

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JANUARY 2018**

**Present:**

Councillor I Ballsdon	(Chairman)
Councillor E Hopper	
Rev K Knee-Robinson	Mapledurham Parish Council
Mr N Stanbrook	Mapledurham Users' Committee
Councillor D Stevens	

**Also in attendance:**

Mr R Bentham	Warren & District Residents' Association
Mr R Bale	CARPS (Catchment Area Residents' Preferred Site)
Mr S Bolton	Caversham & District Residents' Association
Mr M Brommell	Mapledurham Playing Fields Action Group
Mr C Brooks	Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Mr S Brown	Caversham Trents Football Club
Mr D Mander	Caversham Trents Football Club
Ms E Miles	Mapledurham Playing Fields Foundation & Warren & District Residents' Association
Mr A McLean	Warren & District Residents' Association
Mr B O'Neill	Local Resident
Ms K Parr	Local Resident & Heights School Parent
Mrs A Smith	Local Resident
Dr R Smith	Local Resident
Ms N Simpson	Committee Administrator
Mr B Stanesby	Leisure & Recreation Manager
Mr G Thornton	Head of Economic & Cultural Development

At the beginning of the meeting, the Management Committee welcomed Councillor Stevens to the Committee and recorded its thanks to Councillor Skeats for her contributions to the Committee.

**1. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

Further to Minute 1, which referred to Nigel Stanbrook's previous queries about Chris Brooks' potential conflict of interest between giving advice to the Trustee and the Council as clients, Nigel Stanbrook said that he had provided full details of these conflicts to an independent regulatory authority. Chris Brooks said that, as set out in reports later on the agenda, the issue of conflicts of interest had been discussed with the Charity Commission, and Councillor Ballsdon noted that it was set out in the reports how the Council had segregated duties to avoid conflicts.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

## **2. THE HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL - RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Further to Minute 2 of the previous meeting and Minute 4 of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee's meeting on 21 June 2017, Ben Stanesby submitted a report going to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2018, which reviewed the Mapledurham Playing Fields consultation exercise that had taken place with the Beneficiaries over the summer on two proposals received by the Council as Trustee of the Mapledurham Recreation Ground Charity (the "Charity") for the future ownership and use of part or all of the Playing Field and Recreation Ground that was currently in Mapledurham ward ("the Ground"), as follows:

- 1) The proposal received from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA - formerly the Education Funding Agency) to take a 125 year lease of 1.231 acres of the Ground - less than 5% of the total acreage of 25 acres - for use as the site for The Heights free school, in return for a payment to the Trustee of £1.36M;
- 2) The 'Fit4All' proposal from the Mapledurham Playing Fields Foundation ("MPFF") to take a 30 year lease of all of the Ground to manage and improve the Ground during that period, at a peppercorn rent.

The report had appended:

- Appendix 1 - Printed Version of the Consultation Document
- Appendix 2 - Methodology used in the Evaluation of the Responses
- Appendix 3 - Analysis of Consultation Responses
- Appendix 4 - Spreadsheet of Consultation Responses (available in electronic format through the Council's website - <http://www.reading.gov.uk/mapledurham-playing-fields-trustees>)
- Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 6 - Mapledurham Playing Fields Foundation (MPFF) 'Fit4All' proposal
- Appendix 7 - Heat Map showing numbers of responses per postcode

Copies of a document had been sent out prior to the meeting, setting out corrections to the numbers in the report in paragraphs 1.5, 5.4.5 and 5.4.6, clarifying that the number of valid responses from Beneficiaries of the Charity was 3,313.

The report provided an analysis of consultation responses and gave details of ongoing communications between the Council as Trustee and the Charity Commission.

The Consultation Document (Appendix 1) set out in parts 2 and 3 the details of the two proposals, from the ESFA, and the MPFF's 'Fit4All' proposal.

The consultation exercise had run for ten weeks between 14 July and 25 September 2017. It had been centred on an on-line and hard copy questionnaire, 'Mapledurham Playing Fields Consultation: Have Your Say'. It had generated 3,313 responses from Beneficiaries of the Charity, the highest level of response to a Council-run public consultation exercise, of which 2,705 - 82% - had supported the view that investing the £1.36M lease premium from ESFA into the Ground would improve its amenity value, even with the loss of open space to the school.

The Consultation Document attached at Appendix 1 included, on page 1, a map (Map 1) showing both the area of land owned by the Charity and, outlined in red, that part of the Ground for which the ESFA were seeking disposal for use as the site of a new school for The Heights free school, in return for a lease premium of £1.36M to be applied solely and exclusively to meet the charitable recreational object of the Charity.

The Charity Commission had requested a meeting with the Council as Trustee to review the outcome of the public consultation process and the process and timetable for taking a decision in relation to the future use of the Recreation Ground held by the Council as trustee. This had been held on 10 November 2017. Following this, the Charity Commission had written to the Council as Trustee with regulatory advice, which was set out in another report on the agenda (Minute 3 refers).

The report asked the Sub-Committee to consider the report and its attachments, paying particular regard to the methodology used to evaluate the responses, and their analysis. The report stated that the results had been shared with the Charity Commission, and that the Sub-Committee was also being asked to consider the views expressed by the Commission in its recent communications with the Council as Trustee.

The report to the Sub-Committee contained the following recommendations:

- "2.1 That the Consultation Document, Mapledurham Playing Fields Consultation: Have Your Say, attached at Appendix 1, and the process and timetable for the consultation exercise with the Beneficiaries of the Trust, undertaken over the summer of 2017, be noted; and the high level of response be welcomed;
- 2.2 That the methodology used for the evaluation of the responses, attached at Appendix 2, be endorsed;
- 2.3 That the analysis of the consultation responses, attached at Appendices 3 and 4, be received and considered, in particular the fact that over four-fifths of the Beneficiaries who responded believed that investing the £1.36M lease premium from the ESFA into the Ground would improve the amenity value of the Playing Fields even with the loss of open space to the proposed school;
- 2.4 That the equality impact assessment, attached at Appendix 5, be received, and its conclusion be noted that the proposal will not have a negative impact on any of the groups protected by the Equality Act 2010, subject to the implementation of some mitigation measures;

2.5 That the regulatory advice of the Charity Commission, set out in a separate report to this Sub-Committee, be considered.”

Ben Stanesby explained that it had originally been intended to start the consultation with a workshop but, due to the change in the timetable, three drop-in sessions had been organised as an alternative, as set out in paragraph 5.5.2 of the report, as well as the public drop-in sessions. He noted that three formal complaints had been received about the consultation, as well as a complaint about one of the images used in the consultation, details of which were set out in section 5.6 of the report, along with officer responses.

Ben presented the analysis of the consultation responses, from which some key figures were:

- 3,313 eligible responses had been received, of which:
  - 82% had supported the view that investing the £1.36M lease premium from the ESFA into the Ground would improve its amenity value;
  - 84% had favoured the option of taking steps to impose a legal restriction on the remainder of the Ground, if the lease were granted to the ESFA, to ensure that it could only be used for recreational purposes in future.

He noted that the report stated that the Management Committee had not formally responded to the consultation, but explained that there was the opportunity for the Management Committee to feed in its views on the report to the Sub-Committee on 9 January 2018. In response to queries, he explained that the electoral roll had not been used routinely to verify responses, but only on the few responses (around 6-12) where there had been a large number of responses from a single property, and that he did not think that any of these had been from Mapledurham Parish.

Members of the Management Committee expressed their thanks to Ben Stanesby and his team for their hard work in collating and analysing the consultation responses and to all the people who had responded to the consultation.

Keith Knee-Robinson drew the Management Committee’s attention to the letter from Mapledurham Parish Council to the Chief Executive (at Appendix D to the consultation analysis in Appendix 3), which set out the Parish Council’s views about the future of the playing fields, in support of the Fit4All proposal, and listed the reasons for its support.

Nigel Stanbrook expressed concerns about the content of the consultation, noting that this was the first Management Committee meeting that had considered the complete consultation document, as the last meeting had had a draft version. He set out his concerns which included his views that:

- the consultation had not been prepared by an independent body, but by Council officers;

- the form had been changed in relation to how amenity value had been presented;
- the Fit4All proposal had been presented as a “mix and match” option with the ESFA proposal in the consultation, which was not appropriate;
- an independent consultant had looked at the consultation and had concluded that there were ‘so many holes in it’ that it should be considered null and void;
- the picture of the tennis courts included in the consultation document had nobody playing on it, from which people might assume no-one played on the courts, whereas the tennis courts were actually very busy;
- the items listed as possible improvements in the consultation document were misleading as no-one knew what would be deliverable and to what extent the premium would be able to be applied;
- the money would go to the facilities of the school rather than the facilities of the playing fields;
- the legal restriction on the remainder of the Ground mentioned in the consultation was not a guarantee that development of the playing fields could be prevented and the consultation was misleading in saying that if the school went ahead there would be no further development;
- the consultation had been prepared and audited by Council officers and there had been no independent audit, and the consultation was biased towards being positive to the school.

Nigel Stanbrook said that, in his view, there should be an independent consultant’s review of the consultation and that things should not be taken forward until this had been carried out and had said that the consultation had been ok.

He said that an EIA should also be carried out for the school, and Ben Stanesby said that a further EIA would need to be done on the planned development, whether the ESFA proposal, Fit4All proposal, or both.

Councillor Ballsdon explained that officers were in a difficult position with regard to using photos including people in the consultation, noting that there had been a complaint about the picture of Nepalese ladies used, referred to in paragraph 5.6.5 of the report. She said that the Management Committee had seen and commented on the draft consultation document at its last meeting and changes had been made accordingly, so she did not think that an independent consultant needed to look at the consultation.

Councillor Ballsdon also said that she did not think that the information in the consultation regarding the possible legal restriction on the Ground was misleading; it did not say that protection could be put in place to ensure no development could be built on trust land, as no such statement could be made. Ben Stanesby said that the wording in the consultation document had been prepared to frame as clearly as possible the level of protection that it would be possible to give by entering into a

covenant with Fields in Trust. Chris Brooks explained that a Deed of Dedication had previously been raised in questions to the Trustee, and the Trustee needed to consider this proposal, and had acted to include in the consultation a question asking for views on whether this was an appropriate step to take.

Ben Stanesby explained that there would be a separate process with planners looking at the details and cost of works of mitigation which would be required in order to grant planning permission to the ESFA. Officers would be taking information from the consultation results, engaging with the ESFA and working further on the improvement options, and would produce a landscape plan which would show how the premium could be applied and what could be covered by enhancements and what by mitigation. Chris Brooks explained that officers had considered it appropriate to include the options in the consultation, and the Charity Commission had seen the consultation and had considered that sufficient steps had been taken to properly address this element of preparing for decision-making. The Charity Commission advice had been to develop a masterplan to look further at the improvement options.

Ben Stanesby explained that, in the online version of Question 2 in the consultation, the two responses "less likely to enable the amenity value of the Ground to be enhanced" and "not likely to enable the amenity value of the Ground to be enhanced" had been combined inadvertently and that the two negative responses had therefore been combined for analysis purposes, and the two positive responses had been combined, to give an indication of whether respondents had considered that the lease was likely or unlikely to result in improvements to the amenity value of the Ground.

Keith Knee-Robinson presented the view of residents of Mapledurham Parish that they had been disadvantaged by the consultation methodology because of their limited access to where hard copy consultation documents had been provided, and that the consultation had been skewed towards residents in the centre of Caversham. It was noted that hard copy letters about the consultation had been delivered to all households within Mapledurham Parish by Royal Mail.

The meeting discussed the recommendations in the report, and agreed that the following points should be made at the Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2018 by the Chairman on behalf of the Management Committee:

*2.1 That the Consultation Document, Mapledurham Playing Fields Consultation: Have Your Say, attached at Appendix 1, and the process and timetable for the consultation exercise with the Beneficiaries of the Trust, undertaken over the summer of 2017, be noted; and the high level of response be welcomed;*

a) The Management Committee were happy with this recommendation.

*2.2 That the methodology used for the evaluation of the responses, attached at Appendix 2, be endorsed;*

a) The members of the Management Committee all agreed to note the methodology used for evaluation.

- b) Nigel Stanbrook & Keith Knee-Robinson felt that, in view of the strength of objections to how the consultation had been carried out, including the inclusion of Fit4All in an inappropriate “mix & match” way, inclusion of a misleading list of improvements that might be delivered, and with RBC doing the consultation, audit and legal advice, the consultation had not been sufficient for the purposes and an independent consultant should look at the consultation itself and its methodology, to review and audit it, and that things should not move forward until this was done.
- c) The three Councillors on the Management Committee did not agree with this and were happy with the Charity Commission’s view that the consultation had been carried out in compliance with and beyond the requirements of s121 of the Charities Act.

2.3 *That the analysis of the consultation responses, attached at Appendices 3 and 4, be received and considered, in particular the fact that over four-fifths of the Beneficiaries who responded believed that investing the £1.36M lease premium from the ESFA into the Ground would improve the amenity value of the Playing Fields even with the loss of open space to the proposed school.*

- a) The Management Committee noted the analysis, notwithstanding two of the Management Committee members’ views about the overall consultation being flawed.

2.4 *That the equality impact assessment, attached at Appendix 5, be received, and its conclusion be noted that the proposal will not have a negative impact on any of the groups protected by the Equality Act 2010, subject to the implementation of some mitigation measures.*

- a) The Management Committee noted this recommendation.

2.5 *That the regulatory advice of the Charity Commission, set out in a separate report to this Sub-Committee, be considered.*

- a) The Management Committee noted this recommendation.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That Councillor Ballsdon address the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2018 as Chairman of the Management Committee, presenting the points set out above.

**3. MAPLEDURHAM RECREATION GROUND CHARITY - REGULATORY ADVICE FROM CHARITY COMMISSION**

Chris Brooks submitted a report going to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2018, setting out the regulatory advice provided from the Charity Commission (CC) to the Council as Trustee for the Mapledurham Playing Field and Recreation Ground (the Playing Fields) in respect of

making a decision in relation to the future use of the Recreation Ground held by the Council as trustee of the Mapledurham Recreation Ground Charity (registered charity number 304328).

The report stated that officers of the Council representing the Sub-Committee, together with the Sub-Committee's external legal advisor Veale Wasbrough Vizards, had been invited by the CC to meet with it in advance of the Sub-Committee considering the outcome of the public consultation exercise and making further decisions in relation to the Charity, in particular a decision in relation to the proposed grant of a lease to the ESFA. This meeting had taken place on 10 November 2017 at the Charity Commission's headquarters in London. Copies of the Minutes of this meeting with the CC had been sent to members of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee prior to the meeting.

The Senior Case Worker for the CC, Alex Young, had written to Chris Brooks on 20 November 2017, to provide the Sub-Committee with regulatory advice. This letter was attached at Appendix A.

The CC letter made it clear that it considered the Sub-Committee was not yet in a position to take a decision in relation to the proposed grant of a lease to the ESFA. Further consideration of all of the options open to the Sub-Committee in relation to the future use of the Recreation Ground and the impact of the ESFA proposal was required. The report therefore recommended a process and timetable to prepare a report on the three options open to the Sub-Committee in relation to the future use of the Recreation Ground (being the status quo, the ESFA proposal and the Fit4All proposal made by the Mapledurham Playing Fields Foundation) and an impact assessment of the ESFA proposal against a master plan for the future use of the Recreation Ground, to inform the Sub-Committee's future decision-making. A timetable was set out at Appendix B.

The report to the Sub-Committee contained the following recommendations:

"2.1 That the officers advising the Sub-Committee be instructed:

- 1) to prepare a "masterplan" for the Recreation Ground which identifies on an indicative basis how the ESFA lease premium could be applied if the ESFA proposal were to be accepted (in line with the Charity Commission's guidance on this); and
- 2) to prepare an options report which, taking into account the masterplan, enables the Sub-Committee to evaluate the impact of the three options on the amenity value of the Ground for beneficiaries of the Charity.

2.2 That with regard to the above, the officers should:

- 1) consult with the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee on the outcome of the public consultation exercise, the options report and the masterplan;
- 2) engage with the ESFA in relation to the master plan, the Community Use Agreement, any section 106 requirements and any planning mitigation;
- 3) engage with the Caversham Trents Football Club on the level of sports provision and the playing pitch strategy that could be included in the masterplan;

- 4) engage with the trustees of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Foundation in relation to that part of the options report which addresses the Fit4All proposal;
- 5) liaise with the Planning Authority in relation to the mitigation required by the Planning Authority and/or Sport England; and
- 6) engage with such other stakeholders as the officers may consider appropriate.

2.3 That a further meeting of this Sub-Committee be held in February 2018 to consider the masterplan and options report, subject to engaging with the bodies identified above, whose views should be reported to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee."

Chris Brooks said that the letter from the CC showed that the trustees had acted correctly so far and that its advisers had been acting in a correct manner. He noted that the CC had given clear advice as regulators of the trustee about what further information was needed before the Sub-Committee could make a decision, and the proposals in the report addressed these issues.

In response to a query from Nigel Stanbrook, Chris Brooks explained that legal advice on planning and education matters was being given not by him, but by planning and education solicitors. Nigel Stanbrook noted that these officers ultimately reported to Chris Brooks as Head of Legal and Democratic Services, so Chris Brooks still had overall responsibility for this advice.

Nigel Stanbrook queried why no member of the Sub-Committee had been at the meeting with the CC to represent the trustee, and Chris Brooks explained that the CC had asked to meet with officers. Nigel Stanbrook also referred to the issue of whether the CC would have to be involved in the disposal of land, noting that the land involved was more than 5% of the trust's area and that he thought that this would therefore require revision of the charity scheme and involvement of the CC.

Nigel Stanbrook and Keith Knee-Robinson referred to paragraph 10 of the Minutes of the meeting with the CC on 10 November 2017 under the sub heading 'The Management Committee's views' and queried what was meant by:

"...and some Management Committee members had effectively sought to claim a trustee role in the whole matter (from a standpoint of seeking to rule out a decision in relation to the school). The trustee had noted the misunderstanding of the Management Committee's status and role, and it was indicated that, whatever decision was taken, the trustee would be re-examining the structure and role of the Management Committee. We advised that this would involve administration changes to the trust, and would therefore not require the CC's formal authority."

Nigel Stanbrook said that he had not claimed a trustee role and noted that he had said as much in an email. Chris Brooks said that he would look at his own notes from the meeting and speak to the CC officers involved and report back to the next meeting.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That Chris Brooks investigate further with the Charity Commission officers what was meant by the section in the Minutes of the meeting with the Charity Commission on 10 November 2017 about the misunderstanding of the Management Committee's status and role and report back to the next meeting.

#### **4. MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN**

Ben Stanesby submitted a report going to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2018, which recommended the production of a costed landscape masterplan for the Mapledurham Playing Fields.

The report proposed that, following the Mapledurham Playing Fields consultation in 2017 (see Minute 2 above), and with reference to the regulatory advice from the Charity Commission received on 20 November 2017 (see Minute 3 above), the feedback from the public consultation should be used to produce a landscape masterplan to determine how a premium of £1.36m from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) could be used to enhance the amenity value of the Ground.

The report gave details of the areas that the ESFA premium could be used to support which had been set out within the consultation, and of the results of the consultation, and proposed that a landscape masterplan should be developed to establish budget costs for different elements of the work and how and where different features could be arranged on a re-landscaped ground. This would allow a more detailed assessment of the impact, both positive and negative, of the development. The landscape masterplan would be considered by a subsequent meeting of the Sub-Committee.

The report stated that the key features of the masterplan would be:

1. Accommodation of existing and anticipated future use (sport and recreation)
2. Maximising the visual amenity
3. Broadening use by improving accessibility and range of activities
4. Environmental sustainability
5. Maintaining the character of the site
6. Upgrading the play area and improving access
7. Identification of maintenance costs of any changes
8. Upgrading the pavilion
9. Footpath network
10. Entrance improvements
11. New furniture
12. Tree planting
13. Football pitch improvements

During production of the landscape masterplan, officers would engage with the Ground's current principal sports user (Caversham Treants Football Club), the ESFA (including to establish the extent of mitigation proposals and affordability), the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee and any other relevant stakeholders.

## **AGREED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That, if the Sub-Committee agreed the recommendations in the report, the Management Committee were prepared to engage with officers working on the production of the landscape masterplan.

## **5. MAPLEDURHAM PAVILION & PLAYING FIELDS UPDATE AND DRAFT ACCOUNTS 2016/17**

Ben Stanesby submitted a report, which was also going to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee meeting on 9 January 2018, which gave an update on the current use and condition of the playing fields, including the pavilion, and presenting the draft accounts for 2016/17, prior to submission to the Charity Commission.

The report stated that Mapledurham pavilion hall remained closed following the structural survey which had identified significant deterioration requiring additional supports to stabilise the building. The changing rooms were still in use.

The pavilion continued to be checked on an approximately six-weekly basis by leisure staff with an assessment being made periodically by a structural engineer. The latest assessment by the structural engineer in November 2017 had identified no material change to the structure of the building.

A management agreement for the football pitches on site continued to be in place with Caversham Trents Football Club (CTFC). The Council's Leisure & Recreation Service and CTFC had a good working relationship with ongoing regular dialogue to ensure issues were addressed or actions undertaken to support continued use of the site for football.

The report also set out the following points:

- As in previous years, the car park at Mapledurham would be used as a recycling site for Christmas trees and collections would begin on 3 January 2018 for two weeks.
- Maintenance to the car park was undertaken annually with an intention to complete this work before Christmas 2017. Pot holes would be filled and the material compacted.
- Vegetation from the Playing Fields along Chazey Road had been identified as needing cutting back, paving cleared and arisings removed. While volunteer help had been offered for these works, which was appreciated, it was likely to be much quicker if the Council Parks Team using appropriate machinery carried out this work. The Parks Team would confirm a timetable shortly.
- The sand in the play area had become overgrown partly due to little use. Arrangements for a Probation work party to clear this area were being made for when ground conditions were suitable.

- A question had been raised on whether fencing had been incorrectly erected by a neighbour incorporating part of the playing fields within their curtilage. This was currently being investigated.
- A request had been received to clear cut grass within the orchard. Some work parties would be booked with the Probation Service to assist in undertaking this task.

The report had appended the draft accounts for 2016/17. It stated that, following review by the Management Committee, these would be submitted to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee. Subsequently, auditing by the Accountancy Team would be completed and they would be submitted to the Charity Commission.

Keith Knee-Robinson reported that the notice about the Christmas tree recycling had been put to the west of the car park, so people were piling up trees in a number of places, including near his back garden, rather than in the correct place. Ben Stanesby said that he would liaise with Keith Knee-Robinson and Nigel Stanbrook to deal with this problem.

Ben Stanesby reported that the sand in the play area had now been weeded and that, whilst the grass clearing in the orchard was being pursued, officers would also be reviewing the pruning of the orchard, due to the limited availability of the Friends Of Group. He also reported that officers were establishing the boundaries regarding the erected fencing and would be discussing the matter with the neighbour involved.

With regard to the accounts, in response to a query about the cost of building cleaning still being at the same level as in 2015/16, despite most of the pavilion not being used, Ben Stanesby said that he would investigate these costs prior to the meeting of the Sub-Committee. The amount spent on football renovations and supplies was also queried and Ben Stanesby said he would liaise with Caversham Trents FC to check on this.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the report and position be noted;
- (2) That Ben Stanesby liaise with Keith Knee-Robinson and Nigel Stanbrook to deal with problems of misplaced Christmas trees for recycling at the Playing Fields;
- (3) That, subject to Ben Stanesby checking on the building cleaning costs, and with Caversham Trents FC on the amount spent on Football Renovations & Supplies, prior to the Sub-Committee meeting, the draft accounts for 2016/17 be endorsed for submission to the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee, prior to submission to the Charity Commission.

## 6. MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS USERS REPORT

Nigel Stanbrook submitted a report on behalf of Users of Mapledurham Playing Fields and Pavilion, which had originally been prepared for a meeting of the Management Committee scheduled for 18 October 2017, which had subsequently been postponed.

The report had appended individual reports from Mapledurham Lawn Tennis Club, Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields and Caversham Trents Football Club (CTFC), setting out the detailed views of the three organisations on the ESFA's plans. The report also stated the following:

"The depth of views and the substantive objections from these users condemning the EFA proposal for a school on Mapledurham Playing Fields only confirms my statements on their behalf to this committee, to the EFA and to the Charity Commission. When the school was first mooted, I stated that Mapledurham Playing Fields are simply not available to be built upon. As their representative on this committee I cannot but give them my 100% support. It aggrieves them greatly that the three Reading Borough Councillors on the committee led by Councillor Ballsdon have to the contrary actively abused their duties and powers on the committee to exercise a general supervision over the activities of the Playing fields. They have shown bias and a predetermination in favour of the school proposal."

Nigel Stanbrook noted that the Management Committee had a responsibility for the day to day management of the playing fields and expressed his disappointment that his requests to hold a Management Committee meeting in December 2017, in order to consider a number of matters relating to the playing fields, including the ESFA's planning application, had been ignored. He encouraged Management Committee members to read the reports from the User Groups and said that he felt that the Management Committee were walking away from their responsibilities and that users had no confidence in the Management Committee. He said he was disappointed at the way the Management Committee had acted, noting that the non-Councillor members were frustrated as they could always be out-voted. He also noted that, due to the growth of CTFC, there was not room for a school at the playing fields, as the Football Club needed all the current football pitches.

### a) Notice Board at Entrance to Mapledurham Playing Fields

Nigel Stanbrook said he thought that there should be a more formal arrangement in relation to the notice board at the entrance to the playing fields, with someone taking responsibility for keeping it tidy, and also that someone should be inspecting the playing fields regularly for any problems.

Councillor Ballsdon said that the notice board had been in place for a number of years and she did not think the matter had been raised before or that it had been agreed who might take on such a responsibility. She said that, if she saw out-of-date notices on the board when she went past, she removed them and she also regularly raised issues on behalf of residents when asked. Ben Stanesby suggested that he work with Nigel Stanbrook to look at the best way of ensuring that the notice board was maintained, and bring a proposal back to the next meeting. He also suggested that parks officers reminded people of the methods of

communication to the Council if they had concerns about anything happening on site.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That Ben Stanesby liaise with Nigel Stanbrook and bring a proposal back to the next meeting on maintenance of the notice board at the entrance to the playing fields.

**7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would need to be held in advance of the next meeting of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee in February 2018, in line with the process set out in the appendix to the report on the Charity Commission advice (see Minute 3 above), but that the date was not yet known.

**AGREED:** That the next meeting be organised by email when needed, to be held in advance of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee meeting in February 2018.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and finished at 8.55pm)