

Burwell Parish Council

Newmarket Road Sports Hub Community Meeting

Held on 1st November 2023 at the Gardiner Memorial Hall

Liz Swift welcomed all present and introduced Brenda Kibblewhite, Jay Meter and Khalid Shaban from This Land and Craig Mulhall and Andy Wilkinson from Mullhall Leisure Consultancy.

She continued to explain that as part of the Section 106 Agreement for the Newmarket Road Development, Burwell Parish Council is to have first refusal over the land dedicated for a Sports Hub. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council had been held on 17th October 2023, at which the Council resolved to accept the offer of the land.

Liz Swift explained that the purposed of the meeting is for members of the community to learn more about the project and to ask questions. There would be no opportunity for matters relating to the road, cycleway, or the housing development to be discussed, however she was able to confirm that the proposals for phase 1 and 2a had received planning approval earlier in the day and that she understood that Vistry is ready to start work on the development.

Craig Mulhall and Andy Wilkinson started by explaining the work that has been carried out to date. They explained that they had been asked to deliver a Needs Assessment and gaining an understanding of sport and leisure in Burwell, the surrounding villages and the East Cambs district. A consultation/survey was carried out within the village around 18 months ago. More football pitches, a gym and swimming pool were all favourable options. However, despite a swimming pool being popular, it is not a viable option with high construction and running costs, and as a sport has little or no grant funding available, and therefore there is no point in this being taken forward. A Project Brief has been compiled based on the survey results. Engagement with potential stakeholders is taking place. Andy Wilkinson then explained how the Audit was produced using desk top studies, population and data, and spending time in the village. The desk top study had explored East Cambs District Council (ECDC) sports policies and plans, the Burwell Masterplan, and ECDC Indoor and outdoor facilities documents. It was found that Burwell is well served, but there is a shortage of football pitches and a fitness facility. The existing pitches within the village are used to capacity and cannot support the growth of football in the village. The shortage is acknowledged in the ECDC sports polices and plans.

Outdoor sport, mainly football is currently being focused on. Burwell Football Club has around 20 teams playing, with 300 players. This equates to 600 wellbeing/fitness hours per week and 80 volunteer hours per week.

There are a number of options available for the site, one being, but should be included is doing nothing, up to Option 9 which includes a full size, 3G all-weather pitch, grass pitches and changing facilities. The land has already been allocated, which is a bonus, and the next stage will be to work out exactly what is required and what can be afforded. Contact has already been made with possible stakeholders. Any scheme would need support from all stakeholders, Lucy Frazer MP, Cambridgeshire Football Association, the Football Foundation. The Sports Hub is to be included on the Local Football Facilities Plan. It is aimed that a funding application to the Football Foundation will be completed for submission later in 2024. Any project is likely to take 12 to 18 months to deliver. The Football Foundation is a must on this scheme and keeping a dialogue with both the Football Foundation and Football Association is very important. The proposal is seen as being a positive application.

The meeting was then opened for questions:

Q – Question A- Answer C- Additional comments

C. All Weather Pitch will be available for other sports to use.

Q. How many people responded to the survey?

A. Around 200 people responded.

Q. What is a fitness suite?

A. A gym facility with fitness/exercise equipment.

Q. Is Section 106 Funding just for the land? Is other funding available for other sports?

A. Major funding is required for the project. Football funding is more prevalent, with no other sport having this level of funding. The Football Association and Football Foundation will expect as part of any grant agreement that the facility will be used for other types of sports. The Section 106 Agreement only requires the developer to transfer the land.

Q. 200 responses is very low compared to the size of the village, should the survey be carried out again?

A. The number of responses received is an acceptable level. Further consultation could be carried out. The original consultation involved a meeting at the Gardiner Memorial Hall and an online survey.

Q. Sporting Facilities within a radius of 20 miles have been considered as useable for Burwell residents, how many people will travel 20 miles to participate in sport?

A. Sport England guidelines were used for this.

Q. Is football an easy option?

A. The survey result proved that Football was the most popular, with a swimming pool gaining a similar percentage. However, as previously stated a swimming pool is not a viable option.

Q. Who appointed Mulhall Leisure Consultancy?

A. This Land through a tender process in agreement with Burwell Parish Council. Both Craig Mulhall and Andy Wilkinson are independent sport consultants.

Q. How is the land being transferred to the Parish Council?

A. Under the terms of the Section 106 Agreement it will be gifted to the Parish Council for one pound.

Q. There is a need for a fitness facility, but communication is needed with the Sports Centre?

A. There is an understanding that the sports centre does not have the land available to expand in order to accommodate a fitness facility.

C. The Football Club went to the Football Foundation due to need. The young players in Burwell teams have to go to Ely to play and train on floodlit pitches. The current pitches in the village have been unable to cope with the levels required for many years. People including youngsters will be unable to play and the Football Club will not be able grow as the village grows. The majority of the

teams could be accommodated at the sports hub and on the existing pitches. The Football Club would welcome other sports to use the facilities when they are available.

C. Online surveys are not good enough.

Q. The EU is banning rubber crumb, will the all-weather pitch be constructed with eco-friendly materials?

A. We are aware that research is ongoing looking at alternatives to rubber crumb. The Football Foundation will expect best practice and the use of environmentally suitable products.

Q. Will other types of surfaces be considered?

A. Yes

Q. Can expectation be exceeded?

A. Yes if funding is available.

Q. Financially what costs are we looking at? Would not like the Sports Hub to be a financial burden on the parish and in the worse scenario the facility going downhill and closing.

A. General options costs are in the report. For a full size 3G pitch you are looking in the region of £950k. Until exact details are known about the land transfer it is difficult to prejudge the costings for the grass pitches. Again, with the building, until it is known exactly what it is going to be like it is difficult to estimate a cost. This is a good opportunity for a new facility.

Q. Are we thinking too Narrow?

A. All of the data has been looked at carefully. The site will be able to be used for other sports as well as football.

Q. What sort of grant will the Football Foundation give?

A. The Football Foundation will give a significant percentage, but some match funding will be required, and we are confident that grant funding is available.

Liz Swift, Chair of the Parish Council expressed that there is no intention for the Sports Hub to be a burden on the parish. We understand that there will be costs involved but we do not intend to put the precept up to cover these costs. Paul Webb, Vice Chair of the Council said that the refurbishment at the Recreation Ground had been done through grant funding. We do not wish to burden the village, but the sports hub will be a benefit to all residents. The Parish Council has raised over one million pounds through grant funding in the last few years.

Q. There has been a lot of talk about outdoor sports, what about indoor facilities such as roller hockey? We currently play at Burwell Sports Centre, but due to other bookings, not many slots are available.

A. There are a large number of other sports with a need for better/more facilities. We will need to maximise the sports hub to its full potential. What we can do is dependent on grant funding. A 4-court sports hall would cost between £1.5 and £2 million to build. A lot of sports do not have the backing that football does. As we move forward, we will need to prioritise.

Q. The Sports Centre is full to capacity. We do not remember any involvement with Burwell Sports Centre re the Needs Assessment?

A. The previous manager had been contacted by Mulhall Leisure Consultants.

Q. The Sports Centre supports the Football Club in search of improved facilities and supports the Sports Hub project. However once full size 3G is available, the Sports Centre will suffer a loss of income from the Sport Centre pitch. The Sports Centre Committee is talking about diversification. The Parish Council also needs to take this in consideration. The Sports Centre would also be interested in having a role in the management of the new facility.

A. The Football Club will continue to need the use of the Sports Centre facilities at the same level if not more as the club grows.

Q. The transfer of the land to the Parish Council is at a cost of £1, what will be delivered for this?

A. The Section 106 Agreement states that the land is gifted as a serviced site. The infrastructure around the site has to provide for drainage of the land and the energy supply. Within the 3.8 hectare site will not be the responsibility of This Land.

Q. Will you contact the clubs using the Sports Centre as to what the needs are?

A. Further consultation may be carried out. At this stage we are focusing on outside use. We can look into if there is any justification for a bigger building.

Q. What has been put in place regarding the access to the sports hub, for example parking and traffic, road infrastructure?

A. Traffic assessments carried out for the outline planning consent will have taken into account all traffic movements including the sports hub. A further opportunity to assess parking etc will come up when the detailed planning application is submitted for the sports hub.

Q. What stage are we at now? More than the 3.8 hectares being gifted is required.

A. We will be looking to work towards delivering Option 9. There is still a lot of work to define the facility mix and other mixes, not as proposed within Option 9 are not out of the question, but we do need to be realistic. The size of the sports hub was agreed 9 to 10 years ago based on the ECDC Local Plan.

Q. I am concerned about the fundraising for the Sports Hub. The Gardiner Memorial Hall Phase 2 extension already planned; will the Sports Hub stop the delivery of the hall extension?

A. The Council will have to carefully consider its financial position prior to moving either project forward.

Q. I am not against football, but a lot of people do not play football and I believe that plans should encompass all sports?

A. If the need is identified for other sports these can be considered.

Q. I'm involved with a Newmarket Sports facility, who is going to be running the site and what happens if it becomes financially unsustainable?

A. A Management Analysis will be carried out in the next stage. Who will be responsible for the management is not known yet and during the analysis various options will be considered, but ultimately it will be down to the Parish Council to decide.

Q. Could we revisit having a roundabout?

A. This has already been dealt with at the outline planning stage. Both the Parish Council and District Councillors have asked on numerous occasions for the option of the roundabout to be reconsidered.

Q. With less females being involved in sport; how will you make sure that there is fair access for both male and female?

A. When applying for grant funding we will have to demonstrate how a balance will be delivered. This will include making the hub inclusive. Female football has a very high growth rate at the moment. The hub may open availability for other sports. 40% of the programme for the hub will not be for football.

Q. The Sports Centre is having to turn down some teams and sports as we do not have the space. Could we not look at raising funds for a new sports centre facility on the hub.

A. This could be looked at.

Q. Burwell Sports Centre is a registered company with similar aims and objectives as will be needed for the Sports Hub. Could the Sports Centre in conjunction with the Parish Council and Football Club not oversee the facility for local control?

A. This can be considered at the right time.

C. The survey needs to be accessible for more people within the village next time.

Q. If money is raised by other groups could other things be included?

A. Other sports can be looked at but would need to be able to demonstrate need and deliverability, both now and in the future.

Q. Could other clubs combine to raise money?

A. Quite possibly.

Q. This meeting was not advertised well?

A. The meeting was advertised on Parish Council noticeboards, website and on the Burwell Community Noticeboard Facebook page.

Liz Swift, Burwell Parish Council Chair thank all for attending and the meeting was closed at 8.55 pm.