



## **Recreation Ground Report for the Annual Parish Meeting**

I think that it is fair to say that we have had a busy year up at the Recreation Ground.

When this year started, we had just finished a trial by the Coffee Station to see if setting up at the Recreation Ground was going to be viable. It was viable and is still going strong being a popular stop for parents doing the school run and dog and other walkers alike.

In April 2021 we started to acquire some tools to help with the maintenance of the grounds, the first of these being a petrol shredder that works very well!! A further investment was for a multi tool that gives the option of a chainsaw, brush cutter and strimmer. Most useful making a space for the container lorry during the collection and delivery phases. They also came in handy for clearing overhanging vegetation on a footpath which took over half a day for two volunteers even with the power tools. More recently a resident has complained about leaves from a deciduous tree falling into their garden. With the assistance of Wayne and his tree pruning knowledge this has now been rectified, until next Autumn.

As well as these “boy’s toys” work was started on the uplift of the changing rooms having reached that time in their existence. Initially all eleven showers were changed out followed by four new extractor fans. More to come, see future projects.

Our footballers have not been forgotten either. The main pitch has had several tonnes of topsoil and some grass seed added to it to smooth out the wear created in the goalmouths. New goalpost sockets have been added to allow the goal posts to be sited differently each season also helping to reduce wear in the one spot.

One of the spring toys in the play area was also showing signs of much use and age so this was replaced with a bright yellow elephant spring toy. This turned out to be popular, with favourable comments on our social media page. Further repairs to the play equipment were undertaken, slowly working our way through the recommendations of the RoSPA annual report.

Annual fire inspection and fire extinguisher checks conducted.

The broken concrete bollards in the Recreation Ground carpark were finally replaced and a new set of three rubbish bins were installed only for one of them to be severely vandalised within 24 hours of its installation.

It was obvious that there is insufficient seating at the Recreation Ground, so using some of our limited resources two sturdy benches were ordered. These have been so well admired by the committee that courtesy of donations from our local Post Office, the Bar-Clay Music Makers, and a generous resident a further 3 benches have been purchased. Our thanks to everyone.



Another much loved piece of kit, the zipwire, also needed attention. Having had a look at it locally it was decided that it was a job for the professionals. Thus, a new end stop and a re-tensioning exercise was undertaken and subsequently tested by committee volunteers to ensure that it was safe for the public to use.

Other improvements have included changing out the 20-foot container of a certain vintage with a 40-foot container of a much more recent vintage. This has not only given us storage space for the maintenance tools that we have slowly gathered but also means that the changing rooms don't need to be used for crossbar storage during the football off season. Everything now fits in the container along with the junior goal nets and frames.

Once again, the Recreation Ground has been seen as a potential commercial site with an enterprise called Choose Refills asking to park there every third Wednesday afternoon.

For some time, we have had a suspicion that there is a water leak somewhere as there seemed to be water usage even during lock-down. This was finally resolved recently with a leak being found on the spur to the container; now all sorted courtesy of a brilliant man who did the investigation for us.

Due to the state the changing rooms are left in on occasion and to save an annual deep clean a cleaner has been employed. He clears rubbish from the Recreation Ground weekly, something that was desperately needed, and has done a magnificent job keeping the changing rooms clean.

Whilst all of this has been going on some of the committee members have been ~~plotting~~ planning an uplift and expansion of the play area, some of which has already taken place on the existing pieces.

This refurbishment of the existing play equipment has been accomplished through the generous donation from Claydon and Whitton Parish Council of over £12,000. The rest has involved getting quotes from three companies [one was ok but didn't seem to get what we wanted, one couldn't be bothered to get their brochure out of their bag, and one that really got what we were trying to do, appreciated that we had a limited budget and had lots of helpful suggestions]. The upshot of this is that several organisations were approached and a round of seemingly endless form filling took place. We have now secured a sizeable portion of what is needed with further grant avenues being pursued. So it is hoped that from the 6<sup>th</sup> June the play area will be expanded to include new pieces of apparatus within a new fence line and outside of this more items as well as improvement of the existing goalmouth / basket ball hoop and the surface in front of them.

To date we have received pledges of over £76,000. This has included £40,000 [Suez], £17,038 [Viridor], £8,000 [Claydon and Whitton Parish Council], £6500 [Barham Parish Council], £2,000 [John Whitehead, Mid Suffolk District Councillor], £2,000 [Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Councillor] and £1,000 [Suffolk Foundation]

At this point a hearty thank you is due to the Claydon and Whitton Parish Council for their financial support, and their encouragement as well as kind words from the public.

Diverse options regarding ways of tackling Anti-Social Behaviour have been considered and the local police have visited the Recreation Ground to give advice. However, the suggestion of barriers is impractical, and CCTV is not only expensive and fraught with data protection issues but ideally would



require the installation of wi-fi in the changing rooms, another unwanted expense. Overall, a lot of aggravation for occasional stupidity, so not really worth it currently.

Finally a slightly humorous item. Recently two smart wooden benches unexpectedly appeared in the children's play area at the Recreation Ground. Investigation by our team discovered that they had been intended for the small play area recently created in Kirby Rise by Barham Parish Council. They are being re-sited.

### **Future Projects.**

Expanding the existing children's play area, installation of new kit outside of this area and uplift of existing apparatus / play surfaces.

Changing the current fluorescent lighting in the changing rooms for more efficient LED's.

Instal the five benches

Ongoing tidying of the perimeter

Planting and creating a sensory area