

FAO

FROM

Chair, Wickham Parish Council (via email)

Wickham Residents Association Committee

May 31st, 2022

Dear Alistair,

**Sport and recreation facilities in Mill Lane**

Like you, we believe that the Mill Lane sport and recreation project offers the potential for an exciting opportunity to deliver something of lasting value to our community. WRA has endeavoured to engage fully and constructively with the project, including by participation in the Forum and Steering Group set up by the Parish Council. It is with regret, then, that I write, again, to record our concerns about the approach currently being taken to examine, and make recommendations for, the facilities to be installed on the site. We ask, therefore, for vital changes to be made to the role, constitution, and processes of the Steering Group. Without these changes, we fear the project will fail to meet the standards of good governance and the wishes and expectations of residents, and thus indeed may fail in entirety.

The Steering Group needs to be reformed with a membership appropriately representative in terms of both local sports interest and residency. Noting the 6-month deadline for submission of a planning application post receipt of the lease, we believe that a re-set is urgently needed to establish a more accountable and transparent process (and body) to oversee the project. At a minimum, the revised brief must seek to explore and test the wider interest and support of residents for the potential sport and recreation options It needs to produce and publish a compelling, professional business case demonstrating an affordable and effective path to project delivery that will command the widest possible local support.

We set out in the annex to this letter, details of our concerns, together with proposed remedies. We do so in the spirit of our common desire to serve the interests and wishes of our community, and enhance the wellbeing of as many residents, of all ages, as possible.

We ask, therefore, that the Parish Council:

1. considers the points made in the annex and makes the adjustments outlined
2. requests WCC for an extension of the timeline in order for us collectively to deliver a plan demonstrably supported by residents of the Parish

Should the Parish Council be unwilling to make the proposed changes, we may consider asking you to call a Parish Meeting.

We have shared the details of the issues raised in this letter and the annexed document with representatives of the Wickham Society who support this approach to you.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Robert Broad** (Chairman)

cc Wendy Greenish (Chair Wickham Society)

## List of concerns

ID	Concern	Proposed measures to be put in place
1)	The Steering Group formed to consider and debate options for facilities at Mill Lane and make recommendations to the Recreation Committee is <b>undemocratic in its composition.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Steering Group should be chaired, as initially promised, by a member of the Forum not a Councillor</li> <li>2) The Parish Clerk should be an adviser to the Steering Group and not a member of it and hold no vote</li> <li>3) The Chair of the Recreation Committee, to which the Forum and Steering Group report, should not be a member of the Steering Group</li> <li>4) No organisation should be allowed to have more than one representative on the Steering Group</li> </ol>
2)	The Steering Group processes are <b>not well formed and are not being executed in a professional manner.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Draft minutes for review should be produced in timely fashion ideally within 7 days of any meeting</li> <li>2) Comments on Minutes should be sought from members of the Steering Group using modern collaborative working methods ahead of the next Forum meeting before final approval at the meeting and subsequent publication</li> <li>3) Adequate notice of the Forum and Steering Group meetings should be given – 14 days preferable/7 days minimum – to enable diary conflicts to be resolved and to allow for preparation.</li> <li>4) Items for agendas should be sought from Steering Group members and agreed with the Group Chair before they are circulated and published.</li> <li>5) A procedure for making decisions on recommendations to the Recreation Committee should be agreed within the Steering Group</li> </ol>
3)	Self-evident conflicts of interest among participants of the Steering Group have been ignored or deliberately overlooked.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) All potential conflicts of interest should be announced at the start of each meeting</li> <li>2) No participant with a direct conflict of interest should be allowed to chair the meetings</li> <li>3) Any participant with a declared direct organisational interest should not be permitted to vote on a recommendation directly affecting, whether favourably or unfavourably, his/her organisation</li> </ol>

ID	Concern	Proposed measures to be put in place
4)	<p>The Steering Group, does not conform with the statement made in the first forum meeting that the forum is "... designed to be ....the start of a continuing constructive dialogue between the residents of Wickham and Knowle and the parish council".</p> <p>However, the Stakeholder list provided by the Clerk, of organisations/individuals invited to participate in the Steering Group, reveals that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7 out of 23 organisations are not Wickham organisations or residents;</li> <li>- 4 are District or County Councillors</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Steering Group should be limited to residents of Wickham and Knowle parish</li> <li>2) Parish Councillors may sit on the Steering Group as a representative of a Wickham and Knowle organisation</li> <li>3) District/County Councillors participation (if any) should be reserved until after the Steering Group recommendations have been concluded</li> </ol>
5)	<p>The Steering Group has not been required to develop measures of success by which it can gauge the suitability of any proposal or recommendation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) As a priority, a set of dimensions of success should be developed, agreed by the Steering Group and published before any recommendations are made to the Recreation Committee.</li> <li>2) Recommendations made to the Recreation Committee should be discussed and adopted by its members unless there are compelling reasons for them not to be accepted, such reasons to be made explicit to the Steering Group and residents in general</li> <li>3) The final masterplan should be made available for consultation and quantified approval by residents</li> </ol>
6)	<p>There is no strategic overview agreed by which options for Mill Lane can be judged against village residents' preferences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A strategic framework is required to ensure that any proposed facilities meet the needs/preferences of residents</li> <li>2) The Steering Group should as a first step use the Parish Survey (2019) to develop a table of positive and negative impacts that residents have identified in order to guide discussion and decision-making about individual proposals</li> </ol>

ID	Concern	Proposed measures to be put in place
7)	Key background documentation available to the Council has not been made available to the Steering Group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Full background documentation available to the Council or the Clerk, whether in draft or final forms, should be made immediately available to, and scrutinised by, the Steering Group before any recommendations are made to the Recreation Committee</li> <li>2) The Steering Group should decide the relevance of documentation and not be restricted to documents pre-selected by the Parish Clerk</li> <li>3) Background documentation should include, but not be limited to: forecasts of usage, projected costs and projected income, evidence of demand, risks analysis, evidence of a minimum level of resident support, all survey evidence however collected with clear provision of provenance</li> </ol>
8)	The Steering Group has not been given the time and opportunity to review, discuss and challenge the relevance and accuracy of the Fieldform Needs Assessments – currently the key evidence-base for the Masterplan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Fieldform Needs Assessments should be examined in detail by the Steering Group and scrutinised for their accuracy</li> <li>2) Fieldform should be called before the Steering Group to answer questions of fact and motivation behind their conclusions</li> <li>3) A further Need Assessment and draft Masterplan based upon the findings of the Steering Group, should be produced</li> <li>4) Residents should be given the opportunity to comment on this further draft Masterplan prior to submission for planning approval</li> </ol>
9)	Recommendations have already been made to the Recreation Committee without credible business plans. Without this information, residents can have no confidence that the proposed facilities will not be a financial burden on the Parish.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) All business-critical information should be provided and worked into a business plan for each proposed facility.</li> <li>2) Recommendations should only be made to the Recreation Committee once a business plan for each facility has been developed and agreed by the Steering Group</li> <li>3) Recommendation regarding specific facilities already submitted to the Recreation Committee should be withdrawn until they are accompanied by the necessary supporting information in business plan format</li> </ol>

## Dimensions of Success

Each proposed facility should have a mini-business plan that, inter alia, includes the following elements:

- 1) Capital and ongoing maintenance/management costs
- 2) Sources of funding
- 3) Financial viability assessment
- 4) Hazard, Risk, Mitigation assessment
- 5) Target resident population
- 6) User base forecast
- 7) Utilisation forecast
- 8) Impact assessments:
  - a) health
  - b) safety
  - c) traffic
  - d) inclusivity
  - e) exclusivity
  - f) sustainability
  - g) environment
  - h) aesthetics
- 9) Marketing
- 10) Facility evolution
- 11) Community support
- 12) Timetable for completion

Each mini-business plan should be aggregated into a Master Business Plan which should be made available to residents for final review, comment and quantified assessment made of resident support