

# Dersingham Parish Council

## Environment Committee

### Recreation Ground 5 Year Plan

Version 1.0 Approved February 2022

#### Background

Dersingham recreation ground is the area located between Hunstanton Road/allotments and Station Road/Bank Road. It currently comprises a children's play area, skate park, football goal posts and a large grass area surrounded by a number of trees.

The recreation ground is protected by legislation namely;

Enclosure Act 1857

Commons Act 1876

Commons Registration Act 1965 (Village green)

These protect the land as "a place for exercise and recreation for the people of Dersingham". As such 'development' and use has a number of rules/constraints. Any proposed changes need to comply with these Acts. It is mainly used for informal and individual recreation with organised and team sports being catered for at the Dersingham Sports Ground in Manor Road.

The Parish Council Environment Committee agreed that it would be desirable to consider a longer term strategy for the Recreation Ground in consultation with as many parishioners as possible. This consultation has begun and will be the significant driving force for future needs/desires.

#### Parishioner Consultation

This will be conducted using the established means of discussion/feedback;

Village Voice

Parish Council Facebook Page (linked to the village Facebook page)

Parish Council meetings

General communication such as email

All suggestions/recommendations will be considered by the Environment Committee in line with;

Various Acts detailed above

Environmental impact

Cost, installation/maintenance

Likely future use/popularity

Initial consultation via the Parish Council Facebook page produced some 50 responses. A summary of responses produced the following wish list (in order of popularity) -

Adult exercise equipment 17

Dog park area 7

Basketball hoop/s with base 5

More seating (possibly covered) 4

5-a-side (away from young play area) 3

Car park 3

Petanque 2

Play area for toddlers/babies 1

Toilets 1

Better grass less weeds 1

Fixed table tennis table 1  
Equipment for seniors 1  
Sensory garden (visually impaired) 1  
Play equipment for children (wheelchair users) 1  
'Low' tight rope walk 1

All suggestions have a value and will be considered. Not all suggestions can be implemented if we consider the criteria detailed above.

The Environment Committee will continue to accept further ideas from all sources.

## A word on MUGA

MUGA stands for Multi Use Games Area. The term has gained some popularity in recent times. Essentially, MUGA is a way of combining multiple games such as football, cricket, netball, handball and basketball on a single surface. That surface is usually synthetic with well thought through line markings and different portable goals/nets. Most relevant to schools, sports clubs, etc. There is a MUGA at the Sports Ground in Manor Road, currently used for tennis.

## Basketball Hoops

The previous basketball hoops were removed to accommodate the new skate park but an undertaking was given that they would be reinstated. Unfortunately they had to be cut above ground. They cannot be used 'as is' because they are too short. If repaired (extended) they could perhaps provide a lower cost solution to buying new.

The standard height for basketball hoops (also the same for netball rings) are;

Age	Height
5-7	6ft
8-10	8ft
11	9ft
12+	10ft

The previous recreation ground solution did not provide any surface other than the rough grass that has become worn away.

The recommended surface for outdoor adult basketball courts are concrete or asphalt. For junior basketball a slightly softer surface such as polymeric rubber crumb can be suggested.

The hoops were provided for individual practice and due to restrictions of the various Acts protecting the land, the Parish Council do not want to install a full outdoor basketball court (recreation ground not a sports field). The following could be suggested;

1 or 2 separate synthetic areas such as polymeric rubber crumb in the shape and size of a basketball 'neutral zone' (slightly shorter, see diagram). This provides an all weather semi hard surface for players to practice their dribbling and shooting skills. 1 hoop would be 10ft off the ground with the other at 8ft (a compromise height for more junior players).

Wheelchair basketball is played on the same court and hoop height.

The synthetic surface height should not exceed the soil level to allow for ease of grass cutting.

It is recommended that progress is made on this by:

- obtaining costs for repairing/extending hoops
- deciding if this viable or if the hoops need to be replaced
- A decision is needed on location and type of surfacing around the hoops.
- Costs are needed for installation of hoops and surfacing, once agreement is reached.

## 5-a-side Football

The current recreation ground has 2 goal posts spaced apart to form a pitch. Neither the goal posts (roughly 6 x 9 feet) or distance between them conform to any standard football pitch. It is true that that doesn't really matter as this is a recreation ground not a sports facility and the goal posts are used informally to practice shooting skills. However, if we are going to replace/move then we might as well design to a standard. One of the goal posts is close to the 'junior' play area/equipment so youngsters are more at risk of being hit by a football.

One solution would be to provide a 5-a-side pitch located away from the junior play area. It is possible to provide goals and pitch that conform to the requirements of 5-a-side (any age), mini soccer (U7/8) and walking football (typically 50+).

The Football Association recommends goal posts should be metal (steel/aluminium) or UPVC (not wood). They should ideally be fixed in the ground or if portable removed after use. If nets are provided, they must be attached using plastic fastenings (metal hooks are banned). Many 'off the shelf' goals come complete with nets. If so, we have the choice of leaving them out 12 months of the year or perhaps fitting them during the warmer season or not fitting them at all. This, like all proposed changes needs to take into account grass cutting. Football Association (FA) recommended sizes;

	Pitch (l x w)	Goals (h x w)
5-a-side	40 x 30 yards	6 x 12 feet
U7/8	40 x 30 yards	6 x 12 feet
Walking football (5 or 6-a-side)	25-50 x 16-35 meters	1.2-2 x 3-5 meters

6 x 12 feet would seem desirable conforming to all the above. It is true that many indoor 5-a-side pitches (played on a synthetic surface) have goals that are 4 x 12 feet. This could be an option if strong opinions are expressed.

The example picture shown towards the end of this document is made by 'Forza'. Construction is reinforced 110mm aluminium. The posts are secured into the ground using slots embedded in concreted. This allows the posts to be removed if required. The net is all weather and made from UV stabilised HDPE. Conforms to BS EN 8462 safety standards. For the purposes of guidance only, the current price from one supplier is £787 for a pair (installation not included).

The FA does not recommend the type of playing surface. To help keep the recreation ground as green as possible and keep costs down we should use the existing grass. Perhaps the pitch area could be improved with simple levelling using soil/grass seed if required in certain areas. Consideration might be needed to strengthen the grass goal areas to prevent erosion. This could be done using recycled plastic grids designed for this task (installed at any time). The use of plastic (even recycled) would require further discussion and approval by the parish council. It is not envisaged that the pitch will be marked out using white lines. This would require constant maintenance. However, perhaps some form of permanent marking of the corners of the pitch might be desirable/practical?

A minimum distance of 6 yards 'run off' between pitch and skate park should be allowed. In our case we could allow a little more if desired.

Further detailed guidance is available on the FA web site.

It is recommended that progress is made on this by :

- a decision is needed on size and location
- obtaining costs for supplying and installing new goal posts

## Adult Exercise Equipment

Outdoor multi-gym equipment has gained a lot of popularity over more recent times. A number of Parish Councils have installed this type of equipment (see picture). They are typically 6-7 separate exercise machines. Some machines accommodate more than one person at a time so might cater for 9-11 people at a time. They are designed to be permanently located outdoors in all weathers. We should expect maintenance to be minimal but not zero.

The surface of the multi-gym area needs to be synthetic or reinforced grass. This can either be around each piece of equipment or as a single larger area. Again, grass cutting needs to be considered.

The multi-gym area has been located away from other activities to discourage younger children from using the equipment. Clear signage about it's use should be in place.

Some companies advertise online that typical costs might be £8-10K installed.

The addition of a short jogging track, would allow users to include a 'cardiovascular' element to a 'work out'. It is not intended to be a full size running track or marked with lanes. The size needs to be established but could, for example, be 200m around. This would mean that users would be able to incorporate a target distance in their routine i.e. 5 laps = 1km.

The 'track' would need to be defined and one idea might be to establish a wild flower meadow as the centre section. This would probably need to be marked out (certainly to start with) perhaps with sticks or short poles with rope. More discussion is needed.

The running area (perhaps 2m wide) could be improved with the addition of soil and grass seed if required.

It is recommended that a further consultation takes place with parishioners on more detailed requirements before progressing this project.

## Covered Seating Area

An area on the proposed plan was chosen as being central to many activities. More than any other idea, this requirement is rather open ended and requires further discussion. Clearly requirements need to be established before solutions proposed. This could include but not limited to;

Seating area only

Covered seating area

Cover is for rain or sun or both

Cover is permanent or seasonal

What seats?

What cover?

Is this a picnic area?

Grass cutting consideration or maintenance free surface?

It is recommended that further discussion be had on the possible provision of additional seating, its type and location. Denoted on the plan as 'Family Area'.

## Car Park

The opening of the skate park increased the amount of cars parking in Bank Road, which is privately maintained. Discussions are ongoing with residents to address the problems. Provision of car parking/vehicular access to and on the recreation ground itself is not permitted under the

legislation. There is clear case history which means that we would be most unlikely to succeed if there is legal challenge if we were to provide it. The recreation ground is intended for the use of residents of Dersingham so the expectation would be that users would arrive on foot. Additionally, the costs of providing a defined hard surfaced area for parking, including additional fencing and gates to prevent vehicles accessing the whole area would far outweigh the benefits. We should be encouraging users to walk, use bikes or public transport.

It is recommended that this request not be progressed.

## Dog Park Area

Our understanding is that this would be a relatively large enclosed gated area that would be used for dogs to be allowed to run off their leads. This could lead to conflict with and could deter other users of the recreation ground. It would also generate maintenance problems for grass cutting and keeping the surface free from dog mess. The village is surrounded by countryside where there are public footpaths that can be used for dog walking. The recreation ground is considered an unsuitable location for this activity.

It is recommended that this request not be progressed.

## Village Events

The recreation ground is an area in the village that can be used for one-off events such as fetes and informal sporting e.g. summer activities organised by YMCA. Sufficient grass area should be maintained so that such events can take place in the future.

## Other Suggestions

- Petanque – a game similar to bowls. A “pitch” is 4 x 15 metres and is gravel or dirt. Due to the nature of the surface the recreation ground may not be the best location. Further discussion is needed later in the plan period.
- Play area for toddlers/babies – there is equipment for toddlers in the children's play area, it is considered that a separate area is not required.
- Toilets – permanent structures are not permitted under the protective legislation although we do acknowledge that the only toilets in the village are associated with businesses such as cafes, pubs and the garden centre.
- Better grass less weeds – This can be addressed through the various projects listed above.
- Fixed table tennis table – Due to the type of equipment needed and maintenance requirements, the recreation ground may not be the best location.
- Equipment for seniors – will be included in the adult gym.
- Sensory garden (visually impaired) – Nice idea but location, access and maintenance could be problematic. Possibly explore alternative locations in the village.
- Play equipment for children (wheelchair users) – the children's playground is the ideal location and further discussion required.
- 'Low' tight rope walk - the children's playground is the ideal location and further discussion required.

## Funding

Once a specification is agreed on each project, full costings will be needed by obtaining quotes for the full project before any work is commenced. For example, the costs of the football goal posts is likely to include the posts themselves, installation of the posts, removal of the old posts and

repairing the damaged areas of grass.

For the purpose of budgeting, the following is proposed:

Basketball hoops and surface £3500

Football goals £2500

Informal running track £1000

Outdoor multi-gym £10000

Seating/covered £2500

If the costs exceed PC budgetary allowances the availability of grants should be investigated and applied for if appropriate.

## Timescale

Decide on priorities for the various individual projects suggested in this document.

Suggestions below:

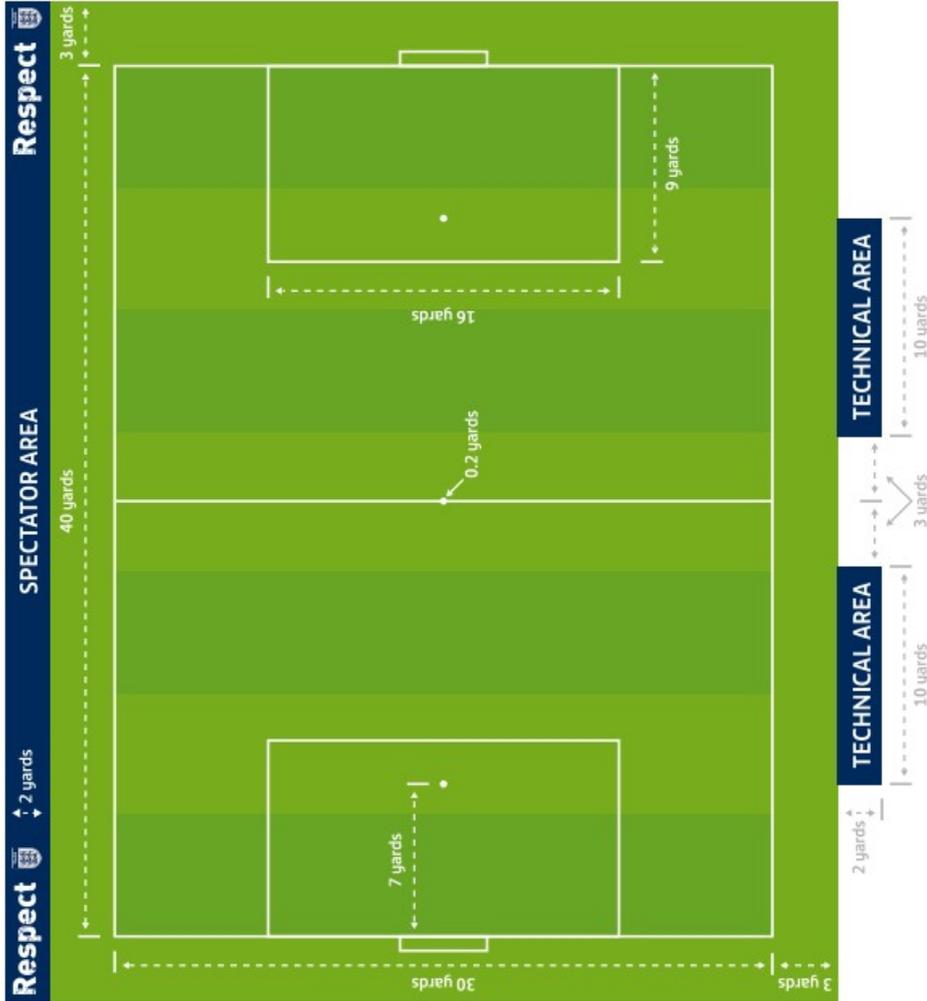
Year 1 – Basketball hoops

Year 2 - Football goal posts, wildflower area/informal running track

Year 3-4- Outdoor Adult Gym

Year 5 – additional seating





## 5-a-side football

### Mini Soccer U7 and U8 (5v5)

Recommended  
pitch size:  
40 x 30 yards

Recommended  
goalpost size:  
6 x 12 feet

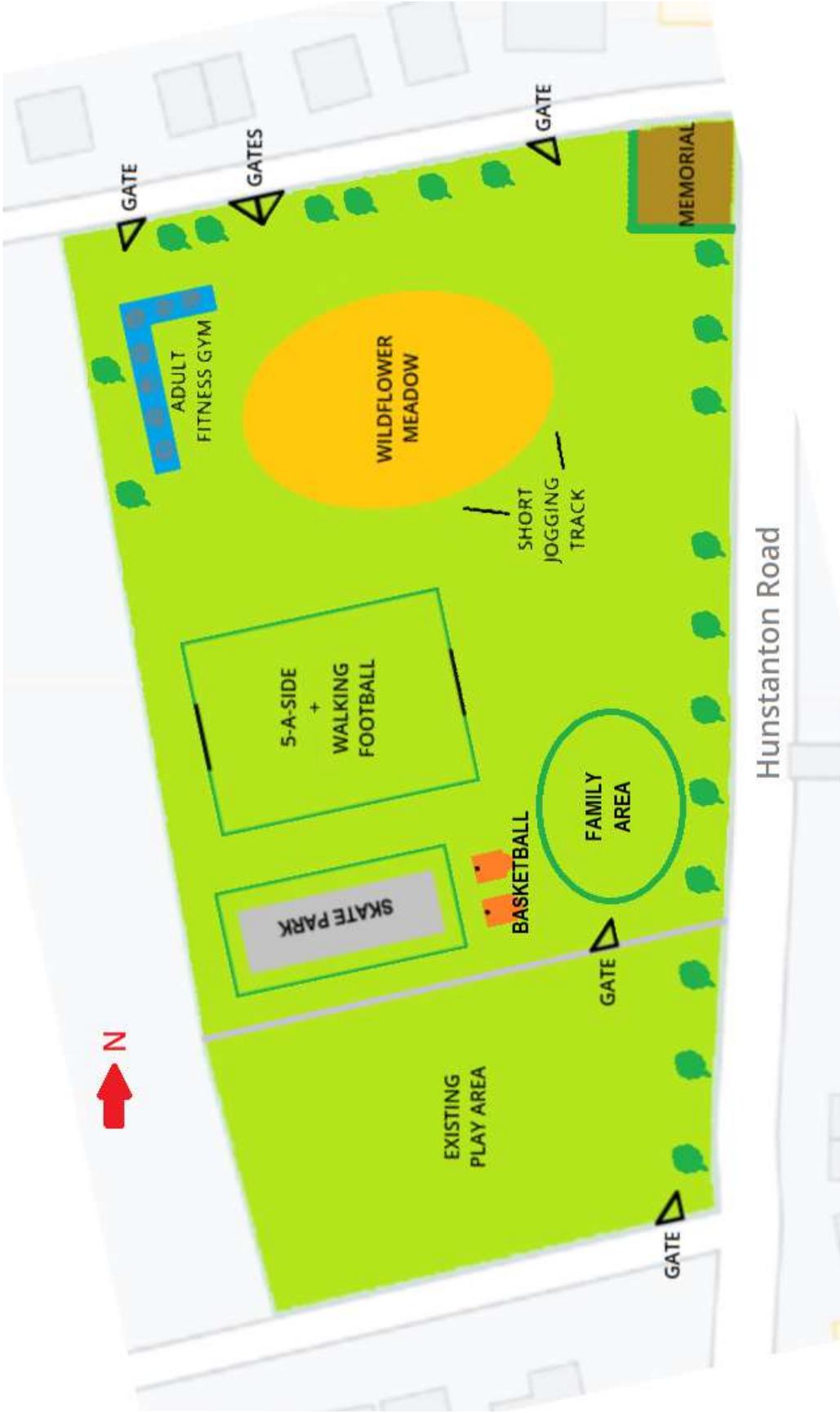
Note: The halfway  
line is also used  
as the retreat line  
when restarting  
play with a  
goal kick



FORZA aluminium 6 x 12 feet goal

**Typical outdoor adult gym equipment**





Hunstanton Road