

CRINGLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MANAGEMENT OF FACILITIES

1.0. Vision

The Parish Council (PC) seeks to promote a strong sense of well-being and community in Cringleford and to enhance its reputation as a 'good place to live'. One way of achieving these goals is through the facilities for which it is responsible. These are the Pavilion, associated playing fields and tennis courts at Oakfields Road, The Willow Centre and parkland at Round House Park, and various play areas. These are community assets. The PC accepts the responsibilities of maintaining these facilities in good condition, enhancing them (where possible), ensuring that they are accessible to all residents and promoting their full use and enjoyment. The PC also accepts that a level of subsidy will be necessary, but it will seek to minimize this by its promotional and hiring policies.

2.0 The Facilities

2.1. The Pavilion and Associated Playing Fields and Tennis Courts

The playing fields at Oakfield's Road are primarily used for football and cricket, according to season. There are also 6 tennis courts, a children's' play area and a zip-wire. A Scout hut is located in one corner of the site.

The Pavilion itself consists of a communal area used by local societies and for public meetings, parties, etc. There are changing rooms and toilets, as well as a kitchen and serving area. None of these is in a good state.

2.2. The Willow Centre, Playing Field and Park

The Willow Centre contains a large hall capable of seating 250 people, approached through a spacious foyer currently used as a café/bistro area. The hall is divisible into quadrants. There are also a kitchen and bar, as well as changing rooms, toilets and the parish office. The associated playing field is intended for football. A children's' play area is located in the opposite corner of the site from The Willow Centre in the park area. The park is largely an open grassed space, but a small wood containing mature trees lies to one side.

3.0. Management

The playing fields, play area, tennis courts and park may be seen as separate from the buildings in terms of management and skills required for their maintenance.

The playing fields group (for convenience) requires the skills of grounds men to ensure that they are in good condition and to erect/remove equipment. Users equipment needs to be stored. The letting of these facilities is an administrative job and can be grouped with the letting of space in the buildings. Historically, the grounds staff has been responsible for verge cutting, a delegated but paid activity. The amount of work can be expected to increase as more housing development takes place and the Council takes over the parkland at the Willow Centre.

The buildings require different skills. On the one hand, space in them will be let out and that means potential users must be made aware of the possibilities. Letting must be managed. On the other hand, the buildings and the 'plant' which they contain (electrical fitments, plumbing) require routine maintenance and cleaning. Promotion of the buildings is essential if they are to be used fully

The challenge for the PC is to devise a management structure which can handle the various facilities and their requirements. Experience has shown that the range and scale of the facilities requires more time and skill than would be expected from a parish clerk.

3.1. Suggested Decisions

3.1.1. Playing fields group.

- a) The PC retains direct control of the work required on the playing fields, play areas and tennis courts but contracts out verge cutting.
- b) The PC's services to clubs using the PC's facilities (Eg. storage, erecting of apparatus) will be reviewed following discussions with the clubs. These are being set up.
- c) The PC continues to employ two grounds men as now, but considers that in the long term more part-time help may be required as extra land is taken on
- d) The PC establishes a working party to look at the work required of the grounds staff (including hours) and how it is currently organized and to make recommendations for change, where required.

3.1.2. Administration, including letting

- a) Overall responsibility rests with the clerk
- b) Subject to the recommendations of Steve Jackman (assistant clerk on contract to the Council). all maintenance work is contracted out and the PC fosters good relations with its contractors.

- c) The management of contracts becomes the responsibility of the clerk, with the help of an assistant
- d).The PC establishes a small group to be responsible for overseeing the use and promotion of the Council's facilities, but not maintenance. It will make recommendations to the PC
- e).The PC appoints an assistant clerk whose principle responsibility will be the promotion and hiring of the Council's facilities, including welcoming and caretaking. The person appointed would work closely with the oversight group but would not be directed by it..
- f) As a matter of urgency, the assistant clerk and the oversight group will work on a marketing plan for the PC's facilities, the Pavilion as well as the Willow Centre, starting with the document prepared in 2014.
- g) A 'users' group' should be established as means of communication between hirers and the PC. It should have representation on the 'oversight group' (d).

Finance

The PC should reconcile itself to The Willow Centre requiring a subsidy for the next few years and a realistic annual amount should be set-aside in the budget. An element of this could be considered as a contribution to supporting the community aims of The Hub café. The PC should decide that the cost of servicing the loan required to build the Centre comes directly from the Council and is not covered by the Centre's income. In setting a budget the PC should set targets for the reduction of the subsidy, taking into account the expected increase in income from the more effective marketing of its facilities. Competitive hire fees will be needed. Thought should be given to the ambiance of the Pavilion and The Willow Centre and how this can be improved. Given the emphasis on community use, the PC should plan how commercial income can be maximized.

JMW

20/08/2015