



Statement regarding the toilet, store and waiting area block to be constructed on the Charles Cowper Playing Field ('CCPF').

At its meeting on Wednesday 6th July 2022, Council **RESOLVED** unanimously by those voting to authorise the RFO and JRWG to place orders for the toilet, store and waiting area on the best possible terms and within the budget of £39,769 at a net cost to the PC after grants that does not exceed £15,000. Cllrs Lee and Jones abstained and their personal statements explaining their abstentions are attached.

Prior to the Council meeting, councillors had received the written report of the Chair of the Joint Recreation Working Group (attached) and various emails from parishioners who had questions. In addition, a lively debate took place on Facebook instigated by Richard Lee who opposed the proposition. As a result of the emails and discussions it was apparent that a number of questions required responses and a list of questions was sent to the Chair of the Joint Recreation Working Group (JRWG) in order that those could be answered verbally at the meeting.

The Parish Council meeting was a well attended open meeting and parishioners were invited to speak before the Council deliberated. Mr Richard Lee made a statement (see attached) and the Chair of the JRWG reported (speakers notes attached). Councillors then asked supplementary questions of the JRWG Chair and discussed the issues at some length before reaching a resolution. No councillor voted against the motion.

Background Information

In 2016 the Council ran consultation events and a parish survey in order to determine the parish plan. The desire for toilets emanated from that survey and as a result was incorporated into the Council's vision for the CCPF (Parish plan pp.63). The Parish plan was published in January 2018 and is available on the website.

Following the delivery of the new playground in 2018 by the collaborative efforts of the Council and village hall trustees, the Joint Recreation Working Group (JRWG) was formalised in May 2019 and its Terms of Reference are on the parish website. It was always recognised that delivering the Council's vision would need to be accomplished in phases as funding was found. The JRWG has provided regular updates on its work to both Council and the parishioners at both monthly meetings and at the Annual Parish Meeting. Articles have also appeared in the Bugle and various additional surveys have been conducted on aspects of the CCPF project as it has advanced.

In November 2019 the PC agreed that it should be prepared to contribute to the cycle track project as grant funders expected the beneficiaries to have some 'skin in the game'. To date no parish money has been spent on the project. Grant funding was sought from numerous

sources and a detailed proposal was prepared for both funders and Council. This detailed proposal had a one off capital budget of £129,560 for the 2 cycle tracks, tarmac the car park, building a toilet block, store room, shelter, timing recorder etc. In addition there was a budget of £4,000 for annual costs including maintaining the cycle track, insurance, safety inspections etc. The PC's contribution would be £15,000 + the annual running costs budgeted at £4,000 but not expected to reach this level.

Funding was secured from various sources including British Cycling (BC) who agreed to pay half the cost of elements 1 & 2 i.e. the cycle tracks, toilet, store and shelter. The offer from British Cycling stipulated that the toilets could not be a toilet as proposed but would need to be Part M compliant and in accordance with the Sport England Design Guidance Note for Accessible facilities. No additional money was to be forthcoming from BC for upgrading the toilet and consequently BC stated in their offer "*We understand that the organisation may not be in a position to accept this offer given the reduced award offer and the conditions outlined, so are contacting you to confirm whether you are happy to proceed with the award on the above basis, or if on this occasion you're unable to fulfil these conditions, therefore leading to the project being unsuccessful.*" Council deliberated the matter and decided that the project was still achievable and accepted the offer in August 2020.

Redesigning the toilets and finding a supplier has taken considerable time and not been helped by the Covid lockdowns and the shortage of builders capacity. Recent events have also seen material costs rise. The JRWG report of April 2021 (see website) covered the then status of the project and the JRWG has done well to put together the latest proposal that will meet both the BC requirements and remain within the budget that was set in 2019 without a further input of cash from any source.

Recent questions & responses

1. [Is there any additional funds for unexpected contingencies.](#)
The Parish Council has not volunteered to set aside any further sums over and above those already reserved and budgeted. The JRWG believes it can deliver the toilet, store and shelter within the allotted budget. The Village Hall, however, has run a number of events for the community and will if necessary contribute a further £7k to capital costs if the PC's commitment of £15,000 is insufficient.
2. [What does the 'appropriately configured refurbished cabin' contain.](#)
The toilet will be completed in accordance with the Sport England Design Guidance Note for Accessible facilities i.e. there will be a ramp access and sanitary units with grab rails, hand washing and drying facilities etc.
3. [How is access to the toilet being controlled?](#)
Fitted to the door will be a time lock. The JRWG have considered whether a charge should be made for using the toilet, but came to the conclusion that any form of cash collection would increase the risk of damage and repairs would outweigh lost income. Other forms of cash collection eg by phone are not considered appropriate for children.

4. [What about CCTV to cover the toilet and store area, in case of vandalism or anti-social behaviour?](#)

The Village Hall already have a CCTV system in place and it will be configured to overlook the outside of the new toilet/store/waiting area. CCTV is a deterrent that will provide evidence of an occurrence which may then be provided to the police. It is not being used as a 24/7 monitor to alert relevant authorities to a crime in progress.

5. [What is the cost of cleaning and ongoing maintenance?](#)

At the moment we don't know exactly what the cost of cleaning will be, although the village hall have the experience of cleaning their toilets and the JRWG have spoken to various people who have public toilets. The current thinking is that a weekly clean will be sufficient plus an additional clean during the school holidays and that each clean will take less than an hour. Cleaning costs are anticipated to cost around £1,400 pa. Where the toilets are required because of an event taking place on the field, we will pass the cleaning cost onto the organiser if the toilets are not left in a clean condition.

6. [Where will the services come from?](#)

The block will be connected to the Village Hall, water, electricity and sewage services with no additional meters. The Village Hall have agreed not to charge the PC for these services.

7. [What about other costs?](#)

Realistically there will be other costs from time, although these are not expected to be significant. Furthermore the JRWG has suggested that advertising boards can be rented around the CCPF to bring in additional revenue which will offset these costs if the costs become excessive.

The Village Hall has already provided the PC with a contribution of a £1,000 towards maintenance of the cycle tracks and the playground, they have indicated that this could be extended to the toilets. If further funds are necessary then future fundraising initiatives are possible. In the final event Council still has the ability to permanently close the toilets and still have the benefits of the store and waiting area.

It should also be borne in mind that the facility has been designed in such a way that local groups can use the block for fund raising activities bringing additional money into the community.

8. [Why not simply provide an external door to the existing disabled toilet at the Village Hall. The internal toilet could be locked from the inside when the Village Hall is closed.](#)

This option was considered but determined to be unworkable by the Village Hall Charity Trustees given the safety, security and use of the Hall.

9. [Why didn't you defer making a making a decision and consult with the village before proceeding?](#)

Firstly, this is a parishioner-initiated initiative that came about through consultation and the parish have been kept up to date on progress in various ways as well as participating in informal discussions. Nothing has really changed since the JRWG posting of April 2021 which is on the parish website. Parishioners could have voiced their concerns long before the agenda for the July meeting was published.

Secondly, the Council made a commitment to provide a toilet before it took the money to build the cycle track and in the knowledge that it was a condition. To renege on that obligation would risk the repayment of £24k of grants already received. Furthermore, this would cause considerable reputational damage which would impact on the ability of the PC to access grant funding in the future

Thirdly the project was originally supposed to be completed by August 2021 as the Places to Ride Funding was at an end. An extension was granted to March 2022 because of Covid and a further extension has been given to September 2022 in order to overcome the cost difficulties brought about by Covid, Brexit and Ukraine. A further extension will not be forthcoming. To delay for a parish survey will take too long and only serves to frustrate the project.

Finally, Councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of parishioners even when the choices are difficult. Council has now made the decision which brings the issue to a close.

Clerk
On behalf of Boddington Parish Council

14th July 2022