supplied. Where do these all go when the full pitch is in use? Genuine question because the area marked on the plan only shows the site not the details or markings of the proposed pitches?

Example pitch plan at meeting with markings from a similar project for 3G 97x55m total size with line markings

1 x 11v11 91x55m (white)

1 x 9v9 73x46m (blue)

2 x 7v7 54.8x37m* (yellow)

4 x 5v5 37x25.32m* (red)

*Smaller than recommended size but acceptable for FA match play and approved by FA / FF

Note minimum full size adult football pitch is 90m v 45m proposed pitch is 97m x 55m.

Area for spectators, plus goal storage area. Business plan includes a fee for maintenance / replacement of damaged equipment.

Full plan for actual site will be confirmed once tender process has been completed and company has completed design phase, prior to planning.

10 How will the pitches be segregated? Will there be nets to pull across on a wire like at YMCA or just markings on the ground?

We are aiming for markings, club preference for markings, also use cones for training. Spectators in "spectator area" rather than between pitches. Also option of gravel around outside.

11. With the proposed pitch set up. will there be any issues with obtaining an FA Safety Licence to enable league and cup games to be played on the pitch?

As part of the project the pitch will be tested and added to the FA 3G Pitch register for match play and retested every 3 years to ensure it remains compliant. Further info here if needed <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/3g-pitch-register>

12. The 3G pitch we use at the YMCA splits into 3 mini soccer pitches. Would this be more appropriate than the proposed split into 4?

Example of pitch plan at meeting proposes division of the pitch for matches is
 4 for 5 v5 mini soccer
 2 for 7 v7 mini soccer
 1 for 9 v9
 1 for 11v11

13. During matches, will spectators have an area to stand and watch or do they have to stand outside? I think Valley Park is a good example of having plenty of viewing space whereas YMCA is not so good. Which one would this facility be comparable to?

Example pitch plan at meeting proposes an area behind low fence plus areas outside main fence.

14. Can Staplehurst Monarchs Youth FC continue to pay on a on a monthly basis? – Yes

15. Can you play on the 3g when a SCEFL match is been played on the main grass pitch?

Current FA advice is that training is fine but not matches.

16. Footpath links?

Current footpath has street lighting from crossroads to Jubilee Field. Feed lighting at entrance into design process (HIP)

17. Parish Council funding?

Council on 5th June 2023 confirmed

- a) £15,000 to Jubilee Field – Earmarked Reserves
- b) @ £15,000 to cover consultancy fees / legal fees – General Reserves
- c) Land free of Charge

- d) MBC agreed to SPC request to ring fence £210,616 of developer contributions to the project

Note Cllr Riordan informed the group that the application to MBC Central CIL funding has been unsuccessful as we do not have planning permission. Can resubmit if we get planning permission.

18. How will it be managed?

Currently looking at options – visiting other sites, trying to contact a Parish Council with a 3g pitch, also Elmstead pitch is a good recent example.

19. Why should SMYFC fund raise for project

Lee Sutter stated the Football Foundation expect all key partners to raise funding. Important that the club engage in fund raising. Often as much about the commitment of the club to the project rather than the amount. Under 7's team raised £x by doing an activity or the under 8's Raised £x by doing a sponsored event etc.

This is basic given of being a key partner in the project

Louise Brice emphasise that this project has only got to this point after eight years of hard work; stemming from the SMYFC club concerns that the grass pitches at the Jubilee Field were not fit to play on for large parts of a football season.

Therefore lobbied Football Foundation, MBC and Parish Council to include in strategic plans and argue the case for funding. This has resulted in the best part of £1m of funding being earmarked for the community's sporting infrastructure in Staplehurst.

Jeff Davis (Kent FA) emphasised the high level of support the Parish Council are giving to the project, when compared to other Parish Councils with similar projects.

The Clerk raised the point of timing.

Appreciate some work to do on fees / car parking but recent delays have led to the project slipping and concerns over increased cost / deliverability.

The aim is for a report to go to the Council meeting on the 17th July 2023 so the Parish Council can sign off the project to the next stage

- Football Foundation "framework tendering process" – eight to 12 weeks for the principal contractor
- Launch information on website / social media etc
- Consultation programme -such as Family Funday, Skate Jam, user group meetings, public meeting and public consultation in autumn village news so that feedback can help inform the "kick off design meeting" with the principal contractor.

The Football Foundation and Staplehurst Parish Council need a letter of comfort / commitment from SMYFC that they are committed to the 3G all-sports project, proactively support consultation and engage in fund raising.

SMYFC need to submit a letter of comfort / commitment by 10th July 2023.

It is important that the Council, Football Clubs, Football Foundation all work together on this £1million project for the community of Staplehurst.

Next meeting 18th July 2023, 7:30pm at Parish Office