

Sports Facilities Need in Buckingham

Introduction

Buckingham Town Council had raised a number of concerns previously with a number of different organisations over the capacity and condition of sports facilities in the Town. As a result it was felt that the current evidence was not up-to-date or robust enough and as a result it was agreed to carry out a survey into the need and condition of facilities in the Town.

Methodology

A questionnaire was devised (Appendix A) to be sent out to local sports organisations. The questionnaire asked questions relating to current facilities being used by each sporting organisation, the current need for facilities, any improvements which are currently planned for these facilities and what future demand there may be for each sporting organisation.

The answers to these questions are to identify what facilities are currently in use in and around the town of Buckingham, do these facilities meet the current demand and what facilities will need to be improved or expanded in the next 20 years to accommodate the growth of the town in that time.

15 sports organisations based in or near to the town of Buckingham were sent the questionnaire. The organisations were:

- Buckingham & Stowe Running Club
- Buckingham Athletic Football Club
- Buckingham Golf Club
- Buckingham Ladies Hockey Club
- Buckingham Lawn Tennis Club
- Buckingham RUFC
- Buckingham Squash & Racketball
- Buckingham Swans Swimming Club
- Buckingham Town Cricket & Sports Club
- Buckingham Town Football Club
- Chandos Park Bowls Club
- Moretonville Junior Football Club
- Slade Recreation Club
- University of Buckingham FC
- West End Bowls Club

Respondents were given a cut off date for replies and then the replies are analysed below.

Analysis – The current facilities

From the survey it is obvious that Sport in and around Buckingham is booming in many respects, with 10 of the 13 respondents having seen some increase in numbers recently. Two clubs numbers had been static with one club seeing a decrease in numbers.

Out of the 9 clubs that responded to say they have a team as part of their club there are 79 teams fielded across the sports (7 football, 26 junior football, 5 tennis, 18 rugby, 1 squash, 1 bowls, 6 hockey, 5 cricket and 10 junior cricket teams).

In total there are 16 football pitches (1 full size pitch having to be ground shared out of the area) of various sizes in use, 2 bowling greens, 3 hockey pitches, 2 cricket pitches (one in Gawcott which is being ground shared), 3 hard surfaced tennis courts, 4 rugby pitches and 2 squash courts. Each facility was well used with 10 of the 11 clubs who have facilities saying that they use them more than 3 times per week due to training and matches. This unfortunately means that it would be highly unlikely to be able to facilitate large ground sharing between clubs using grass sports pitches.

When asked specifically if their facilities matched current demand, six of the clubs flatly stated no. Three only responded with a list of improvements they would need, one stated that following completion of on-going projects their facility would. A further club stated yes, but highlighted that in reality they needed better facilities and two clubs stated yes.

The current demand is for the following in addition to the facilities present:

- Better social facilities
- Re-placement bowls club facilities
- More floodlighting on tennis courts (which are also in an incorrect position)
- Extension to rugby club house
- Better facilities at the Swan Pool:
 - including seating for swimming and squash
 - central heating overhaul
 - better gym facilities,
- A further Football ground to UCL regulations
- More football pitches
- Changing facilities
- Car parking facilities
- Hockey facilities to national league level
- A further cricket pitch and facilities.

Future Growth and need

Between 2010 and 2030 there is scheduled to be an additional 1,700 built in Buckingham and over 3,300 in the North of Aylesbury Vale as a whole. As part of the survey the sports clubs were asked what impact this would have on future need and facilities.

The responses to this question highlighted the lack of facilities above but also included 3 all weather pitches (one primarily for hockey, rugby and football) for use during poor weather and for training. Additional squash court with good seating and an additional swimming pool (due to pool time currently being at a premium) and the repositioning of the tennis courts from their current location.

Assumed Decisions

It is assumed in the work below that the sports pitches at Maids Moreton and Gawcott Fields are close enough to the town to not warrant replacement facilities within the Town Council boundary.

It is assumed that the facilities associated with the Buckingham Ladies Hockey Club would be provided in the town following their previously expressed desire to be based in the town. Also accommodating Buckingham Town Football Club and their expressed desire to return to the town.

It is further assumed that due to the high usage expressed in the questionnaire that it would not be practicable for sharing the grass pitches, due to the need to allow the pitches to rest and recuperate.
Conclusion

Sports facilities in the Buckingham area are at a premium and there is currently a deficit of sports infrastructure in the town.

A decision would need to be taken on where the tennis club should be situated as they have expressed a desire to change their venue from their current home in Chandos Park.

Current Facilities	Future need	Deficit
Football		
1 pitch situated in grounds approximating National Grade E quality. 12 further pitches (plus one out of town) (2 U7/8, 3 U9/10, 2 U11/12, 1 U13/14, 2 U15/16 and 2 Senior pitches)	2 pitches situated in grounds of National Grade E quality as defined by the FA 25 further pitches of various sizes as defined by the FA (4 U7/8, 4 U9/10, 5 U11/12, 4 U13/14, 4 U15/16 and 4 Senior pitches)	1 pitch situated in the grounds of National Grade E quality 13 further pitches (2 U7/8, 1 U9/10, 3 U11/12, 3 U13/14, 2 U15/16 and 2 Senior pitches)
7 sets of Changing Rooms	There should be four dressing rooms available for each pitch where dressing rooms are needed (one home, one away, one female and one male officials)	Approximately 7 further changing rooms
1 Synthetic turf pitch (at the Swan Pool)	2 3G synthetic turf pitches primarily for football use	1 further 3G synthetic turf pitch
Other Facilities Training Area	Training area Supporters toilets (for outside of the National Grade E grounds) Club house/ food facilities	Supporters toilets (for outside of the National Grade E grounds) Club house/ food facilities (relating to Grade E facility)
Running		
No Facilities	No Additional Facilities	No Additional Facilities
Golf		
No Facilities	No Additional Facilities	No Additional Facilities
Bowls		
Two bowling greens	Two Bowling Greens	No Additional Facilities
Two Pavilions	Two updated pavilions	No Additional Facilities

Swimming		
One large swimming pool	Further investigation is needed to determine if a second large pool is needed	Further investigation is needed to determine if a second large pool is needed
	Extension to current area to accommodate extra seating	Extension to current area to accommodate extra seating
Squash		
2 courts	3 courts	1 further squash court
	Extra seating and viewing provision	
Hockey		
3 Pitches	1 pitch within a ground suitable for English National League Hockey as defined by the FiH	1 pitch within a ground suitable for English National League Hockey as defined by the FiH
1 Changing room and Pavilion (one jointly used with Buckingham Cricket Club but only for committee meetings)	3 further pitches with adequate changing facilities, one of which should be 3G and available for other sports but primarily for hockey.	3 further pitches with adequate changing facilities, one of which should be 3G and available for other sports but primarily for hockey.
Cricket		
1 pitch (an additional one is used through a ground share arrangement)	2 pitches and associated facilities as highlighted by the ECB	1 pitch and associated facilities as highlighted by the ECB
1 pavilion		
Tennis		
3 Hard courts (2 with flood lights)	4 Hard Courts with Flood lighting	1 Hard Court with Floodlighting
1 Pavilion	1 Pavilion with changing facilities	
Rugby		
4 pitches (+ one in Maids Moreton)	4 pitches (+ one in Maids Moreton) 1 3G synthetic turf pitches primarily for rugby use	1 3G synthetic turf pitches primarily for rugby use

Football

2 senior football pitches are being provided as part of the development of Lace Hill. Removing these pitches from the provision there is still a demand of 5.5ha of space for pitches and associated facilities.

Synthetic Pitches

While clubs have highlighted a need for synthetic pitches, by combining use there may be a demand for two pitches rather than the three highlighted in the questionnaire results. This would need to be accommodated in the area. With associated space around the facilities there is a demand for 1.5 ha for new synthetic pitches.

Squash court and swimming facilities

The identified lack of provision would likely be provided on the existing site of the Swan Pool.

Hockey Pitches

Provision of three pitches and associated buildings would need an area of 2ha

Cricket Pitch

Provision of a new cricket pitch would need an area of 1.4ha

Recommendation

That the lack of facilities are addressed in the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan, with the Plan allocating at least 10.4 hectares to extending and providing new sports facilities.

That a meeting is set up with the District Council and Sport England and representatives of the sports clubs involved to take forward an action plan over funding and providing the new facilities.