**Update from the Weir Meadow Working Group (WMWG) and**

**Joint Projects Fund Raising Group (JPFRG)**

1. **Introduction**

Since the last update (16th July 2024) there has been one meeting of the WMWG and JPFRG on 19th August 2024 added to which there have been numerous sub-committee meetings in relation to the Ide Revel.

1. **Sports pitches**

Mowing continues on a weekly basis. The contractor (County Grounds Maintenance) got very behind with their invoicing. They have been chased and a batch of invoices has been collated and sent onto IPC for payment bringing invoicing up to date as at 31st August 2024. Soil samples will be taken in the autumn to ascertain what, if any, fertiliser needs to be applied in either the autumn or the spring. There are numerous bare patches throughout Weir Meadow. Given last autumn / winter / spring’s wet weather the plan is to undertake localised re-seeding by hand (volunteers) in the spring.

1. **Lease and ground maintenance arrangements**

Documentation for the lease of the cricket pitch area only to the cricket club has been completed. Basic details regarding the lease were included in the last update.

A previous application for grant funding to Sport England via its “Movement Fund” was rejected on the grounds (if I remember correctly) that there was a lack of inclusivity and the project as a whole would not see inactivity reduced – precisely the opposite in fact being the reality.

A lockable container (possibly two) will also have to be purchased in which to store the tractor mower and associated equipment.

The committee is investigating the merits and costs of a path around the eastern perimeter of Weir Meadow together with a timber boardwalk over the swale area as this area becomes very wet and boggy in the winter. The purpose would be to encourage dog walkers etc. to use the path around the perimeter when the field is lying wet.

1. **National Lottery Fund**

Two outstanding items have yet to be delivered from the National Lottery Fund grant of £9,825. Firstly, a dozen or so specimen trees are to be planted this autumn / winter adjacent to, or in the swale area, near the northern boundary of Weir Meadow. The trees have been ordered and paid for. Secondly, an interpretation board will be installed soon near the pedestrian footbridge entrance into the field. The board has been ordered and paid for.

1. **PitchPower FA Fund**

The purchase of a suitable mower and associated equipment is now the main focus with Nick Bradley and Stuart Brooking in the process of lodging grant applications through the Football Association’s “PitchPower” scheme. I understand NB and SB have invested many hours in attempting to lodge these grant applications but the FA’s IT system is at fault and not accepting the application for the mower at the present time. Sadly, perseverance will be the key as ever when dealing with these bodies.

1. **Artificial Wicket**

The contractors laying the artificial wicket have delayed installation two if not three times over the past couple of months. The wicket was supposed to be laid on 12th August but it is hoped that it will finally be laid by the end of September.

1. **The Ide Revel**

This took place on 7th September and despite the very wet weather, feedback has been entirely positive. Income and expenditure figures are currently being collated so that a finalised profit and loss account can be issued. It is difficult to be precise, but is it thought that a good profit has been achieved.

1. **Northern Fields Community Woodland**

CGM flailed the Northern Fields and a quote is now being sought for box trimming the hedges.

The Stage 2 grant application process is now underway with the contractor, Julia Matthews generating a design for the woodland including layout, species, hard works etc. The aim is to lodge an application by 1st November 2024 having undertaken a consultation exercise on the initial design. If approved, hard works could start in summer 2025 (paths, fencing etc.) and planting in winter 2025 / 2026.

1. **Next Meeting**

The next combined meeting of WMWG and JPFRG is scheduled for 7th October 2024.

**Peter Skinner 10.09.2024.**

**END**