

Malpas Recreation Ground Chairman's Report

August 2017 – September 2018

Introduction:

The period from August 2017 – September 2018 has been a relatively quiet year again for the Trust and the Management Committee.

Accounts and Finance:

An audited set of accounts for the year ending March 2017 were submitted to and accepted by the Charity Commissioners in December 2017. These accounts reported a total of £308,563 in unrestricted funds consisting of the freehold property of 34 Hughes Lane valued at £229,772 and funds held of £78,791.

Expenditure for the year was £ 6,144, this against an income of £16,113 from a house and car park rental.

Monthly income from the letting of a 4 bedroom property continues to ensure financial sustainability for the Trust.

Site Review

With completion of the neighbouring housing development site, the Trust has taken back control of the area previously used as a Stewart Milne workers compound. The increase in financial expenditure during the year was mainly due to the Trustees decision to fence this area off; this to prevent vehicle access to the site. In addition over the winter period, I have planted up the gaps in the hedge bordering Oak Tree Rise with Hawthorne hedging plants.

The site continues to be used by the Malpas Alport Primary School for their weekly games period and their periodic sports days.

In addition, regular keep fit classes for women have been run on a twice weekly basis for most of the year. There was a break in this activity over the summer period, but this will now be resumed with the Trust being satisfied the operation is insured and is acting in a respectful manner towards all site users.

The site was again provided free of charge for the popular and well attended Village Fair; this in line with the trust principle objective of supporting leisure activities for Malpas residents. The Trustees and I assisted with the logistics of the Fair once again.

Six years ago, Japanese Knotweed was discovered growing on the verge on Tilston Road and starting to invade the Recreation Ground. Cheshire West Council had failed to act in a timely manner, which has resulted in an ongoing problem for the Trust.

Work to eradicate the plant has been carried out again this year, and this yearly attention to this matter is resulting in a significant reduction of the plant. However, it is likely some further action will again be needed next year.

Safety and Anti-social Behaviour:

During the reporting period, I have made weekly inspections of the site. These visits consist of an inspection of the play equipment to identify and potential hazards or defects, and also pick litter off the site.

Any defects identified are normally remedied within appropriate timescales, or reported to the appropriate responsible body. Visits, issues and actions taken are recorded in a log book.

Broken glass in the MUGA area has been a regular issue during the year and following an evidenced report from one of the Oak Tree Rise residents, I held a meeting with the Headmaster of the Bishop Heber School on 22nd June to highlight the problems.

In addition an incident of glass in the sand pit has been highlighted on the Malpas Village Facebook Page as being a deliberate act aimed at causing harm to children.

I personally feel the issue was blown up out of all proportion, and I must record that I am bitterly disappointed in two members of the Management Committee with their comments aimed at undermining myself and the trusts activities.

The weekly safety inspections highlight numerous occasions where glass bottles have been broken on the play equipment or the sandstone rocks. On no occasion have I had any suspicions that there was deliberate intent to do children harm.

However, a meeting was held with two Police Community Safety Officers and concerned residents on the 1st August. A number of suggested actions and a method of approaching unruly youngsters were offered as potential solutions.

A 12 monthly inspection, conducted to BSEN Standards, was undertaken by Morral Play Services certified Inspector on 26th August 2017.

A feedback report was received and any outstanding issues are being addressed.

Dog waste has continued to be a minor issue on the site as it is in the rest of the village. The situation has improved since the re-opening of the footpath through the housing development site, with further reduction of the problem taking place following visits to the village by the Cheshire West Council Dog warden. I would ask the committee to report names of any known offenders to Cheshire West Council.

Management Committee:

Over the last few years it has become increasingly difficult to recruit new committee members, and for the reporting period we have only had 10 Committee members in total.

It is hoped that now we have new residents as close neighbours, we will be able to recruit a full complement of 12 committee members,

Future Strategy:

The strategy for the future is to develop the site in a unique manner with some greater emphasis on a park with open green spaces on its north western perimeter.

Some of the possible changes to be considered for 2018 - 2019 include:

Remove some scrub trees and bushes from the boundaries on the Tilston Road and Love Lane.

Improve the site boundary fencing.

The vision for the future is one of a well-used and maintained green space capable of being enjoyed by all residents and visitors to the village.

Chris Whitehurst,

Chairman

Malpas Recreation Ground Management Committee
16th September 2018