

Pitch Condition Update and Assessment Report

Committee: Leisure & Recreation

Wards Affected: All CSNPC Wards

Priorities: To provide a high standard of services & facilities.

Date: 8th January 2026

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides members with an update on the condition of football pitches at Southbrook Recreation Ground and Penhill Recreation Ground, based on the most recent PitchPower inspections completed in November - December 2025. It compares the findings against the previous assessment cycle (2024) and highlights key changes, risks, and recommended actions.

2. Summary Overview

Site	Previous PQS (2024)	Most Recent PQS (2025)	Direction of Travel
Southbrook Recreation Ground	Good – 57%	Basic – 52%	↓ Decline
Penhill Recreation Ground – Pitch 1	Good – 57%	Basic – 45%	↓ Decline
Penhill Recreation Ground – Pitch 2	Good – 41%	Good – 41%	→ Stable
Penhill Recreation Ground – Pitch 3	Good – 57%	Good – 50%	↓ Slight decline

3. Southbrook Recreation Ground

Current Position (Inspection completed December 2025)

- The main pitch is now assessed as Basic (52%), a reduction from Good (57%) in the November 2024 inspection.
- The grass quality score has been capped at Basic, primarily due to compaction and reduced sward quality.
- Drainage issues remain evident following rainfall, with standing water recorded during inspection.
- Thatch depth and surface compaction have increased compared to the previous year.

Comparison with Previous Report (November 2024)

- In 2024 the pitch showed good grass coverage, minimal weed presence and lower thatch levels.
- The decline in 2025 is attributed to insufficient decompaction, limited aeration, and the cumulative impact of seasonal use.
- The overall Pitch Quality Score trend shows a downward movement from Good to Basic between 2024 and 2025.

Key Recommendations

- Priority action on decompaction (minimum twice annually).
- Increased surface grooming and deep slitting during the playing season.
- Application of controlled release fertiliser to support recovery.
- Consideration of top dressing to protect existing drainage infrastructure.

4. Penhill Recreation Ground

Current Position (Inspection completed November 2025)

Pitch 1

- PQS has fallen from Good (57%) in October 2024 to Basic (45%).
- Increased thatch levels, reduced grass coverage and slower drainage recorded.
- Pitch is now grass capped at Basic standard.

Pitch 2

- PQS remains Good (41%), unchanged from the 2024 assessment.
- Persistent slow drainage noted, but general grass coverage and wear remain stable.

Pitch 3

- PQS reduced slightly from Good (57%) to Good (50%).
- Decline linked to increased thatch and reduced root depth in some areas.

Comparison with Previous Report (October 2024)

- The 2024 inspection showed all three pitches rated Good, with Pitch 1 and 3 performing particularly well.
- The 2025 assessment highlights a clear deterioration on Pitch 1, while Pitches 2 and 3 have broadly maintained standards, albeit with early signs of decline.
- The overall site condition indicates growing maintenance pressures rather than isolated issues.

Key Recommendations

- Whole site decompaction and aeration programme to be reinstated as a priority.
- Regular surface grooming and slitting to manage compaction and improve infiltration.
- Overseeding and fertiliser applications to restore grass coverage, particularly on Pitch 1.
- Ongoing goalmouth repairs to mitigate waterlogging during the season.

5. Financial and Operational Implications

- Both reports identify that clubs and site managers may be eligible for Football Foundation grant funding of up to 75% for pitch maintenance machinery and equipment.
- Failure to address compaction and drainage risks may lead to increased match cancellations and further deterioration, potentially increasing long term maintenance costs.

6. Conclusions

- The most recent inspections show a general downward trend in pitch quality, most notably at Southbrook Recreation Ground and Penhill Pitch 1.
- The decline appears linked to reduced or inconsistent implementation of recommended maintenance regimes rather than structural failure.
- Early intervention during 2025 - 26 offers an opportunity to stabilise and improve pitch standards and protect previous investment.

7. Recommendations to Committee

1. **Note** the findings of the latest PitchPower assessments.
2. **Note** pending reports for Mannington Recreation.
3. **Continuation** to prioritise decompaction and aeration works.
4. **Continue to seek external funding opportunities** for maintenance equipment and renovations.