

DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL RECREATION GROUND MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION JANUARY 2019

COMMENTS
Please consider a pedestrian hard surface access route around the perimeter of the recreation ground. This will enable wheelchair users and people with mobility problems (on boggy/uneven ground) to make full use of the Recreation Ground all year.
Perhaps a couple of picnic tables at the northern border
A kiosk (leased) facility for tea/coffee/light lunches in the spring/summer/autumn.
Access to toilet facilities
General refurbishment of the pavilion with easy access for the elderly - with ramps/rails
Yes agree to the demolition of the former groundsmans shed. Would be great if a basketball court could be included within this area.
There are no facilities for secondary school children, they are part of the Ditchling community.
It would not be a good idea to locate football or other activities into the field that is next to a wood and a camp site. For childrens' safety site lines need to be clear. It seems they have a problem in Adastra Park of drug taking and anti social behaviour after dark, keeping this aspect in mind we would not want this problem to transfer over to Ditchling. This area would be better put to use as a meadow field, could not solar lighting be put in, children would not be playing after 9.30pm.
With regards to a football pitch much needed, I note that Plumpton Football club play, yes their pitches do get flooded along with Adastra. The Hassocks Robins have no where to practice sometimes and use the Belmont pitch. It would be great to come to Ditchling, as both of our children do play at Plumpton and the Robins.
Yes agree there is nothing for nine year old girls, we often drive to Hurst, Hassocks and Plumpton for tennis, cricket and football.
Would not like to see more activities and equipment that would encourage older teenagers/young people to hang around the village.
I would not like a play area that is designated for older children, it won't be used and it would put off the parents of younger children, floodlights, any form of equipment that is noisy, making the play area dominate the northern end of the rec to the detriment of cricket and the surroundings, adult gym equipment they are never used.
Play area need very clearly defined and physically separated areas for the different age groups ie age 3-7 8-11 and 12+ small childrens areas should be well away from secondary age children, currently there is no equipment suitable for 8-11 age group.
I do not support floodlighting
I do not support outdoor gym equipment.
The current play area is used a lot for pre-schoolers and infant school age and therefore there should be significant focus on the provision of equipment for the 3-8 age group.
Desperate need to update the childrens' play area. It is very old and some equipment is potentially very dangerous now.
Residents are always travelling out of the village to much better, more well equiped parks.
I believe an outdoor gym would not be sufficiently used in the long term.

Point 17 should be a priority! The dog fouling in the village is a huge issue. Always avoiding dog and horse poo, my children are on 'poo-watch' on the way to school!!!
An all weather pathway around the perimeter of the recreation grounds, including the old rugby pitch so that small children in buggies, elderly people, wheelchairs etc can access the lovely green fields for exercise.
Please don't forget the Tai Chi group who use the space under the large tree near to the proposed childrens playground.
Please consider the noise and rubbish for new play area and impact on nearby residents. This must be planned and controlled especially when teens use this space at night in the dark. Keep the boundary of the childrens' play area well away from residents gardens.
Please consult with the owners of nearby properties in an organised and collaborating way, the residents had no prior information directly.
The childrens' play area certainly should be no bigger, just better organised.
12-16 year olds do not need a play area. They need tennis courts, running routes, football areas, basketball hoops.
What is the point of investing vast sums of money into a village which doesn't really need any of these developments, when you could be putting the money into actually deprived areas which need it?
Why are you attempting to make a rural village into a sub-urban area, it will simply ruin the village dynamic.
You're paying no attention to the cricket club, with it being heavily cut off by the new enlarged play area, which will almost definitely get barely any use, a pointless enterprise hindering the cricket club, which is the main user of these grounds.
We don't need any of these climbing, rock or other expensive climbing or fitness equipment, like the 'Rope and Dome Frame' at £25,000 when children could be doing that exercise in the actual outdoor area in this rural village.
Waste of money - having a negative impact on the village community.
I enjoyed my outdoor childhood, not a suburban one.
Why not invest this in a poor area of London or Brighton which will actually benefit?
I love what is already in these grounds - no need for improvements or replacements
I do not understand the want to renovate an existing working area, which has been around for years. The expansion of the children's play area, which is only in use roughly half the year, would disrupt two pre-existing establishments, of the football and cricket which both have a large following.
The new play equipment is costing incredibly high amounts of money, of which could be spent on repairing damaged roads, faulty lighting or on the local area in general. The park is in working condition and the expense and disruption is not worth it.
The proposed astro turf is a good idea as it promotes healthy behaviour in children all year round, however the flood lights simply do not work as this cost would be too high. Also the lights could not be turned on and off at specific times without disturbing local residents.
I think all the proposals are a very good idea.
It is great that such depth and thought is going into the plan and that public opinion is being sought.
Firstly an omission - please consider a Petanque (Boules) Court as a fairly low cost but great community facility
Improve play facilities for the over 8's - 15 year olds as we have nothing really in the village
Some better provision for small sports games on 'narrow field'.

Please consider noise levels with new equipment
I do not think it appropriate to put in pathways that urban/suburbanise what is a beautiful rural facility. I have raised three sons who have all loved the natural environment.
I am completely opposed to the demolition of the former groundsman's shed it has architectural merit as it is in keeping with the surrounding houses and would look great if restored and add to the setting enormously.
If there is funding for facilities for 13-16 year olds then proper funding for a youth group at the pavilion makes far more sense than equipment that is unlikely to be used.
I cannot emphasize enough that over sculpting of the recreation ground would ruin its natural, rural quality.
The cricket club's ability to play cricket on the ground that is presently in place will finish. Also the extension of the playground should not go to the fences of neighbouring properties.
The play equipment should be upgraded and the area possibly extended but I have lived here with children for 18 years and never been aware of there not being enough play facilities for children (who in the main have gardens anyway) so it should not be extended to the detriment of the natural environment, cricket/sports playing and neighbours.
Against the proposal for outdoor gym equipment and flood lighting the 5-a-side football pitch
For all weather 5-a-side pitch but with a more modest scope and less fencing, expansion of childrens' play area with some separation of younger and older childrens equipment and upgrading of access paths.
The extending of the play area would reduce the cricket pitch size which would have a negative effect on the cricket
Floodlights seem unnecessary, played football there when younger without floodlights.
The play area should be positioned on the Archery Club range, this is a huge area dedicated to a minority sport. Moving the play area to this space would also eliminate the risk to play area users from flying cricket balls!
Don't support floodlights on all weather pitch.
I regularly play cricket for Ditchling CC as do my 3 sons. I would be concerned that possibly the new play area at point 5 could lead to a safety issue with the potential for cricket balls to be hit accidentally into the play area.
I like the idea of an all weather football pitch
I also approve at developing the pavilion, we have a thriving junior cricket club and it would be great to see this extended for winter sports.
The position of the extended play area is completely inappropriate. The cricket club is the main user of this area with a thriving junior section. The extended area is way too near this and would be unsafe.
There is no need for a floodlit pitch. Local residents like to see the night not false light.
I brought up three boys here and live locally. They love the park as it is with the wooded area to play in. Although I think new play equipment would be good, in my view this should go in the far field. Please don't spend thousands changing what is already a lovely recreation ground.
I declare an interest as I have been involved in managing the pavilion for the last 12 years - it needs improving and could be better used.

Why not move the childrens play area north of the hedge onto the Northern field, then there is room for another tennis court. All plans have to be aware of the extent of the cricket pitch and how far the boundary extends. The cricket club are the biggest users of the recreation ground by far. There are not many clubs in the Country that are 200 years old!
Where would the groundsmans hut move to with refrence to option 12?
The cricket club has a massive junior section which uses the recreation ground extensively
Car Park extension and clamping down on unlawful or anti-social activities are very important.
Shaded area for mothers/babies and group of seats
The existing equipment caters for 2-7 year olds in practice - good to improve/increase provision. Need to keep toddler pre school equipment securely fenced and separate from older children. As a regular user duing the day, toddlers to preschool are main users. Good to make provision for 7+ 16 year olds unlikely to use play equipment.
Firmly against items 8/9/10 How are you going to implement item 17? Insurance, supervision, responsibility?
Second tennis court and shed to enable 'social' club to be developed
New play area for 0-11 year olds with swing for toddlers
New play space for 12-18 year olds MUGA style
Adult fitness circuit
More dog poo bins
Retain basketball net/practice area, retain roundabout, current slide climbing frame combination, seesaw. Needs new infant swings.
Two tennis courts to encourage social activities - no floodlights
Outdoor gym - excellent idea
Kickwall for football and tennis practice
Borehole only - No second storey to pavilion
An area for 11-16 year olds such as climbing rock
Dog fouling is a nuisance
Against 5 - do not increase age to 16 - small children are really put off by having much bigger ones there.
Against 8 - no new 5-aside pitch, no levelling, no floodlighting. Children run wild in that field and have family picnics there in the summer.
Against 10 - a complete waste of space and money.
Provision of public toilets
Management of the use of the faciilites and provision and appropriate funding relating to litter and missuse
Provision of additiional rubbish/dog bins
Drainage certainly needed
Generally a good scheme provided it is managed well
I am against 5, 8 & 10

We are a young, local family who love the outdoors. Our children would hugely benefit from improvements to the play area and equipment.
Our children absolutely love sport and we would welcome further opportunities for them to develop their football/netball skills
I do think there should be further consideration regarding public toilets, overall it's a fantastic plan.
Jen de Soule pitch
I would like a 'Petank' or Jen de Bowles pitch - French game they play in parks on gravel. It's a very good community activity - bringing all ages together and I think would be quite good value for money addition.
Would be keen to see improvement of playground for 3 years up
Would be keen to see improvement of pitch for football, rugby etc.
I like the idea of using the grounds for sports days and regular village events and more teams for women and girls.
Car Park - adding extra car parking is a priority, especially if increasing pavilion size and use. I would add a little more than you actually plan to assist on football/cricket match days, spillage onto the roads is already a problem
Pavilion - Great idea to extend/upgrade and add café facilities etc. Would like to make sure litter issues are addressed however. After matches/training/parties at the pavilion there is always a lot of debris left on the Recreation Ground, can we step up collections? Also would like to make sure there is a time curfew on events; music from events held does affect us as neighbours already sometimes. If it can be tightly policed however it shouldn't be a problem.
Borehole - Please prove this will be OK in terms of ground heave/subsidence for neighbouring houses. It is an issue in the area, otherwise good idea.
Tennis Court - If maintained well we'd use more. A proper booking system would be good - key and sheet in pavilion maybe? Add another court?
Anti-Social activities - Noise from the car park at night is sometimes an issue as youths sometimes park up to smoke, talk and listen to music from their cars or just rev engines, bikes, etc. More worryingly at times it feels like there may be low level 'dealing' going on. Items passed between windows when cars/motorbikes pull up to meet. A problem in any space like this but if manned or low level lighting/CCTV installed, that may help?
Might need higher barrier between cricket field and new play area extension because of ball danger? Needn't be ugly - trees/bushes to disguise?
Any thoughts or discussions on a community veg plot or garden area maintained by locals? I would be interested to help or be involved in this if ever became a possibility. Archery or five a side area might be ideal for this.
Possible petanque pitch
Sand areas always huge hit with children if can be kept free from animals
Crazy golf/pitch and putt run from pavilion
One more dog bin in archery field would capture quite a few more left bags/dog poo

Campers from Stoneywish often use hedge as toilet, quite often come across loo paper along it. Could we ask them to add porta loos or loo block to stop this?
Agree to more bins but not CCTV, fines are a waste of time and dog fouling will always continue
I think the existing play equipment (maybe not the roundabout) can be repaired the fact that it is made to last 20 odd years doesn't mean it has to be replaced after that time. I wonder if the playground is used sufficiently at present and not sure that the expense of new equipment would actually make any difference
More seating in the play area with tables would be welcome
A water fountain?
Would not want to see second storey on pavilion
Item 8 - too grand an idea for a village such as ours
Item 12 - Do not agree with demolition - outdoor table tennis is not popular enough the shed is pleasing to the eye and should remain.
Item 10 - Waste of money I doubt it would get used
Extended play area much needed as more and more families move into the village.
Table tennis fun for all ages.
Wildflower meadow important for ecology
5-aside pitch with lights great for older children and Dads/Mums too. Lighting adds to security. Walking football growing in popularity for the older generation
Outdoor gym - good for everyone
Car parking resurfacing nice to have but not high priority most locals walk/own wellies
All fantastic ideas
More dog poo bins
The recreation ground is such a popular area for children and the current play area simply doesn't prove an adequate solution to the needs of Ditchling School children
In the summer the playground is so popular after school that it just is not big enough to cater for the kids and adults that use it. The equipment is also tired and in much need of updating, some new facilities would be of such benefit to so many village people.
Adding another storey to the pavilion would make it too intrusive
Item 8 - no floodlighting
Upgrading the childrens play equipment especially with wood and natural materials, ie 7,8,10,14 options to provide for different ages and abilities. Removal of basket ball stand to make more room
Modernise (demolish and rebuild?) pavilion. Better marketing to get more clubs and usage of pavilion and grounds
The drainage of the football pitch has transformed the surface and the same should be done on the rugby pitch.
All of the footpaths proposed would be a good idea
I would suggest that the outdoor gym and the outdoor table tennis would likely be a waste of money that would be better used elsewhere.

More dog bins around the village
Barriers to prevent parking on grass verges around village.
Improved lighting on Recreation Ground
Skate Park
Shelter for teenagers
Somewhere to do gymnastics
As a young family I feel the most important part to improve would be the childrens play area. I feel as there are more and more families living in the areas this is a must as Ditchling doesn't offer a great deal for young families.
I also feel a big 5 aside football pitch would be extremely beneficial as it would constantly be in use and can possibly be used for school sports activities and clubs.
I have no idea why anyone would be against these proposals this is a great opportunity to improve the the childrens faciiliites for all ages and a massive social improvement for older children as well we need this!!
Amazing plans fingers crossed!!
The most important thing for us as a young family in the area would be for the space to be used as much for children of all ages, so we could spend a day there with all aged children.
Perhaps a small picnic area would be nice.
The best thing would be the football pitch!!
Not sure why the older generation in the village have a strong opinion against the money being spent on this - they say there is not many young families in the village - but there is loads!!! We need this for the future of our children.
An all weather ball court would be an amazing and invaluable addition for young teenage children in the village of which there are many!
Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Brownies would use the court for games outdoors (I help with Cubs and Brownies and there is no outdoor court that any youth groups can use currently without having to travel and pay)
Basketball, netball and football could all be played on the court, this would keep local children fit, healthy and busy! The Scout Hut is currently used for games but is too small and indoors.
Larger play area with things for older children, including table tennis table.
It would be good for the Scouts to have the use of a ball court and the older children in Ditchling.
I fully support the proposed improvements I have two small children who like to go to the Rec but the current provision is outdated and inadequate. If these improvements were made I am sure we would use the playground and the rec a lot more
We would use the outdoor table tennis and good for older children too!
Dog poo in particular is a real problem!
I am very keen to see the improvements to the childrens play area and pavillion. It is the same equipment I played on as a child and now my children are playing on old crumbled equipment
Children and teenagers need decent outdoor experiences to improve well being and mental health

Improving these facilities will also encourage more people to the village to then use the shops and cafes etc
If there was a possibility of the pavilion providing some sort of coffee/tea shop for people using the park I think that would be a winner!
I'm really supportive of lots of these proposals but can I make a plea that the rural nature of the recreation ground is not ruined.
Please don't put too many hard surfaces, signs in and no floodlighting - a bit of mud is part of rural life!
The current 5-aside football field is hardly used as it is not level and very muddy and the goals are poor. This would be an ideal place for an all weather court for boys and girls in the village to play sport
There is currently no netball court for girls to learn to play so it would be used by both sexes, boys for football and basketball and girls for both these and netball. For slightly older children this facility would be a brilliant addition.
More clubs running for teenagers in all sports including mixed teams for cricket, football, hockey and rugby.
I would definitely like to see more all weather access and facilities
Improvements to the tennis courts and a football pitch would be great!
My boys would love a skate park
Item 8 & 9 - I appose these suggestions as I feel they would both detract from the fields as they are. The stream is a charming and fun area to play with children in the summer and I think would look out of place and take away from the lovely rural feel of the recreation ground as would flood lights
I have not selected the classic swings (14) from the play list as I presume the old swings will stay? Same with the slides?
I have a 3 & 5 year old and the most popular equipment are the swings and slide, please keep these.
I feel improvements should be made to existing equipment in current locations but expansion of other areas should be carefully considered so as to not upset the balance of this beautiful space. We need to be wary of overdevelopment.
Overall the improvements I'd like to see are more opportunities for children from toddlers to teenagers to enjoy the rec in all weathers. I think this is best achieved through expansion and improvements of the play area and the addition of an all weather pitch.
The creation of a wild flower meadow area would add another facet and offset the loss of grass to the all weather pitch.
Outside gym absolutely in a block together
Extended play area very beneficial
Difficult to make small 5-aside multi purpose as on a slope
Petanque/Bowles Court - great potential for all demographics from children to older folk. Promotes a valuable social interaction opportunity for the villagers at minimal costs
Move archery site further towards Stoneywish, can prevent casual usage at peak times, ie weekends.
I think the most important change that could be made is extending and upgrading the childrens play area. In order to do this I think that the removal of the current basketball stand is vital. If this is going to be removed it should be replaced with something such as a new all weather sports pitch.
I am also a firm believer that the environment should be protected and wildlife allowed to thrive so the creation of a new wildflower/grassland meadow area is another important improvement.

I also think that the Recreation ground needs to be used more in general,so more use of the grounds for athletics and summer events is also going to make a large difference.
Strongly support upgrade of childrens play area
Wood is best for playgrounds not metal (ugly, hard, dangerous)
Table tennis - option 1 or 3 please not circular one
A good mix of table tennis and wooden equipment would be fab
Against gym equipment, people don't use it and unsightly
Keep the tennis we use it and love it
Please cut down big tree at northern end (by mushrooms) it is too tall and very ugly
We strongly support the upgrade to the recreation ground
I would love to see table tennis tables and an expanded childrens play area.
Rope climbing frames and a zip wire would be such fun.
A keep fit zone and a basket ball court would give my older children an area of activity in the park which would be amazing.
We love the tennis court and use it regularly, please don't get rid of this!
Petanque Courts - social interaction for all plus club opportunity for competitions and utilise pavilion more in conjunction, could be bookable like the tennis court at popular times or free to utilise. Cheap to keep in order once completed. Suggest seat size wooden boundaries to enclose areas.
Item 13 - Remove and improve childrens are to incorporate older children
Item 7 - Keep nature going - remove archery.
Item 8 - Utilise this area for more sports by leveling and improving
Item 10 - Think would be used here if appropriate equipment purchased.
Very much in support of the plans and would like to see more girls getting into sport
I have two children aged 2 & 5 we use the play park regularly. However, I feel that the current equipment does not appeal to older children.
A new hard surface path leading from the pavilion would be very useful as the field currently gets very water logged and difficult to navigate, especially with a pram.
I think it is important to have at least one disabled friendly piece of equipment and accessibility, we already have a roundabout which hopefully we can keep.
I don't understand why everything is being cramped into one area when the archery is being allocated an entire field for use on 2 days.
The size of the new play area seems to be very close to the cricket field and could easily cause problems for anyone in the area.
Will there be toilets nearer to the play area?
I am concerned that the Rec is in danger of losing its charm and character if too much is going on?
I am firmly in favour of the proposals!

New play equipment for the play area, table tennis, zip wire, climbing wall/frame plus activities for smaller children
We have two young children and end up visiting other parks with better facilities, ie Plumpton, Lindfield. We would love to see these improvements and believe they would be used and loved by many.
Thanks you for all the hard work involved in this consultation, it looks so exciting.
Increasing the age range of the play facilities for children would be really beneficial for local children.
Improving access with hard surfaced paths would benefit children/pushchairs/wheelchair users/elderly.
Most important points for us - expanding the use of the ground and maximising it as a resource to the school and all the village; extending the equipment for children in the form of equipment to play on and meadow to make it nice for the community to hang out in.
I think if the car park can be done in a National Trust kind of way which is sympathetic to the surroundings it will set the scene for the whole area, rather than tarmac which has to be softened by additional planting and can look harsh in rural villages.
The childrens play area is quite shaded in parts making some areas and equipment wetter and colder, plus they lose the sun. Can this be looked at with a view to topping the trees where equipment is sited?
An area for Petanque is a lovely idea
Ensuring there is an area of this park which is fully enclosed for dog walking
Is there scope for a quite area for sitting, reading, perhaps landscaped with flower beds, etc?
Could there be an area designated for community art projects? Perhaps installations that could be renewed annually (maybe but not necessarily connected with the museum or open houses). Perhaps something like the plinth in Trafalgar Square, something that has a new project each year that the school, museum, village groups and artists could contribute to. This could be part of an area as mentioned above, maybe even an amphitheatre (There's a lovely one in Dyke Road park in Brighton)
Improvements to the playground needs to encompass 'basics' such as slide, something for climbing, swings for toddlers and older children and seesaw.
Firstly, I'd like to say improving the Rec is a great idea.
Upgrading the pavilion and extending and upgrading the childrens play area are both vital.
I also support all the infrastructure improvements necessary to support this.
The all weather sports pitch would be great especially for the older kids.
I am not sure how much use the outdoor gym would get
I don't think the car park should be extended.
The only idea I'd like to add would be a pump track (for bikes and BMX) possibly in the woodland 'snake pit' area.
We would be very supportive of increased security to reduce the frequent late night meetings with cars revving, some unusual behaviour which can be intimidating living next door to.
Removing current basketball area and renew - need to make sure there is a basketball area as this is used a lot.

Extending and upgrading the childrens park - however please include all children not just ages 3-16 as a park is a really important part of family fun for young children too. My daughter is 2 years old and we have visited the park regularly sincw she she was 6 months old - a park should be suitable for all age of children.
We are so excited about the new park, as are many parents in the village - thank you.
Extending and upgrading the childrens play area to provide equipment for 3-16 year olds would be invaluable for all the younger children living in and around Ditchling and families, essential for skills and play.
Creation of wildflower/grassland meadow would be a super edition - essential for wildlife and appreciating the environment we live in
A bike track - 'pump track' for children/older children to use - a track for children to practice off the road on their bikes/bigger kids more advanced space to bike.
Sports pitch for use by many sports would be a great edition for range of ages.
Grounds used for more athletics/summer events - Park Run maybe?
Borehole - a great idea for use of water, ground water for sprinklers etc.
Firstly, thank you this is a superb presentation showing great imagination.
I think that our village would benefit greatly from almost all your suggestions. We are an incredibly youthful village with a thriving primary school, multiple sporting communities (Football/Tennis/Cycling/Archery etc) and a tremendous community spirit (Sports Day/Ball). The facilities we currently have don't however make it very easy to enjoy our lives as much as we could.
A bigger burial ground, because in 60 years time I'd like to still be part of this Rec!
Not on the list, but maybe a BMX track?
By all means replace worn out play equipment but leave it at that.
The whole plan is urbanisation of a village recreation ground.
It seems irresponsible to be spending £80,000 of public money to benefit so few - just a handful of teenagers.
If there is to be a new all-weather pitch this would cancel out the need for a ball court noted on the play equipment list.
I also think its really important that the 'basics' playground equipment is covered, ie slide accessible for toddlers and older children, swings I note there are no toddler friendly swings in the options, something to climb.
It's a shame there are no sand-play options like the park at Plumpton
Spinning dishes like numbers 26 & 33 can cause fits in children.
I think this is a wonderful proposal and much needed for the village. Ditchling is behind in neighbouring villages in terms of its offering and this goes to make it up to date and make it a vibrant and bustling community and a lovely place for families - well done.
Replace childrens pieces as needed
Add a few adult gym items
Don't put hard paths to urbanise the village even more
We don't need another café we already have four, one of those is only yards from the recreation ground.
No CCTV cameras

Do not support urbanising a rural area
Agree with updating and keeping equipment safe but not the Disney suggestions 1-43
Why encourage more traffic, people and potentially anti-social and criminal behaviour?
Another café why? Again more traffic, there are plenty of cafes in Ditchling.
Will there be limited hours for usage?
Definitely no CCTV
Note problems at other parks in Sussex. What is Police response time to anti-social behaviour?
Negative effect on local property prices
Will there be a referendum about this - not just a focus group opinion?
£80,000 on just 150 individuals is excessive
Late night noise from youths
Promoting the pavilion as a venue centre encouraging late night events and noise to local residents
Ditchling is becoming a suburb - retain rural atmosphere
Childrens play area separate areas needed for older 11- 16 year olds, to include reposition of basketball stand
Wildflower meadow/grassland problem establishing due to dogs exercising
Floodlights intrusive to local homes
Sports hall in pavilion to accommodate badminton courts - size suitable for activities such as dance/fitness classes/Tai Chi etc with appropriate floor surface as village hall not suitable due to design as a theatre.
There are no specific proposals for upgrading the pavilion, but about two years ago I attended a meeting in the Parish Office to discuss the requirements of a number of clubs/groups. (Morris/playgroup etc). My particular interest is in the provision of a Morris rehearsal area and subsequent to this meeting I advised the Council of our requirements. None of these have been addressed. Ditchling Morris has been established since 1985 and supports events in the village. We originally practised in the Scout HQ but for the last two years have practiced in the URC Church Hall in Hassocks. We would dearly love to move back to the village. The Village Hall is unsuitable because of length and width, so we are looking for a space in excess of that in the VH. There are also no badminton courts and at present no resources available. So to summarise, Ditchling Morris who support St James & St Peters Hospice would like to be able to come back to the village for practicing and this space could also be used for badminton.
Flood protection garden at bottom of slope on the North field
All weather running/walking track around perimeter of the grounds
Option 8 the suggestion of a road next to the stream to allow cars to drive up to the proposed all weather pitch near the cemetery - one of the reasons I would oppose this idea is that the field as it stands, is a safe car free area at the moment, which means I can let my children run free (same with pets). If there were to be a road built, even a very low usage one, it would mean that freedom to roam for children would be taken away. It is one of the few safe spaces I can take my kids and its important that they have room to be independent and carefree. It would change the useage of that field for families and pet owners.

The playground area has not meet the needs of local children and those who come from outside Ditchling. It needs safer modern and more engaging equipment for both under 5's and older children.

There is no level access for children with needs (not necessarily physically disabled) and equipment is not strong enough.

The draining needs improving so that the play area can be accessed all year round.

Providing an all weather pitch would enable clubs to meet regularly throughout the winter (not just the dry weather) and could be used for many clubs for all ages and abilities. Riding bikes (and learning for little ones)

The older children need more opportunities in the village to engage with sport and social activity which these proposals would support.

I really look forward to the exciting changes - I have a four year and 7 year old boy who attends the local school, although we live in Hassocks, we access the facilities through the year.

I have had the opportunity to view the proposals for the improvements to the recreation ground I welcome the PC's initiatives and I in principal have no objections to most of the improvements which are well intended. However, there are two aspects which I am afraid will need a rethink. The extension of the play area means that it would encroach onto the cricket playing area. Even if the proposed new play area is reduced in size, it is still likely to extend to an area very close to the cricket pitch boundary which presents an obvious danger to any child or person using the play area. The drawings that show the current boundary to the cricket playing area are wrong and the boundary is much nearer the childrens play area than is currently shown. The proposed pathway along the western edge of the recreation ground together with tree planting also encroaches onto the cricket playing area. This is demonstrated in one of the drawings where the cricket boundary line simply disappears from view. Finally, despite playing at the recreation ground for 200 years, it was rather dissapointing to note that the cricket club was not even mentioned on the list of sports clubs.

As long standing residents of Ditchling and equally long-standing neighbours of the Recreation Ground we do not believe the Rec should be preserved in aspic, but we also hoped and expected, not unreasonably, that any proposals to amend it would be created with sensitivity and understanding for those who live adjacent to it. This does not appear to be the case up to this point and it is our sincere hope that before any further decisions are made, the council can make efforts to speak with us and our neighbours to take onboard our very real concerns about safety, noise, disturbance, anti-social behaviour and more. (Letter included in appendix)

Congratulations to the PCC for starting the consultation process on how the Recreation Ground (“RG”) should be upgraded and utilised by current and existing generations. Our family house abuts the RG, I have used it for over 45 years and my children, 12 and 8, use the play area and also represent the village at cricket. In the last forty five years I do not recall the play area being “full”, that said fresh equipment and a slightly larger area along side the tennis court makes sense. However, the area planned covers not only part of someone’s garden but also part of the cricket pitch. It makes no sense to expand the play area so that its occupants are in danger of being hit by cricket balls – many land in that area. Further the hard surfaced path would also encroach on the playing area to little if any benefit. I do not see why it is needed having walked that route for many decades without incident or problem. The cricket club is one of the oldest in the country and it has consistently contributed to the RG being kept in good condition and constructive use. I hope the PCC is consulting closely with them and the other clubs to make sure that their substantial contribution to village life is recognised and supported. Turning to the future use of the RG I believe the PCC has a unique opportunity to initiate material change that benefits all users of the RG. All proposals should be centred around a new pavilion in a better location. The existing pavilion is well past its design life and urgently needs replacement before further money is wasted patching it up. Since I can remember everyone has agreed that the pavilion should be demolished with a new pavilion being built between the cricket pitch and the old rugby pitch – the current compost pile has some of the best views of the Downs in Sussex – it would be a good starting point. A pavilion in this location would better serve the whole recreation ground, all the clubs and provide a facility for a nursery during the week in a glorious setting for early years learning. It would also provide income to support the ongoing maintenance of a new pavilion and the RG.

If funding were no object then a levelled astroturf pitch on the old rugby pitch would be a great asset to the village.

The existing car park can easily be improved with access to the new pavilion across the field and along the path to the burial ground Lottery funding should be available for such a development. Until the question of a new pavilion is addressed any proposals for the RG are, to my mind, only scratching the sides. I look forward to seeing the proposals being developed in the coming months.

I think the most important priority should be the pavilion, which is now not really fit for purpose. Ditchling has one of the oldest cricket clubs in the country and a thriving membership. Many fixtures take place, both for adults and juniors and the current changing facilities including the showers and toilets are just not good enough. To rebuild this would probably be the best option and I feel sure grants are available and that villages would subscribe. Of course with a new and upgraded pavilion use would be improved for all age groups and for all sorts of activities.

I agree with the suggestions that the car park be extended.

Whilst recognising that the playground needs upgrading and agreeing with the suggestion that it could be extended both to east and west I disagree with the proposed extension to the south which would affect residents in Barnfield Gardens. I cannot see that much more equipment is needed - it is very rare that children are waiting to use the existing facilities.

Whilst it might be nice to have outdoor table tennis and other such play equipment available, this has been tried in the past and the bats, etc have disappeared within a week.

With regard to the proposal about coaching for women and girls, cricket coaching is already available for both boys and girls and is given on a weekly basis during the summer months.

I believe the proposed footpath around the tennis court should be to the east, rather than the west of the court to make it easier to use.

I grew up Ditchling where my mother still lives and I've played cricket here for 40 years although I currently live in Albourne. My sons now play at Ditchling and I coach cricket.

I only today became aware of these proposals so haven't had much opportunity to consider properly but it's good to see some investment in the Recreation Ground is being considered. It would be great to draw in more of the community. However, I'm really not sure of the need for a pathway along the hedge from the pavilion to the childrens' play area. People walk along this way all the time. Why the need to cover with tarmac?

And is there a need to enlarge the playground to such a degree? I've never seen it full.

In my view, what the Recreation Ground really needs is a new pavilion sited in the north east corner of the cricket pitch near the stream and existing compost heap. This pavilion would have stunning views of the Downs and be a real focal point for the village. Access could be created parallel to the stream from the lane servicing the graveyard with parking on the field that slopes westerly down to the stream and lies adjacent to the graveyard. A pavilion here would provide wonderful views across the sports pitches and to the Downs. It would service both the existing cricket pitch and the old rugby pitch now used by archers. These are my immediate thoughts and I look forward to seeing how proposals progress.

There are 3 main areas that I would ask you to consider -

1. Impact on Cricket As laid out in its current form it will dramatically affect all the cricket played on the Rec, significantly intruding into the area required to play the matches. It would particularly disrupt the junior matches that are played on the top wickets. The pathway along the hedge would impact almost every match played, and over 30 years of attending the Rec in winter and summer I would suggest is simply not required and would go largely unused. The expansion of the playground proposed is now so extensive and as currently laid out would also have a disastrous and very tangible impact on the ability of DCC to play its matches – matches involving literally hundreds of people each year. As the cricket club has been a good tenant of the Rec for many, many years and provides much to the local community, I think it reasonable that our ongoing activities not be so significantly impacted (affecting hundreds of adults and children). Only recently we were asked to bear a significant burden on behalf of the football club.

2. Impact on safety In terms of safety I would suspect that a 30/40ft metal fence on 2 sides would be needed to protect kids from cricket balls which land (from a great height) in the area proposed. There is a ground we play at where this set up exists to protect a playground and it's a large eyesore and a very intrusive structure. Further, with a concrete or tarmac walkway along the boundary, then protection for players sliding on to that would also be required to avoid injury.

3. Impact on environment / aesthetic Environmentally there is surely a significant impact to be considered. The idea of laying hundreds of yards of concrete/tarmac across such a beautiful setting simply to walk along, and then digging up further thousands of sq. yards to tarmac for a playground where for generations people have walked and played happily on the grass seems difficult to square with all our desire to not impact our environment unnecessarily. Are we in Ditchling of the view that walking along firm, well cared for grass is not acceptable and that we need a concrete / tarmac path? Such intrusion/impact on nature must be very carefully considered. Are we not all agreed that we want LESS intrusion and more natural environment? It's been that way for hundreds of years, what's the argument for imposing man made structure? So many kids currently play under the trees (and run about > playing) in the most natural way, with sticks, mud and stones; the formalisation of that to a huge "playground" with fences is difficult to support. The existing plans also appear to enclose a tree laid in memory of a previous president, taking it off the boundary of the cricket pitch (his wish) and putting it inside a kids play area. The negative impact is large and is difficult to balance against the marginal added benefit. These plans are disproportionate and unsympathetic to the existing well balanced use of the space. The harmony that exists has grown over many years and is well tended to by all the users of the space – with each respecting the others requirements. There already is a great playground and people walk happily along the narrow (but wholly suitable) space between hedge and boundary to reach it. All 3 of my kids used that playground happily (as do all their friends) for many year and the youngest still does regularly. I believe that It's also significant that even at the height of the summer, on a Saturday afternoon it was never full, they never waited to use the facilities. Having a great playground is a wonderful asset and so, could that playground be enhanced, rides updated and even extended? Of course it could! But surely in a more sympathetic and balanced way which meets the actual demand of the kids/families who wish to use it without impacting so much on others.

I think it's important to note that the cricket club would certainly welcome any ideas to make the existing footprint more accessible to the community at large, to add facilities for kids and families to use the pavilion or event extend it. But with the shared goal of not impacting on the existing use of the land and not changing the ascetic (or rec at Ditchling being the envy of so many public spaces) so dramatically. We have demonstrated that clearly over the last few years. We would respectfully ask that the plans be reconsidered, with more emphasis on the balanced use of the space, consideration of the environment, the natural beauty and the significant impact the current plans would have on the hundreds of years of cricket that has been played on the Rec.

Please ensure that the slide has steps to access it, not just a climbing frame type of access. Young children cannot use climbing frames, so step access is vital for young children to be able to use it.

Different types of swings are needed for different ages

Please note missing from the play equipment list is a baby toddler swing (a swing that is an enclosed safe seat) This is the only equipment that a baby up to 1 year old can use and the only swing a child up to 3 years can use - they will fall off regular open swings.

Play equipment - don't really agree with any of them, played there when younger without any of it.

Appendix 1 - letter from resident

Appendix 2 - letter from resident