

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: 10 JANUARY 2023
title: MARDALE PLAYING PITCHES
submitted by: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Committee with an update on situation regarding the playing pitches and parking issues in the area.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives - To help make people's lives healthier and safer.
- Corporate Priorities - To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Other Considerations – The grant scheme is a popular programme that helps groups in many cases gain external funding that benefits residents.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The playing pitches at Mardale are located alongside the housing estate and access is through the estate to where the car park is located. The car park is a Council operated pay and display, with 57 spaces. Prior to the pandemic, the issue of parking did occasionally get raised, by residents on the estate. However, it did not cause significant issues that the Council was aware of.

2.2 There are two clubs playing at Mardale, Longridge Town Juniors with 11 teams, all juniors and AFC Longridge with one senior team. The demand for junior teams has grown in recent years, reflecting the appeal of football with boys and girls.

2.3 There are 5 pitches, one full size 11 aside, one junior 11 aside pitch, one 9v9 pitch and two 7v7 pitches. Previously there were four, 11 side pitches, however the new format reflects the demand for junior pitches, in capacity terms the difference is just 2 players. Although football is the predominant sport played there, other sports can apply for pitch space. Indeed, in previous summers a softball team did book space to play their games there. The area is also used by dog walkers and informal recreation by Longridge residents.

2.4 Since the last lock down, the parking issue has gradually become more problematical for the residents, as players and parents have chosen to continue to travel independently, as was required during the covid pandemic, when previously car sharing was popular. There has also been greater demand for the pitches at the site primarily from young people.

2.5 Consequently, at weekends parking on the estate roads has become more of an issue. Although there have been several initiatives to try and mitigate this issue:

- The home teams have been asked to park on Shay Lane Industrial Estate to limit the demand for the car park. There is a footpath which leads from the estate to the pitches.
- Home teams have switched leagues to try and avoid too many games being played at one time and thus increasing the demand for parking spaces.

- Teams have been asked to share cars to limit parking demands. Although there is still a marked reluctance to do this following the pandemic.
- The teams and the leagues they play in have staggered games to reduce the parking load, although there is practical aspect to when games can start due to light conditions and the distances away teams must travel.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 Unfortunately, some players still choose to park on the roads of the housing estate rather than use the car park. There is a combination of reasons for this, reluctance to pay the parking fee, space availability (because the surface has no defined bays marked) and convenience for departing at the end of a game.
- 3.2 Consequently, residents have complained to the Council about the situation because of the disruption this can cause some of them, (although on street parking is not a RVBC issue to enforce), and the Police have attended some weekends the problem persists.
- 3.3 The main club, Longridge Town Juniors have been very helpful in getting messages to the parents of the children that play, however they cannot be accountable for where home and away teams' park. That is the same for AFC Longridge.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Residents have proposed that one solution would be to limit the number of matches played in a 3-hour period to two games. This would through the winter months mean only four games per day, AFC Longridge, must play home games at 11am on a Sunday morning as stipulated by their league. Although Longridge Town Juniors have some flexibility with their games, if they were forced to have a restricted number of games, they might need to limit the number of players who they could accommodate, restricting the opportunities for young people to play, or they might wish to play outside of Longridge. This would in turn make it more onerous for the parents and young people from a travelling perspective.
- 4.2 Alternatively, the car park could be increased in size; however, this would need to be balanced with the number of spaces that could be achieved with the loss of green space and the impact on the pitches themselves.
- 4.3 Resurfacing and remarking the car park would help to maximise the available space, however currently there is no capital budget for this work.

Mark Beveridge
Head of Cultural and Leisure Services

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge 01200 425111