



Wincanton Sports Ground Update

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to update members on the current arrangements and performance of the Wincanton Sports Ground (WSG).

Public Interest

The Wincanton Sport Ground provides an important leisure and recreation facility to Wincanton and its surrounding hinterland.

Recommendation

That members note the report

Background

In March 2021, Area East Committee received an update on the Wincanton Sports Ground. The report detailed significant changes in the governance with a move to a volunteer only model of delivery. The new arrangements had only been in place for a few months and members requested a further update when the new arrangements had had an opportunity become established.

Governance

Members will recall that the facility was no longer managed by a company limited by guarantee and that the Trust had taken on direct operational management of the facility. A committee had been established to manage the day-to-day operations with support from Trustees. This made immediate efficiency savings (Staffing & Business Rates) in the region of £30,000 per year.

A significant amount of work has been done on the recruitment of Trustees and the Trust currently has nine Trustees with good user group representation and a range of relevant knowledge and experience.

An emergency meeting was called in June 2022 as several volunteers had decided to step down. The meeting generated some interest, and volunteers (new and returning)

stepped forward. The current level of volunteering is good. However, it should be noted that there are significant risks attached to reliance on volunteer effort. Maintaining a good number of volunteers and avoiding overloading any one individual or individuals without an element of paid support, is extremely challenging. It is unclear as to whether it is sustainable in the longer term. Other options for operating the facility continue to be explored.

User groups and usage

At the time that the last report was presented, the new management arrangements had only just been introduced and the facility was still in the process of building usage back to pre-covid levels.

Usage of the facilities has remained steady with an increase in events and one-off bookings.

The regular users are currently as follows:

- Football Club
- Tennis Club
- Rugby Club
- Forest School
- A training/work-out provider
- Various Astro users (local groups)
- Events – especially in the bar/recreation area.

Financial position

There is now a clearer idea of running costs and income generation from regular use. A full set of accounts for 21/22 are available on the charity commission website.

The overall financial performance since the changes were introduced has been positive with a small surplus expected this year.

Income for the last 12 months is £82k.

Main income items are as follows: -

- Income from sports clubs - in the region of £7k per annum.
- The Astro bookings - £12k
- Events - Pavilion hire & Bar income - £24k
- Grants - £28k

£6000 of Section 106 money was recently allocated to address serious issues with drainage of the main football pitch.

Total expenditure for the last 12 month is £44,500

Main items of expenditure are as follows: -

- Repairs and servicing - £12k
- Utilities (Gas, Water & Electricity) - £12k
- Insurance and security (alarms etc) - £8k

The surplus generated is encouraging. However, there are significant repairs and maintenance liabilities going forward and a programme of improvements, costed at a little over £200,000.

It is also worth noting that financial stability continues to be dependent on grants alongside the reduction of staffing costs.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

Council Plan Implications

Healthy & Self-Reliant Communities

- Collaborate with local partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of community
- Work with local partners to support people in improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities
- Enable quality and inclusive cultural, leisure and sport activities

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

There are no implications as a direct result of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	No
<i>If an EIA was not required please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>Not attached as this an update report for information only.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	
<i>There is no proposed change to the operating arrangements of this external organisation. This update will not negatively impact any citizens. The facility is accessible to all and widely used with details widely publicised online and via social media.</i>	



South Somerset
District Council

Background Papers

- Wincanton Sports Ground Update to Area East Committee March 2021
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