

Longmead

Report to HPC 6th Sept 2017

Brief history

The field behind Station Rd was designated as potential POS by MDDC some 30 years ago.

There was no inclination by LA to compulsorily purchase the site & no agreement could be reached with landowner.

HPC accrued funds via the precept for many years in case it could be purchased.

Approx 2004/05 WED's approached HPC to partner development in the higher part of Longmead & would sell for £1 the rest of the area (approx. 6 acres) to HPC for playing fields.

Hemyock AFC had been having difficulty playing at the Recreation Field, especially balancing their matches with those of Hemyock CC toward the end of the football season, so HAFC were very pleased to get a separate pitch, with an area for the juniors, too.

There would be space for more than the one tennis court (3 in fact with some floodlit)and for a multi-use games area (MUGA) for 5 a-side football, netball & basketball.

HPC 'recruited ' Jack Pursell to oversee the funding application to the FF, with HPC contributing around £60k for match funding.

The funding application to FF was successful: WED's did the groundworks whilst on-site, developing the football pitches with soil from the housing area. Specialist firms were used to lay the MUGA & tennis courts. Brendan Kingston built the pavilion.

The project saw completion in 2007.

HPC created a management committee (LMG) to oversee & run the day to day issues with the site. The group is formed of reps from all the sporting clubs; a childrens/ young persons rep; & a residents rep. 3 HP Councillors also sat on the committee, originally those with a keen interest to develop the sporting site.

LMG meet 3 to 4 times a year, co-ordinating ideas & requests from the various clubs or groups and oversee the management of the MUGA, pavilion & playing fields, together with the recent development of the environmental area. LEAP was started in conjunction with Hemyock Primary School, but has taken a less prominent role in their curriculum recently.

Hemyock tennis Club look after the courts, but also use the pavilion.

LMG also oversee any initial problems with the play area and to date any problems with damage or safety inspections have been dealt with by Brookridge Timber direct.

However the timber treated in the early 2000's had a preservative formula that was weakened by Regulation, and has subsequently been found to be less effective than previous treatments.

I have recently met Roy Brooke on site to investigate the seriousness of the problem with both the play area & the footbridge over St Margaret's Stream and I intend to bring a report to HPC for consideration in the near future.

It is my view that communication between HPC & LMG can consist of: verbal to & from HPC via the Councillor reps on LMG and by use of the minutes on Longmead website or by hard copy, if requested.

For more in-depth matters, then a report either verbal or written to HPC or LMG, from either party would be effective (e.g. the report I intend to bring regarding the timber deterioration)

Unfortunately, over the years Longmead has been subject to some vandalism; either with persons climbing over or cutting the wire to access the MUGA without paying and more recently, the lighting at one side of the pavilion has been smashed. Some of the posts that HPC put up with the dog signs on, have been uprooted. One post with its concrete in place has been uprooted in the last month and used to smash some plastic furniture.

Both acts of damage have been reported to the police.

It appears to me that the dog signs have been successful, although there are always those who cannot or will not read and observe. Perhaps a measure of their success will be the degree of fouling that occurs in the darker, wetter evenings.

Overall, Longmead is well used and well looked after, and whilst there will always be a minority who are of concern, the great majority are very happy to use the facilities.

The quality of the football pitch & the pavilion are frequently praised by away teams who visit.

The tennis Club are looking to further develop their courts, by installing new lighting technology in the floodlights.

Ian McCulloch

Chair

Longmead Management Group.

6th September 2017