



Wingham Recreation Ground

Chairman's Report Recreation Ground AGM & Annual Parish Assembly 2023/24

I'd like to start my report by thanking all the committee members for their time, helping in the running of the Recreation Ground and the club. Also, our Parish Council representative, Martin Smith. We are all volunteers and we employ no staff. The Management Committee as a whole also thanks the Parish Council for their support over the past year.

The grounds are used by many from both Wingham and beyond. We have our various sports groups, children using the play areas and both children and adults using the fields for recreation. The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), the play area and the gym apparatus are well used by all ages. By far and above our fields are most widely used for exercising dogs. As many are aware over the past year, we have been highlighting the problem of dog walkers not clearing up behind them. It's not just in one area, we find dog excrement everywhere, even in front of the club house. Particularly problematic are owners who walk their dogs in the dark 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. I would like to stress, again, that the fields are maintained by volunteers with much help from the Parish Council. We are proud that both cricket and football teams comment on how well the pitches are maintained. During the year we were awarded 'Good Pitch' status by the FA, something that is not given to most amateur facilities. It is such a shame that this hard work is so regularly devalued.

The good news is that we have not had any reports of anti-social behaviour on the grounds. There was a minor incident of off-road bikes being driven on the football pitch and churning up the ground. For the record, people should be aware that motorbikes can only be ridden on ground where they have permission to do so. There is no obligation on the committee or the council to display signage to that effect.

Many will know that an 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 also 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. 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.

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 of this precious village asset. If any other groups wish to use the grounds and facilities please contact us via Facebook, committee members, or the Parish Council who can get in touch with us.

Some will know that we also operate a sports and social club based in our pavilion on the grounds. This, again, is managed by volunteers and is governed under the same charity umbrella with Trustee and Charity Commission supervision. The premises are used by the various sports club members, particularly on home match days. We are also open on various nights as a social club. Whenever we are open the public are also welcome. The pavilion can be rented for any private functions with or without the licenced bar. We are really keen for our facilities to be better used and would like to hear from anyone with a potential need.

I must congratulate the various sports clubs that are based at the Recreation Ground on another successful year. The Cricket teams did well but both narrowly missed league glory. By way of compensation the first team won their indoor league and the second team theirs. The second team then beat the first team in the knockout cup and went on to win. The football season has been plagued by bad weather and many matches have been cancelled. Our team started well but has flagged a bit, despite maintaining high spirits. We are lying second in the league as I write.

The Pavilion is now looking to be updated as it was built back in 1983 by mainly public donations. Since then sport has changed with a bigger diversity of people taking part and the club needs to change with it. The committee would like anyone who has any experience of obtaining grants to please come along and assist in helping this great facility to its next level.

As with many other organisations in the village a great deal of hard work is put in by all the volunteers for others to enjoy. Without them the facility probably wouldn't exist. I thank them all sincerely.

Below please find a brief report from our treasurer on the Recreation Ground finances .

Ian Pettman, Chairman

I. Pettman

Recreation Ground Finances 2023-2024

We publish our full accounts annually. They are available on the Charity Commission website, charity number 101263. They are not yet available for the year ending March 31st 2024. Full numbers will be circulated before our AGM on May 14th. All Wingham residents are more than welcome, we would love to see more people taking an interest in our work.

We have not had a very successful year, with rising prices and football matches cancelled, revenues are down and expenses are up. Nevertheless, we do know that this past year will still show a surplus, albeit very modest. Most of this will probably be swallowed up when we renovate the car park which may well be expensive. 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 2023 and the following has been spent so far:-

Insurances	- £360
Ground Maintenance	- £140
Fence repairs	- £1,335

A total of £1,835.

In the financial year from April 2023 through March 2024 – we actually spent £1,904 on the grounds. We fund the gap from our club revenues and the £300 we receive from Sporting Events UK for hosting the annual run. It is worth mentioning that the Parish Council also pays for regular 'rough cutting' during the spring and summer. Our volunteers do the fine surfacing and pitch preparation, we would not be able to keep the grounds in such good condition without this help.

David Rothschild
Treasurer