



WINGHAM RECREATION GROUND

Chairman's Report to the Charity Commission Recreation Ground A.G.M & Annual Parish Assembly 2022/23

I'd like to start my report by thanking you for asking me this evening.

First, a little background. The Recreation Ground, out on the southeastern edge of the village is a lovely grassy space reserved for recreational use. The Parish Council has built and maintains a children's playground, fenced games area and outdoor gym on special surfaces in one section. We have tennis courts in another. Finally, there is a little clubhouse with bar and changing facilities for the sports teams. The remaining 5 or so acres are for general recreational use. We are a registered charity incorporated in 1965 to manage and maintain the grounds and facilities of behalf of the village.

This is all run entirely on a voluntary basis. Our management committee is formed of representatives from the various groups who use the facilities of the Recreation Ground, a Parish Council rep and two members of the public who are nominated at the Annual Parish Assembly. We co-opt the treasurer and secretary. Sports represented are Football, Cricket, Tennis, Bat & Trap and Darts. We are always keen to encourage more use of our facilities and ask aspiring organisations to contact us in case we can help.

I'd like to thank all those who helped on our committee over the past year including our Parish Council representative, Martin Smith.

The grounds are used by many, from all the various sports groups and children using the play areas and the fields to the public from far and wide, often with dogs. The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), the play area and the gym apparatus are well used by all ages.

Littering seems to be increasing, particularly near the MUGA facility and we still have the problem of dog fouling. We find dog excrement everywhere, even in front of the club house. Particularly problematic are owners who walk their dogs in the dark and are not sufficiently vigilant and either cannot or do not see what their dogs have done. I would ask all visitors to the ground to be vigilant with both their dogs and others. All users must appreciate that these grounds are used by both children and all the sports teams. It is just not possible to scour the grass, nor should we have to. There are ample supplies of waste bins, regularly emptied that are spread across the grounds, it really shouldn't be an issue.

At least we don't seem to have had much anti-social behaviour. During the year there were only a couple of reports. It seems that some miscreants had lit a small fire in the hard shelter on the perimeter of the football pitch. On the night of the second report the activity was picked up by the CCTV camera mounted on the club house, monitored by DCC. The police were called and attended but the group scarpared across the fields and were not caught. Apart from this I haven't had any other feedback of anti-social behaviour and I don't think any vandalism has occurred on the grounds.

As many will know we now have a little café operating in the club house. At present it's only open on Thursdays and Fridays for 4 hours per day but we are looking to increase the opening times as the weather improves. This idea came about as the committee felt something like this was missing from the village since the closure of the cafe in the High St. We are very pleased it seems to have been well received.

The annual 10k and 5k run held every year on the grounds was supported in considerable numbers and was very well organised as ever. The event puts Wingham on the map for that day. The organiser told me that they were pleased with the attendance but regretted that numbers were down from pre-covid years, something which seems to be a trend in many areas of events.

The Management Committee wish to thank the contractors for the good work in keeping the grounds cut to a nice standard, the same contractors (Harmer&Sons) also trimmed the trees and hedges around the perimeter of the grounds and tennis court during March so that there was no impact of the bird nesting season. As always, these things come at a cost so the Management Committee wish to thank Parish Council for the grant to help with this. This grant is much appreciated and is only used for managing the grounds. By example, controlling moles and weeds, fertilising, cutting and trimming the trees and the hedges along the perimeter of the grounds and anything else which needs attention.

Aside from the grounds, we have a social club which manages and maintains our pavilion. Our building was built largely by public subscription in 1983 and re-invigorated many of our sports teams. Sports clubs and individuals can become members entitling them to use of the facilities and member's prices at our bar. This section is entirely self-funding and staffed by volunteers. We must raise over £5,000 a year to keep it all going. This year we had to replace our boiler at a cost of £6,600, we were fortunate to get a grant of £3,000 from Dover District Council but had to find the rest from our own funds.

The Wingham Cricket Club was formed some way back in the 1700's and records go back to at least 1783 although not continuous. The club has just celebrated its 40th year after reforming and runs two very successful teams playing in league and friendly matches. The Football Club was formed back in 1930 and it is one of the oldest amateur clubs in Kent playing in the Canterbury & District league.

The Tennis Club was set up back in 1969/70 and is still very active but it would be good to see the courts used more. We also have active Bat and Trap and Darts teams, always keen to welcome new members. It's a pity we don't have a pool team, we have a lovely table, maybe someone might like to have a crack at that?

We would really like to attract other groups or individuals from the village to join the committee to bring fresh ideas and help to maintain and promote the grounds, this precious village asset. If any other groups wish to use the grounds and facilities please contact us via Facebook - or committee members or to the Parish Council who can get in touch with us.

And that brings me to my big ask. Inevitably, our pavilion now really needs to be updated. We need to encourage more diversity in sports with facilities for women, a more practical kitchen and possibly even public toilets. We have amassed £45,000 towards this project but will need way more to make it real. And we need people to help make it happen. We already have two experienced volunteers but would be keen for any assistance from people who could help us to attract potential grants, manage a building project and navigate building regulations and move this valuable sports and village asset on to better things.

We must all appreciate the work that goes in to keeping the grounds maintained, the sports clubs running, the pavilion open and warm. A great deal of hard work is put in by all the volunteers for others to enjoy and without these volunteers the facility probably wouldn't exist. I thank them all sincerely. A brief report from our treasurer follows.

Ian Pettman, Chairman
I. Pettman

Recreation Ground Expenditure 2022-2023

We publish our full accounts annually. They are available on the Charity Commission website, charity number 101263. Overall, this past year will show a modest surplus, all of which will probably be allocated to our new building fund. For the year ahead, as for so many, our main concern is utility costs. It's not easy to disassemble all of the numbers so here are the actual costs relating to upkeep of the grounds themselves and the grant we receive from the Parish Council.

The parish council granted us £1,300 which we received in June 2022 and the following has been spent so far:

Insurances	- £401
Ground Maintenance	- £897

A total of £1,298. We will do more work on the grounds in the next couple of months and will use the £300 a donation we received from Sporting Events UK to pick up the slack .

In the financial year from April 2022 through March 2023 – we actually spent £1,653 on the grounds

David Rothschild, Treasurer