

CURRENT POSITION ON DEVELOPMENT & PITCHES (September 2010) CURRENT FACILITIES

Playing facilities at Wymondham currently consist of two full sized pitches and a small training area and minis pitch used for the younger members.

There is a single storey clubhouse with a bar, social area and small kitchen and four changing rooms with one communal shower area. There is a small changing room for officials.

There is a tarmac car park for 100 cars which is also used by the Norfolk Police as an overspill car park during the working week.

The subsoil at Tuttle Lane is heavy clay and, despite significant expenditure over the years, becomes waterlogged very easily and takes considerable time to dry out. Consequently, during adverse weather conditions, there are many weeks when fixtures and training sessions have to be cancelled or postponed with a consequent loss in morale and revenue from refreshment sales.

As an illustration, during the 2009/10 season, we lost eight weekends from December to February . Although this was exceptional weather, we often encounter waterlogged pitches and rutting as a consequence of deep mud leading to surface water pooling.

Our historic yearly pattern shows an average of four lost weekends per season.

With a playing membership of over 500, it is impossible to rotate training areas or pitches to preserve them and, in an effort to at least retain our members, we have had to hire a variety of venues such as local schools, colleges, community centres and parks to provide training facilities.

DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

The club has identified a 'greenfield' site within a mile or so of its current ground which would meet its needs for the foreseeable future. The site is easily accessible from Norwich Common (The Wymondham Hethersett Road- old A11) and comprises 25 acres of flat agricultural land. This would enable the construction of six full-size pitches, additional training areas, adequate car parking and would allow the construction of a new, two storey club house and associated facilities.

Planning permission has been obtained for this site and for redevelopment of the existing ground as a 'care village'.

We are currently (September 2010) in the final stages of negotiating a sales and marketing agreement for the existing ground and the acquisition of the new land which would provide us with net funds of approximately £2.6m.

The economic downturn has, however, meant that a sale has inevitably been delayed. Care facilities require intensive capital funding and banks are being both extremely wary about major investment and also charging very high interest rates on borrowings.

It is also true that our costed proposals and project plan for the full redevelopment would indicate that further funds will be required in addition to the receipts from Tuttle Lane and a major fund raising effort is imminent.

INTERIM PROPOSAL

The Club Management Committee is seriously concerned at the effect on the club of the present inadequate facilities and is negotiating with the owner of the 'new site' to secure an interim 50 year lease on a 15 acre portion.

This would allow for the construction of 4 new pitches and a car parking area.

This interim development would allow us to lift restrictions on the number of members in some age groups while rotation of pitches would allow the existing pitches at Tutttles Lane to recover and remain playable. In addition, some aspects of our schools and community programme would be able to be fully implemented.

The interim move is of course fully in line with the long- term plan so no expenditure would be wasted.

The lease would be subsumed by the purchase agreement as and when we were able to complete the sale and purchase and the land would then become the freehold property of the club. We would also hope to obtain a purchase option should the wider development option not proceed for any reason.

TIMING & FUNDING

As already identified, we are at the final stages of negotiation for the above Agreements, which must all be concluded concurrently and, it is hoped that, with professional advice and recommendations from our legal and property advisors, we will be able to finalise these matters very shortly.

We have obtained quotations for drainage, levelling and sowing of the 15 acres and have applied for a loan from the Rugby Football Foundation to help us fund work for the interim proposal.

The final hurdle to overcome will be to satisfy or obtain a waiver from the District Council in respect of certain pre-conditions which were put in place at the time that planning consent was granted. Some of these are quite onerous and were formulated on the basis that we would commence development of the whole site and club house in 'one hit' having sold the Tutttles Lane site.

Assuming that we conclude the legal Agreements, planning conditions and finalise the loan from the RFF, we hope to be able to drain and prepare the 15 acre field over this winter with the aim of sowing in spring 2011. Depending on the weather, this could allow us to use the new pitches at some stage of season 2011/12.

It is important to point out that the Club is taking on extra commitments in terms of the rent and loan repayments and maintenance of pitches and so we will need to implement both cost saving and fund raising activity to ensure we can meet these obligations.

A tremendous amount of detailed work has been put in to arrive at this stage and we are optimistic that it will bear fruit before too long.

There will be regular updates on here so that everybody knows where we are in relation to the development plans.