

Update from the Weir Meadow Working Group (WMWG) and Joint Projects Fund Raising Group (JPFRG)

1. Introduction

Since the last update (12th March 2024) there has been one meeting of the WMWG and JPFRG on 29th April.

2. Sports pitches

The first cut took place on 26th April and then it rained again. Ground conditions permitting, mowing is scheduled to re-start on 10th May and weekly thereafter until the cricket club take over – see below.

3. Lease and ground maintenance arrangements.

Lease arrangements are all effectively complete save for the drawing of an accurate plan which can only be done when the ground dries out and the grass is cut. We need to know the exact position of the boundary, touchlines, the position of the artificial wicket, the overlap with the football pitch etc. Once done, documents will then be signed and completed. In summary, the cricket club have been granted a one-year lease starting when the artificial wicket is laid for a rent of £500.00 per year in arrears. The lease will cover the cricket pitch area only. The cricket club have agreed to mow not only the cricket pitch but also the entire field (including the football pitch) subject to IPC providing a suitable mower. It is proposed that the football club do not have a lease as such but rather a licence agreement allowing them to hire the football pitch on a game-by-game basis.

The purchase of a mower is the next objective. Nick Bradley is progressing a grant application to Sport England via its “Movement Fund” which is focused on informal exercise and recreation. A huge amount of work is required to complete the application. The fund offers grants of up to £15K. Purchasing a second-hand mower is most cost effective in the Autumn. It is thought a mower of suitable spec. will cost in the region of £10-£15K. As previously noted, the cricket club does have a mower, but it is not large enough to take on the mowing of five to six acres. A lockable container will also have to be purchased in which to store it.

There is also the possibility of funding from the Football Association, but we need to have the football pitch in place and marked out before pursuing this avenue of grant.

Trespassing and illegal occupation of the field remains a concern despite the installation of an industrial spec. gate that is locked. **The committee recommends IPC installs two ground raising bollards just inside the entrance gate. Estimated cost - £450.00**

4. National Lottery Fund

A previous grant application to the National Lottery Fund was successful with an award of £9,825.00 having been paid to IPC approximately 16 or so months ago. The award was based on the following;

350 metres of fencing at £11.00 per metre - £3,850.00.
500 tree whips - £1,000.00.
Labour to prepare ground and plant trees - £1,850.00.
Two memorial benches - £1,000.00.
Interpretation board and signage - £1,500.00.
15 x bird nest boxes and 10 x dormouse nest boxes - £625.00.

It is a requirement that this grant money is spent by August 2024 with a six-month extension having already been granted. Planting of the whips can only take place next winter and until the grass is cut, the pitches laid out, the car park boundary identified etc. it is difficult to know where to plant. On reflection, WMWG thought it would benefit the community more if £1,000.00 was transferred from the tree budget to the bench budget thus increasing the bench budget to £2,000.00. Further, as Weir Meadow is a recreation ground, rather than plant a large number of trees, it was felt more appropriate to pre-order container grown, specimen trees (approx. 10 – 15 in total) and plant these out next winter with the Northern Fields woodland designer (see below) having an input on the type of trees and their location.

Ten “A-frame” picnic tables and one bench were purchased and have been stored in the cricket pavilion for a total cost of £2,213.00. These tables and benches are the same spec. as those in the Orchard. Some could be placed in Northern Fields. The excess £213.00 is to be funded from the money raised at the pancake breakfast (£300.00). **A volunteer group needs to be raised to erect the tables as they have been delivered flat packed.**

Fencing approximately 150 metres alongside the stream with two pedestrian gates (and a 12’ gate also into the triangular field next to Plane Trees) has been instructed and will take place when ground conditions permit in July probably.

The fifteen bird nest boxes have been installed. Ten dormouse nest boxes have not yet been installed.

Design of the interpretation board and general signage with a grant of £1,500.00 is to be undertaken shortly before the grant deadline.

5. Artificial Wicket

The cricket club is installing an artificial wicket for a total cost of £11,917.00 plus VAT. The cricket club is providing the funding for these works and has transferred the money to IPC. David Howe has completed contractual paperwork. Installation due to start on 12th August 2024.

6. Car Park

With the purchase of a mower the priority, WMWG consider the creation of a car parking area to be the second priority. This project is on hold until the mower is bought and paid for.

7. Northern Fields Community Woodland

Julia Matthews has been appointed to act for and advise IPC in this regard. A Phase 1 application has recently been lodged with the Forestry Commission for grant aid under the Woodland Creation Design Scheme. Again, this required another huge amount of work. If

approved, we can move to Stage 2 which focuses on the design of the woodland itself and community consultation.

8. Ide Revel

A subcommittee has been formed to consider the feasibility of a “grand opening” of Weir Meadow in late Summer when the artificial wicket has been laid and the grass is established. Members of the group include Cheryl Haddy, Rachel Herbert, Liz Sharman, Charlotte McGregor, Dave and Laura Farrow and Peter Skinner. A couple of meetings have taken place to date. Following a referral of initial plans to the last meeting of WMWG and JPFRG and subject to IPC approval it is suggested that:

- Takes place on Saturday 7th September 2024.
- It’s branded the “Ide Revel”.
- Open to all – no selling tickets or payment on entrance.
- Comprising of activities such as fun cricket match, 5-a-side football, BBQ, fish and chip van, junior obstacle course, Northern Fields woodland display tent/gazebo, other fun village activities, tea and cake tent, bar, music, auction of promises.
- We will need marquee, bar, loos, generator etc which are estimated to cost £5K in total if hired on the open market.
- Noted that IPC are not able to underwrite such a venture but understood that IPC would consider funding the loos and generator. All other plant, equipment to be begged, borrowed etc from the village.
- Finances to be run through a third-party account.
- The aim is to draw as many people in as possible, so this is not a fund raiser but important to break-even.

9. Next Meeting

The next combined meeting of WMWG and JPFRG is scheduled for 3rd June.

Peter Skinner 08.05.2024.

END