

Cringleford Parish Council

The development of the project for sports and recreational facilities in Cringleford

Purpose of this paper

This paper will provide a record of decisions made and development of the project.

It will also advise Cringleford Parish Council (CPC) of the processes necessary (up to the planning application stage) to implement elements of the 2020 recreation strategy approved by CPC.

The information provided will identify when and what decisions are likely to be required to be made by Council.

Introduction

Objective

In 2020 CPC developed a recreational strategy (appendix A) for the expanding parish, with an aim to increase the sporting and recreational facilities available to existing and future residents.

This paper outlines the project stages necessary and progress to implement the following components of that strategy:

- Improved football facilities at St Giles Park (Big Sky development)
- A skate park at St Giles Park (Big Sky development)
- A multi-user games area (MUGA) adjacent to the Willow Centre (Roundhouse Park)
- A multi-functional sports hall

Guiding principles

RAAG discussed what the guiding principles for the implementation of a sports hall should be. Initial ideas included implementing the following:

- constructing an energy efficient building
- avoiding unnecessary duplication of other facilities owned by CPC (The Willow Centre and Pavilion)
- engaging with parishioners to increase the number of local sports clubs and participation in recreational activities
- achieving a high utilisation rate for the facility e.g. 80-90%
- constructing a building that has the potential to be adapted and/or extended

- utilising the building design to reduce operating cost

This list was approved by full council on Thursday 11th February 2021.

Governance

In respect of the project the governance model is as follows:

Crangleford Parish Council is accountable for the project. It approves the following elements of the project – specification, feasibility, and final option selection. It is also responsible for approving all expenditure of monies.

RAAG has responsibility for the development of the project at this stage and preparing options for council. It ensures the working meeting is undertaking appropriate workstreams.

CIL Group is responsible for ensuring necessary monies from CIL are available as required and for liaising with the council on these matters.

PEC is responsible for the relationship with Big Sky Developers and liaising with them.

Working meeting is responsible for taking the project forward on a daily basis and providing progress reports to RAAG as well as recommending actions to it for approval.

The assistant parish clerk is a member of the working meeting and provides expertise from current parish activity at the Willow Centre as well as general support.

Full council on Thursday 11th February 2021 confirmed that where possible RAAG should be in attendance at the relevant parts of all meetings discussing the project.

High level Feasibility of Proposal

High level feasibility has largely been completed:

- Capital costs - the recreation strategy approved by CPC includes outline capital costs (using Sport England data) for the hall. The capital can be met, in principle, by CIL funds
- A survey amongst Cringleford residents has been undertaken to estimate demand for the facilities proposed but the response has been insufficient. It has proved difficult to obtain running and maintenance costs from local organisations operating halls of similar size.

- Sufficient space is available at the open spaces of the Big Sky development.

Need and Demand

A need and demand analysis is fundamental to understanding the sports and recreational facilities required for Cringleford and more specifically the earlier development of facilities at St Giles Park (Big Sky development).

The aim of the analysis is to:

1. Assess the overall need for additional indoor sports and recreational facilities in the Cringleford area.
2. Identify the types and scale of sports and activities needed and the facilities required to support these sports and activities.
3. Evaluate the demand for each of these sports and activities in the growing community and the ongoing viability of the facilities; this will require:
 - assessment of the need of each sport taking into account local demographics, anticipated further housing growth and the catchment of the facilities;
 - consultation with a range of stakeholders i.e. CPC staff, local PCs, national governing bodies for sport, local clubs, Big Sky, Active Norfolk etc.
 - assessment of the demand for sports and activities requiring a sprung floor.

The outcome will be a recommendation as to which selection of sports and activities are likely to be the most beneficial and the type and size of facilities required to accommodate these sports and activities.

4. Subsequently the financial viability of the proposed facilities can be assessed; this will require:
 - detailed financial analysis, taking into account potential income and operational costs e.g. maintenance, repair and replacement requirements of the proposed facilities;
 - identification of the best management and operational model.

The outcome will be to provide sufficient information to evaluate the financial viability of the facilities, determine the potential scale of financial risk to the Council and define possible operating costs to the Parish Council, for example the level of subsidy that could be required.

The work can be done in two stages; stage 1 addressing points 1-3 and stage 2 addressing point 4. Both stages of the work could be undertaken by the Parish Council or through contracting a consultant with a degree of local knowledge, or the stages could be split between the Parish Council and a consultant. The Parish Council will need to develop the outcome of the analysis into detailed business plans based on collection and analysis of the information.

The principle for the use of consultants to carry out the first stage of a needs analysis was approved by Full council on Thursday 11th February 2021.

ACTION: To produce a proposal to engage with consultants, to be taken to RAAG for consideration.

St Giles Park and potential Big Sky Building

St Giles Park is being developed by Big Sky. Amongst other things it will provide 350 homes, predicted to be completed by 2025. As part of planning permission Big Sky are required to provide football pitches and changing rooms on the St Giles Estate (what exactly are they required to provide?)

In the short term while the project is in the phase before planning, they have agreed to produce drawings based on our best guess of our need so we can refine and develop our thinking and understand what might fit. This allows for the opportunity to potentially expand the changing rooms into a building that we can use as sports hall. An initial set of drawings (appendix D) has been produced to show what that might look like based on an initial set of requirements approved by RAAG in October 2020 (see appendix B).

They will now develop those drawings on receipt of an updated wish list (unconstrained) and provide high level costs. The timescale they would like to work to is agreement in principle what the building might look like (size, location) by June 2021. Additional storage facilities for council use are also a requirement of this new building.

Separately further discussions are required to make decisions on procurement route, contract strategy, drawing sign off etc. for the final building.

ACTION

Current action is to share guiding principles and wish list at the next meeting with Big Sky on 2 March.

Development of Options

The potential options to deliver the elements outlined on the recreational strategy are presented as a series of stages.

Stage 1: Development of new sports facilities at St Giles Park (Big Sky development)

Option 1: a new football pitch, changing rooms, and skatepark

This represents close to the status quo. The St Giles developers, Big Sky, have planning consent for a football pitch, changing rooms, and a BMX track on their site.

The CPC proposal is a modest change to the existing plan (a skatepark instead of the BMX track). There is a strong demand locally and nationally for skateboarding parks. The sport is widely practiced by a good range of age groups, and by both sexes. Maintenance costs are low, and parks are largely self-monitoring. There is limited potential for an income stream by providing metered lighting.

ACTIONS needed:

- Liaise with Big Sky regarding detailed design and costs of changing rooms, parking, and pitches. A list of our detailed requirements will need to be agreed.
- Needs analysis – Cringleford has an established football club which is keen to move to the new site and wants to keep Cringleford as its home base. The current football field at the Willow Centre is not well regarded by local teams. (Ian currently undertaking a needs analysis for football).
- Consideration to when and how we involve football club in the consultation. (Actioned by Ian week commencing 8th February 2021)
- A strategy for the design and construction of a skate park or BMX track. The other elements are to be delivered by Big Sky. Please note, the original location of the proposed skate park will change due to the land being taken by Highways England for the A47/Thickthorn roundabout improvements.
- An assessment of the financial implications

Option 2 (a): as option 1 but with the changing rooms upgraded to a sports hall

The sports hall would provide facilities that emerge from the need's analysis. Both capital and running costs will be higher than option 1.

ACTIONS needed:

- Liaise with Big Sky to understand what could be built on the site. Already an initial wish list was approved by RAAG in October 2020 (see appendix B). An updated list approved by full council on Thursday 11th February 2021. This needs to be shared with Big Sky to allow decisions to be made on best size etc.
- Full council on Thursday 11th February 2021 approved the principle of using consultants to deliver a needs analysis to justify the potential sports that will be catered for.
- Decision on when and how to consult with appropriate range of stakeholders (and to decide on stakeholders - local sports clubs, national governing bodies for sport, Active Norfolk etc.)
- Financial implications - operating versus capital costs

Option 2 (b): a nursery facility

An alternative use of the building has been identified. Alongside the requirements of football, a building that can be used primarily by a local nursery group

(Crackerjacks) could be considered as an option. Crackerjacks have confirmed that they are interested in renting the building ([see appendix x](#)). They will collate their requirements and wish list for the space. This will be presented to RAAG (when received) for consideration.

Stage 2: Development of a MUGA at the Willow Centre

The development of a MUGA at the Willow Centre is able to begin once the current football pitch is relocated to St Giles Park.

A MUGA would be attractive to the nearby primary school which has very limited sporting facilities. It could also be let out to local sporting teams although demand needs to be established. This can make better use of the existing changing facilities at the Willow Centre although initial investigations suggest that children are more likely to be taken home directly after sport rather than showering and changing on site. The MUGA provides a sporting focus for the Roundhouse Park development.

With the football pitches being relocated to St Giles Park, the current pitch area can become a green area which can be used by parishioners for various sporting/recreational purposes, including walking, picnicking, casual football, dog walking etc.

ACTIONS needed in the future (no current action required at this stage):

- Develop initial idea and preliminary costings.
- Needs analysis to confirm demand level (the MUGA is approved in principle by the strategy)
- Decision on when to consult with appropriate range of stakeholders (and to decide on stakeholders)
- Financial implications (capital and operating)

Stage 3: Sports hall at a site within the expanded Cringleford development

This represents an alternative to option 2 in stage 1. A separate sports hall could be established at the Barratts site within Cringleford if the needs cannot be met at St Giles.

The current position is in the S106 documents it says that that land only comes to us if the open space on the Big Sky land (St Giles Park) is not large enough. Barratts at present believe the Big Sky area is sufficient which means that we will only get smaller open spaces such as playgrounds on their development – nothing large enough for a hall. Anything that we do get will be at least five years away as it's on the second part of their development.

ACTIONS needed:

- At present no further actions are to be taken on this option until the St Giles site facilities are agreed except to continue regular communication

Appendix

Appendix A: Recreational Strategy

OUTLINE RECREATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CRINGLEFORD

Aims and objectives

Cringleford has a rapidly expanding population with several hundred new homes scheduled to be completed within the next few years. The Parish Council wants to ensure that sufficient and appropriate recreational opportunities are provided alongside the housing developments. The overall objective of the strategy is to support widespread participation in sporting and outdoor activities by the community at large.

Within this overall objective, specific activities are defined which will need the parish council to work with the Local Community, South Norfolk Council (SNC) planning and the Developers during the early stages of the development programme to guarantee that adequate access is made available as the community expands. The core activities considered include:

- **Formal team sports:** field sports: - cricket, tennis, football etc; court sports: - netball, basketball etc.
- **Individual competitive sports:** competition and club cycling and running
- **Individual outdoor activities:** walking, recreational cycling, horse riding, skateboarding
- **Adventure activities:** orienteering, nature walks, scouting/guiding
- **Indoor activities for all ages:** to include dancing, self-defence and indoor ball and racquet sports.

There is some overlap between the categories. SNC are developing a demand analysis for recreation around Cringleford but currently the data is not available. We know that the population of the parish will grow over the next 5 to 10 years, from four new developments within the parish, 350 homes St Giles Park, 650 Newfound Farm and 300 houses on the two Kier sites, Roundhouse Gate and Colney Lane. Potentially this could mean an additional 5000 residents looking for recreational activities.

Existing sporting facilities

Formal outdoor team sports

The village currently has enthusiastic, and well run, clubs for football, cricket, and tennis. These sports are facilitated on the recreational ground off Oakfield Road which is managed by Cringleford Parish Council. The football club has reported to have outgrown the current facilities and need to organise training and matches at other venues e.g. UEA, Eaton Park and Easton College. A full-size adult football pitch is now operational adjacent to the Willow Centre on Roundhouse Park, but sports such as netball, basketball are not catered for locally.

An additional dedicated sports area has been allocated in the plans for the St Giles Park development, however, no provision for formal team sports has been made for the other three developments. A new primary school is being planned within the Newfound Farm development, which may have a sports facility suitable for young children, however, the possibility of this being a viable option for use as a community sports facility is doubtful.

On the completion of the senior football pitch at the Willow Centre, in 2018, a two-year trial was set by the parish council to determine the demand. The review of the trial will be subject to the cessation of the 2020 Corona Virus restrictions. Currently football on this pitch can only be played during daylight hours, and generally over the weekends. This limits the use of the pitch to one or two games a week over the football season.

Other football facilities have been developed and available within the area at Wymondham and prospectively at the new Sports Complex at the UEA, albeit the current proposals for the redevelopment of the UEA playing fields is in collaboration with Norwich Rugby Club. Provision for other outdoor team sports, such as netball and hockey, is not sufficiently documented at this stage but advice is being sought from NCC.

Formal indoor team sports

There is poor provision locally for indoor team sports such as indoor netball and badminton. The Willow Centre is unsuitable and UEA facilities are already heavily used, making them difficult to access on a routine basis by clubs, groups or individuals.

Individual competitive sports

The roads and lanes in the area are extensively used for both competition and club cycling and, especially since the lock down period, for recreational cycling, running, and walking. Traffic is not normally controlled for these activities and participants have to share road use with others, which can be dangerous. Good facilities for swimming, rock-climbing, and other sports, exist at UEA.

Individual outdoor and adventure activities

These range from dog walking through recreational cycling/running to horse riding. Although the new developments have provision for cycle paths, these do not create "joined up" routes for safe road use by inexperienced participants. Increasing levels of traffic make the use of the lanes around Cringleford dangerous. There are plans to make some provision within the new green areas in the village, but these are

unlikely to be sufficient in either quality or quantity to meet needs. The Newfound Farm development has poor provision overall.

Scouts are well provided for at the recreation site off Oakfield Road and Girl Guides have some provision at the church hall. There is no availability of sites for other such groups or to allow for expansion of the existing ones.

A particular absence is the lack of individual outdoor activity provision for young people, for example skateboarding and free running/parkour. Skateboard parks have proved a valuable tool for attracting young people away from hanging about in potentially ill-disciplined groups; parkour is cheap to provide, simpler to maintain than traditional play equipment, and can be attractive across a wide range of age groups.

Recommended proposals for enhanced sporting facilities in Cringleford

Formal outdoor team sports

During the trial period for the new adult football pitch at the Willow Centre, the users and the groundsmen have commented unfavourably on the quality of the pitch and playing experience. With the pitch only being used at weekends, the parish council is not realising the full potential of this site. Although there is outline planning permission for flood lighting and fencing, which would enable more frequent use, this would be intrusive to neighbouring properties, and fencing would impact on the availability of the open space when senior football is not being played, and will be most certainly controversial and likely to be opposed by the neighbouring residents.

Recommendations for outdoor and indoor team sports

The following recommendations are based the current thinking of Cringleford Parish council, and will be subject to a public consultation and co-operation for the South Norfolk Council and the developers.

1. **Outside Team Sports** - Retain the existing football facilities at the recreation ground off Oakfield Road and develop all new football, along with other outdoor sport facilities at the St Giles Park development which has provision for sports pitches alongside the A47/A11 junction, north of Cantley Lane. The exact siting of the pitches will need to be agreed with the developers. On completion or approval of the additional football facilities at St Giles, a change of use can be sought for the Willow Centre football pitch. This would release space adjacent to the Willow Centre for a multi user games area (MUGA), which is a hard, all-weather surface which allows a range of sporting activities throughout the year, such as netball, basketball, volleyball, and five a side football. The immediate MUGA area would need to be fenced with security gate and be flood lit – although the lighting would be less intrusive and energy

demanding than the full size football pitch, and the fenced area much more modest than a full size adult football pitch. The establishment cost for a MUGA incorporating a small spectator area is around £140,000 based on three quotations and on Sport England 2019 estimates.

The full size football pitch would be changed to a junior pitch which can be used more frequently during the week without floodlighting. This preserves the green space outside the Willow Centre (avoiding intrusive floodlighting and fencing). The additional cost of making this change will be small as the area is already laid out. Permanent goal posts could be put in place, but no further significant infrastructure. Costing for this project is to be determined. Additional funding, in addition to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that will become available, may be needed to meet these requirements. The local football club will approach the FA, Premier League, and Football Foundation to request their support in securing the level of funding required for this important community asset. Other sports clubs will be encouraged to cooperate with this initiative.

2. **A Sports Hall which should include a sprung wooden floor to accommodate the widest range of activities** - With the expected increase in the population of the village and the expanding demographic, indoor sport facilities for playing and enjoying team sports will become not only important but necessary for maintaining a thriving and healthy community. To obtain Football Association (FA) approval and recognition of the St Giles football pitches, suitable changing and shower facilities have to be provided. This will entail the developers building and providing a unit adjacent to football pitches to facilitate this requirements. Our recommendation is encourage a larger investment and extending the football changing room unit for a sports hall on the St Giles Park site to cater for badminton and other indoor sports activities. This would give Cringleford a dedicated sports hall with good facilities for a range of indoor and outdoor sports at one location and under the management of the Parish Council. The Sport England 2019 estimate for a good quality two court sport hall is £850,000.
3. **Skateboarding facilities:** Skateboarding is widely popular amongst teenagers. The nearest available facility is Eaton Park which is heavily used at all seasons. The informal activity provided by a skatepark could be a valuable addition to the recreational facilities of Cringleford. To build a skatepark similar to that at Eaton Park would cost around £75000 based on Sport England estimate for a 40' x 18' park with lighting and fencing.
4. **Individual competitive sports:** The parish council need not consider providing direct support to individual competitive sports as these can be managed at club level.

Individual outdoor and adventure activities

Adventure and outdoor activities are a central focus of recreational needs for the young people of Cringleford. In this digitally dominated age, there is an important need for children to be given the opportunity to reconnect with nature. People of all ages need the space to exercise and enjoy the open air.

Recommendations for individual and adventure activities

There are a number of important green areas within the Cringleford area which can quite easily be enhanced and improved to provide a range of individual outdoor activities.

1. The area of attractive, old woodland adjacent to the Willow Centre will be enhanced through the creation of a children's adventure area. This will include assets such as rustic climbing frames, stepping stones, and exploration guides. Start up cost could be around £25,000 with funds being raised both by the community and the parish council.
2. The green areas alongside the A47 within the St Giles Park development will be developed to provide facilities for walkers, recreational cycling, and horse riding (walking only). Paths will be laid out by close mowing of the existing grassland rather than hard landscaping (following the practices of Ladybelt Country Park in East Carleton). These paths will be multi use and also cater for recreational cycling and running.
3. Some areas will be set aside to provide nesting sites for ground nesting birds, and the hedges will be managed to provide shelter and nesting sites for wildlife. The grassland area and hedges will be managed to encourage wildflowers and maintain biodiversity.
4. In the longer term, further adventure play and walking/cycling/riding areas will be established around woodland and other green sites within the village.
5. An important area to consider as a green walking and exercise area, is the open space green land between Cringleford Heights and the N&N hospital. The council will continue to liaise with Colney Parish Council and UEA to develop the area south of Cringleford Heights and along the A47 as a community asset, particularly given the lack of green space within the Cringleford Heights development. The enhancements in Cringleford could be coordinated with the proposed development of the UEA playing fields, which has new designated pathways.

Capital costs based on literature review

Sports hall:	£850000
MUGA	£140000
Skatepark	£75000
Woodland area	£25000
TOTAL CAPITAL	£1090000

Appendix B: Sports hall wish list

St Giles Estate – Big Sky Sports Hall 'wish list' Timeline

Wish List		Outcome
Origin	Suggested requirements	
16/10/20 email sent to Big Sky to draw up initial plans/ideas	1 large hall (big/tall enough to be marked out for 2 x badminton courts or 1 x 5 aside football pitch)	15/1/21 Initial plans received from Big Sky (appendix D)
	1 x small kitchen	
	3 x changing rooms/toilets (home/away team and referee)	
	1 x small groundsman break room	
	1 x large storage unit on outside for groundsman equipment	
	Plenty of storage inside for sporting equipment/cleaning items etc.	
15/1/21 Plans discussed with Big Sky and further requirements to the initial plans were clarified. Next meeting in 4 weeks' time.	1 x kitchen	
	More storage required (discussed with Big Sky using the proposed grounds storage area for more storage and building a separate storage unit for ground equipment at the side of the sports hall).	
4/2/21 Working Meeting	External doors to the changing rooms so that they can be accessed independently of the main sports hall.	

8/2/21 RAAG meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- seating area within the kitchen space.- an outside seating space (with roof awning for shelter)- larger storage space area (potentially on the eastern side of the building)- four changing rooms (to accommodate the two football pitches)- FA compliant changing rooms- Floodlit football pitches- a sprung floor- a high ceiling to accommodate badminton- good acoustics- adequate soundproofing- adequate space for skatepark.	
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Appendix C – Need and Demand: Specific Questions

Building and Use

1. What is the minimum size and type of the building that will accommodate the maximum number of sports and activities?
2. What are the most popular activities / clubs that use community sports buildings, both during the day and the evening; what they can afford and what is the average longevity of these groups?
3. What other buildings exist in the local area and what services are they providing; how accessible, expensive and easy to book they are and how well used?
4. Can we avoid duplication and competition, especially with other facilities owned by CPC?
5. What activities are mutually exclusive e.g. need different flooring, building heights, good acoustics, lighting design or potential damage?
6. What field sports will generate the most use?
7. How many and what standard of changing rooms are required for the sports and activities identified?
8. How much storage is needed for the sports and activities identified?
9. How much parking is needed for the sports and activities identified?

Costs

1. What is the most cost-efficient building size to accommodate the sports and activities identified to ensure operational costs are manageable, considering desired elements e.g. sprung wood floor suitable for dancing and sport, good levels of internal storage, speakers/sound system, kitchen areas?
2. What are the projected operational costs for different sized buildings of this type to include but not limited to: staffing, annual business rates; utilities (water, gas, electricity); refuse; security; licenses; cleaning; and maintenance, repair and service contracts?
3. What potential income is achievable based on similar facilities in the locality, considering utilisation rates and charging strategy i.e. variable charging (per hour, per evening, off peak, peak, regular user or one off booking, corporate bookings etc.) while maintaining competitiveness with other local facilities?
4. What are the most cost-effective booking arrangements?
5. How many other areas use reduced pricing structures for regular hirers that may become key holders when trusted?

6. What are the most successful marketing strategies for these facilities?

Staffing

1. What additional staff will be required to manage and service the new facilities?
2. How much of the likely workload could be undertaken by existing parish council staff?
3. What type of staff roles will be needed and how many hours of new staff time is required?

Appendix D – Initial architectural plans from Big Sky (15th January 2021)

