

**SHERSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN SHERSTON**  
**Present and Future Developments.**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

The sporting and recreational activities of Sherston residents take place in diverse locations. There are many local facilities but many more are found outside of the village. The limited range of local facilities results in either a higher level of inactivity (due to the lack of opportunity) or higher level of vehicle use on country roads, and of course a loss of potential income to the village.

The Appendix to this Report gives information on the range of activities that were identified when compiling this document. From this it can be seen that the Community would greatly benefit from an increased variety of sporting facilities on the land that is currently owned by the Sherston Parish Council. These areas of land are analysed below.

**2 VILLAGE HALL and FIELD.**

This is currently used for indoor sport and recreation and Village social events including exhibitions and Drama Group productions. The Hall and the Field are both available for private hire and the income generated from all these activities contributes to the running costs of this vitally important Village amenity. The hire rate for the Hall is now roughly £10 per hour. A fund raising campaign will be launched shortly to refurbish the facilities to improve storage and the kitchen to make it more attractive for hiring for outside events. Current regular sport and recreation users are as follows:-

- 2.1 Badminton Club. Tuesday evening 2hrs
- 2.2 Yoga Classes. Monday evening and Friday morning 2hrs

2.3 Pilates Class. Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays afternoon and evenings 2hrs

2.4 Girl Guides. Wednesday evenings

Note, with the move of Short-Mat Bowls to The Lea Village Hall (round trip 20 miles), Yoga and Pilates are the only activities now locally available to the more elderly residents.

### **3 RECREATION GROUND (The Pennymead).**

This site comprises Scout Hut, children's play area with hard-standing, small football pitch and general open space. It is currently used for casual sports, Keep Fit classes, Village social events and overflow car parking for major village events. The facility is in close proximity to the village Primary School and it is heavily used by children and adults at the end of each school day and at weekends.

The Scout Hut is owned by The Scouts who pay a ground rent to the Parish Council. The existing structure is small and lacking in storage space and this restricts the range of possible recreational activities. However, a general shortage of adult volunteer helpers has resulted in the need to create waiting lists for most of the groups.

Keep Fit classes are run by local enthusiasts during daylight hours using their own equipment. As most of the casual users are local people, the lack of changing rooms and showers at this site is not a big issue. The proximity of housing means that the installation of floodlighting to extend the period of use would probably not be possible.

There is a very good range of well-maintained playground equipment available at the Recreation Ground – some funded by private individuals (legacies). There would be benefits in providing one or more 6 a-side football goals/pitches here to discourage the ad-hoc arrangements that are causing damage to boundary walls and the newly planted trees.

Current regular sport and recreation users are as follows:-

3.1 Toddlers Group mornings

3.2 Scout Troup every Tuesday evening

3.3 Brownies on Wednesdays during term time

3.4 Cub Scouts pack on Fridays during Term time.

3.5 Sherston Whitewall Explorers Friday evenings.

3.6 Children's informal play every afternoon and week-ends

3.7 Casual children's football, rugby and cricket.

3.8 Keep fit Class Friday morning

3.9 Boot Camp Keep Fit Sunday morning

#### **4 KNOCKDOWN ROAD SPORTS FIELD**

At over 4 acres, the Knockdown Road Sports Field is the largest publically owned open space within the village boundary. It is the current site of the Sherston men's Football Club. It provides space for a small club house and options for an F.A. Club sized pitch. Two tennis courts and a skateboard park have been installed by the efforts of local residents. The Village Boules and Carnival Committee utilises part of the open space for their storage requirement. A small security floodlighting system exists by the clubhouse just within the site entrance. This area has been utilised for football training.

The Football Club changing rooms are in urgent need of refurbishment. There are no refreshment facilities or shelter for football spectators. Tennis players and skateboarders have no access to toilets, changing facilities or shelter from the weather. The shipping container utilised by the Village Boules Committee for storage now has a very limited life due to severe rusting.

The access arrangements are unsatisfactory primarily because of the location and condition of the existing site entrance. There is no hardstanding for car parking, resulting in either cars being parked on the road at a hazardous bend and/or cars damaging the playing surface as they gain access to various (un-designated) parts of the field. Facilities for the Disabled are non-existent. Wheelchair movement in and around the ground is severely hampered in all but the driest weather conditions.

The Football Pitch itself and the necessary run-off areas surrounding it place limitations on the range of sports and other activities that can take place on this site. Furthermore, the necessary improvements to the changing rooms, site access and on-site car parking facilities would further limit the space available for additional activities. The village has indicated it would support the expansion of the Football Field to the West to provide the additional space required to facilitate these desired improvements.

Any development at this site would need to consider how it would impact upon the six properties situated on the Eastern boundary. Apart from these neighbours, the site is somewhat isolated from the village so a reasonable level of security needs to be built into any design to minimise criminal damage. There would be great benefits in establishing a pedestrian right of way between this site and the Village Primary School some 200 metres to the South.

The site is heavily under-utilised in the summer - apart from being used for some over-spill car parking for occasional large village events.

Current users of the Knockdown Sports Field are:-

- 4.1 Sherston Football Club. Men's Over 16 Team playing bi-weekly in the Cirencester League.
- 4.2 Football Club. Training Monday evenings (Men and Juniors)
- 4.3 Sherston Tennis Club. Casual use during daylight hours
- 4.4 Skateboard Park. Occasional casual use.

## **5 STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE**

Residents have expressed very strong feelings that the Village Hall and Field and The Pennymead should remain predominantly as they are, that is as green open spaces at the heart of the village for all to use. However, some thought should be given to introducing new activities here such as Dancing, Archery or Walking Football to benefit the more elderly residents.

Considering all the above, the site with the most potential for development of sports and recreation in the village is the Knockdown Road Sports Field. The expansion of this site onto the land to the west would enable significant improvements to be made to the quality and range of sports/leisure facilities on this site

N.B. Cricket and equestrian sports have not been considered here as they are adequately provided for on local private land elsewhere immediately adjoining the village. Similarly, swimming, golf, squash and outdoor bowls have not been considered for a combination of financial reasons and given the proximity of good nearby facilities.

The following summarises additional facilities that have been suggested could be provided on the existing and/or expanded site at Knockdown Road within a reasonable budget over a period of say ten years. This list has been compiled by discussing requirements with many of those currently active in sports and recreation within the village.

- 5.1 All-weather playing surfaces for 6-a side Football, Netball, Volleyball and Hockey etc
- 5.2 Changing Rooms for Men and Women.
- 5.3 Limited social facilities for service of refreshments
- 5.3 Perimeter wood-chip track for casual running and walking.
- 5.4 Mini-Gym with equipment for Keep-Fit and Cycling Training
- 5.5 Floodlighting for security and to extend periods of use.
- 5.6 Storage Module for Boules Committee.
- 5.7 Storage for Ground Maintenance equipment and Goal Posts etc.
- 5.8 Improved vehicular Site Access and Car Parking.

## **6 SUMMARY**

There is great enthusiasm for sporting and recreational activity within the village. Residents appreciate that we are fortunate in having open areas in which to carry out these activities. However, there is little co-ordination between the hard working efforts of those involved in their individual pastimes. There is a feeling that village facilities have fallen behind others especially with regard to the availability of all-weather pitches, changing facilities and floodlighting.

It is appreciated that it may well be necessary to set up a formal Sports and Social Club to manage and maintain any additional costly facilities provided on the Football Field and to be responsible for the revenue streams generated. If this could be established and given the

current availability of land then it should be possible to attract funding for a much wider range of facilities.

It is accepted that nothing will happen without commitment and enthusiasm of those whose individual sports will benefit (or indeed the availability of appropriate funding). However, this enthusiasm will need to be organised and co-ordinated and additional non-sporting skills will need to be brought in to manage the planning, funding, construction and on-going maintenance of the facilities. The outstanding success of The Sherston Old School Community Interest Company (SOSCIC) proves that we have the people in the village who could help achieve this.

It is hoped that at least some of the funding needed to secure improvements to the existing sports/recreational facilities in the village can be provided via contributions from any/all of the new build housing proposals being considered in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. This could be done either via a direct contribution from a specific (related) development or via utilising some or all of the **Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL) contributions that will necessarily be levied on such development.

Thanks to all those who have helped me compile this short Report and apologies for any errors or omissions.

Graham Hayman

## **APPENDIX**

The following lists the majority of the activities that residents currently participate in together with their locations.

1. Men's Football - Knockdown Road. Over 16 Team playing bi-weekly in the Cirencester League. Train at Stanley Park all-weather pitch Chippenham (approx. 10 miles away at £40 per hour)
2. Junior Football (boys and girls)- Malmesbury YFC. (Red Bull) Train at Knockdown when available.

3. Girls Football. Malmesbury YFC (Red Bull – approx. 4 miles away) and Stanley Park all-weather pitch (approx. 10 miles away), Chippenham.
4. Tag Rugby (boys and girls) Chipping Sodbury RUFC (approx. 10 miles).
5. Junior/U16 Rugby Chippenham RUFC (approx. 10 miles).
6. Tennis. Sherston Tennis Club - Knockdown Road
7. Childrens Dancing - Scout Hut.
8. Tae Kwon Do - Sherston Primary School
9. Cycling. Props Barbarians and Sherston Velos cycling clubs. No facilities provided.
10. Keep Fit Friday morning - Recreation Ground. No indoor facilities.
11. Keep Fit Sunday Boot Camp - Recreation Ground. All ages No indoor facilities
12. Running. Sundays meet at Scout Hut. No facilities provided
13. Running. Abbey Fliers Malmesbury (indoor training facilities approx. 5 miles)
14. Boules - Sherston Village Competition, Rattlebone Inn and Red Bull PH
15. Badminton. Tuesdays - Village Hall
16. Yoga. Monday and Friday - Village Hall
17. Pilates. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday - Village Hall
18. Ladies Swimming. Westonbirt School (approx. 3 miles).
19. Netball. Sherston Shooters meet Monday evenings Westonbirt School (approx. 3 miles).
20. Gymnastics. Tetbury Gymnastics Club (approx. 6 miles).
21. Tennis Malmesbury Tennis Club, the Wiltshire LTA and the Tennis Foundation.
22. Cricket - Sherston Magna CC Adults and Juniors
23. Hockey - Chippenham (approx. 10 miles) and Royal Wootton Bassett (approx. 22 miles).
24. Equestrian - Local Riding and Equestrian Centres
25. Short mat bowls - The Lea Village Hall (approx. 8 miles)
26. Rugby Union Mens - Tetbury, Minety (approx. 13 miles) and Chippenham.
27. Skateboarding – Knockdown Road.

