

Feasibility Report

MULTI USE GAMES AREA

MUGA Task Group Report to Parish & Community Councils



INTRODUCTION

The parish council discussed the potential use of monies held in trust by Babergh District Council

following development contributions to the community. These funds are held by BDC under section 106 Planning Obligation, Recreation Contribution (Policy HS32) and it is recognised these monies may, potentially, be returned to developer donors if the funds are not used for their designated purpose. The parish council requested, as the responsible body, the Hintlesham & Chattisham Community Council undertake a survey of residents, throughout the communities, to establish a preference of project between 5 different options. This process was undertaken throughout September 2015 with a questionnaire circulated via the 'Village Link'. The parish council were advised by the CC that 82 replies had been received. The most popular response was for monies to be deployed to resurface the CH car park. Following discussions with BDC (Nick Elliot) this option was rejected as be a suitable use for S106 monies. During the PC meeting held on 12th November 2015, residents raised the desire to consider the creation of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). It was agreed at this meeting between CC Chair, Eileen Damant and the PC to create a joint PC/CC Working Party Task Group to undertake an investigation into the feasibility of such a project, looking at location, capital cost of construction and operational management.

Andrew Bryce agreed to take on the initial responsibility to consider the project feasibility.

- **Community Research Survey** – AB coordinated details into the Village Link asking residents to undertake an online survey into whether they considered the community would benefit from having access to an 'all weather' sports area. In summary, 81% of residents who responded were in favour, 5% were not in favour & 14% undecided.
- **Follow Up Basic Research** - As a result of the positive response to the survey, AB undertook some basic analysis of anecdotal capital costing, preliminary discussion with BDC in relation to potential acceptability for S106 funding and additional grant funding.
- **Location Survey** – A basic survey was undertaken of the Hintlesham playing field to establish how a MUGA might be located in relation to the existing football pitch and give consideration to access to the CH & changing rooms (playing field hut). Three potential options were established A,B&C.
- **Joint PC/CC MUGA Task Group** – The PC & CC established the task group in May 2016. Andrew Bryce asked to take a 'back seat' on the project due to increasing work commitments, but was happy to continue to support the project from the 'back row'. The group asked Jamie Bostock & John Whyman to take a lead role managing the group.
- **Contractor Meetings** – During the summer JW, JB & DA asked contractors, with a proven track record in this field, to provide initial indicative costings for MUGA options, giving consideration to surface type, fencing & lighting. Contractors, thus far considered, are Cambridge Courts, Doe Sport Ltd & Playdale. Both Cambridge Courts & Doe Sport Ltd have visited the site & given constructive advice on various site issues and Games Area orientation.
- **Operational Games Area Research** – The task group visited Bealings village & met with Jenny Shaw (Bealings MUGA Coordinator) to discuss their experiences of construction they

undertook 8 years ago, the operational access & charging structure and their general experiences of operational activity.

- **Public Consultation** – The task group, after looking closely at the various construction, location and operational issues, considered that there should be a further opportunity for the communities to make representations on the potential project. It was decided it would be opportune to coordinate this date with the village garden show on the 10th September. A display of information was provided in the playing field hut from 10.00am until 12.30pm, thereafter, in the Community Hall meeting room. It was agreed the task group should have this event ‘manned’ to take on board & record comments and positive/negative responses from residents. After analysis of the recorded responses from residents who visited the event. There were 24 ‘suggestions/thoughts’ on the project. From a ‘support/not support/undecided’ survey undertaken. Of those who gave a view, 75% expressed support, 12.5% expressed not supportive & 12.5% undecided.
- **Review Meeting** – The task group were keen to expand the number of people within the group to get the best possible breadth of opinion within the community. Our final meeting was held on the 10th October in the Community Hall meeting room. The group analytically examined all the information thus far held. We considered all the written and aural responses to the project that had been recorded. A paper considered by the group looked at anecdotal operational costs of operation. We considered it to be fundamentally important to ensure the group had a true and properly agreed mandate from the community to progress the project further and make a recommendation to the PC & CC. The group met for 2 hours considering these points and, at the end of their discussion voted on 3 proposals. Proposal 1, was to recommend to the PC & CC to ‘scrap’ the project. Proposal 2, was to undertake further work to more completely validate the project with the community. Proposal 3, was to recommend to the PC & CC to proceed to obtain Planning consent for the full development, which would be a 37m x 18m, AstroTurf surfaced, floodlit Area. Furthermore request funding from the Community Council for the planning application and site surveys. The group, consisting of 10 members, voted unanimously for proposal 3.
- **Stakeholder Engagement** – One of the principle questions from many residents throughout the investigation process has been the potential use of the Games Area by the school. We have received a letter from Roy Midgeley, the school PE Coordinator, confirming their full support to help & use the facility both during ‘school hours’ and extra-curricula times in the evenings and holidays. They have confirmed adequate pupil/staff ratios exist to ensure pupils can be safely escorted from the school to the potential MUGA site. Needless to say this gives a significant boost to the project, both from a ‘social benefit’ perspective, but also for potential

revenue generating clubs and a wider local market catchment which would assist and support its sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION

The group has closely analysed and challenged its own findings both in terms of the 'needs assessment', its potential financial sustainability (separate fact sheet attached), the capital financial challenge, but most importantly, the democratic mandate which is vital to the projects success. Under no circumstances is there an appetite for a 'white elephant' and potential financial drain on the community. It is for the foregoing reasons the MUGA Task Group recommend to the Parish and Community Councils that the project enters, 2 further phases. The next phase, which is critical to the overall sustainability of the project is to apply to BDC for outline planning consent for the Multi Use Games Area (Astro-turf basis), fully fenced and with floodlighting. All our anecdotal financial information indicates a unit with lighting extends its operational availability into significant revenue earning phases of the day and yearly seasons to allow it to provide 'low or no cost' use to the indigenous community. Needless to say this throws up the 'planning challenge' which has to be overcome or not through the normal democratic mechanism of the planning application. We feel this is a crucial part of our recommendation as to proceed without a lighting facility would likely render the MUGA a loss leading Community asset which would be, we anticipate, unacceptable to the Community Council as potential operator. Funding for the application and any supporting surveys etc could be met by the monies held by the CC which have been donated and targeted at the creation of the MUGA facility. We would, therefore, commend our recommendation to the Parish and Community councils for their consideration and response. Should the joint councils accept our recommendation we would envisage moving to the next phase.