

Leisure & Recreation Committee

Report: Football Foundation Reports

Date: 2nd July 2026

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1. Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an update on the 2026 grass pitch enhancement programme and summarises the outcomes of the latest Football Foundation PitchPower assessments undertaken across the Councils Recreation sites.

The report demonstrates the effectiveness of the Council's ongoing investment in pitch maintenance and outlines future priorities to maintain and further improve pitch quality.



26269-swindon-and-district-football-le



26161-swindon-and-district-football-le



26150-swindon-sunday-football-league



26270-swindon-sunday-football-league

2. Background

The Council continues to work in partnership with the Swindon & District Football League, Swindon Sunday Football League, Wiltshire FA and the Football Foundation to improve the quality of natural turf football pitches.

As part of the approved 2026/27 programme, the Council undertook a package of enhancement works comprising:

- Deep tine aeration (Verti-Drain);
- Selective herbicide application;
- Scarification;
- Overseeding using dwarf perennial ryegrass sports seed; and
- Controlled release fertiliser application.

The enhancement programme was delivered across:

- Mannington Recreation Ground
- Southbrook Recreation Ground
- Penhill Recreation Ground
- Moredon Sporting Hub
- Seven Fields.

Moredon Sporting Hub isn't currently included within the Football Foundation maintenance grant programme. However, the Council has applied the same enhancement standard to the Moredon grass pitches to ensure consistency across the wider football estate.

3. Works

Operation	Status
Verti-Drain Aeration	Completed
Selective Weed Treatment	Completed
Scarification	Completed
Overseeding	Completed
Fertiliser Application	Completed
Goal Post Removal	Completed
End of Season Renovation Works	Ongoing
Verti-Quake Decompaction	Scheduled Autumn 2026

In addition, standard post-season maintenance operations including goalmouth repairs and surface restoration have commenced following removal of goal posts.

4. Financial Summary

The enhancement programme has been delivered using a combination of Council budget provision and Football Foundation maintenance funding.

The Council continues to receive Football Foundation maintenance funding through the Swindon Saturday and Sunday Football Leagues, helping offset the overall cost of maintaining football pitches to the required standard.

4a. Spend to Date

The following expenditure has been incurred to date as part of the pitch enhancement programme.

Site / Work Area	Contractor	Description	Net Cost
Southbrook Recreation Ground	S. Merrett Services Ltd	Verti-Drain works	£700.00
Seven Fields	S. Merrett Services Ltd	Verti-Drain works	£1,050.00
Mannington Recreation Ground	S. Merrett Services Ltd	Verti-Drain works	£1,400.00

Site / Work Area	Contractor	Description	Net Cost
Moredon Sporting Hub	S. Merrett Services Ltd	Verti-Drain works	£1,100.00
Mannington Recreation Ground	Idverde	Enhanced pitch maintenance: scarifying, overseeding, seed and fertiliser	£8,827.40
Seven Fields	Idverde	Enhanced pitch maintenance: scarifying, overseeding, seed and fertiliser	£6,620.55
Southbrook Recreation Ground	Idverde	Enhanced pitch maintenance: scarifying, overseeding, seed and fertiliser	£2,206.85
Moredon Sporting Hub	Idverde	Enhanced pitch maintenance: scarifying, overseeding, seed and fertiliser	£4,413.70
Weed Treatment	Idverde	Selective weed spraying across pitch sites	£2,176.00
Total Spend to Date			£28,494.50

4b. Budget Position and Reimbursement

The Council allocated the following budgets for 2026/27:

Budget Area	Allocation
Moredon Sporting Hub grass pitches	£7,452
Sports pitch maintenance / enhancement	£30,000
Total Council Budget Allocation	£37,452

Spend to date is **£28,494.50**, leaving a remaining budget balance of **£8,957.50** against the combined approved allocation.

The Council will invoice a proportionate amount of the eligible enhancement works to the Swindon Saturday and Sunday Football Leagues for reimbursement through the Football Foundation maintenance funding arrangement.

The anticipated reimbursement is approximately **£15,000**, subject to confirmation of eligible costs and the final funding allocation across the relevant sites.

This reimbursement will reduce the net cost to the Council and reflects the partnership funding model used to support ongoing improvement of grass football pitches across the parish.

5. Football Foundation PitchPower Assessment Outcomes

The latest PitchPower inspections were completed during May 2026.

Mannington Recreation Ground

All five adult pitches achieved a **Good** rating.

Pitch	PQS Score
Pitch 1	62%
Pitch 2	64%
Pitch 3	59%
Pitch 4	67%
Pitch 5	51%

The Football Foundation report notes that priority maintenance activities remain continued decompaction, overseeding, fertiliser application and periodic top dressing.

Southbrook Recreation Ground

The main adult pitch achieved a **Good** rating with a score of **59%**.

The Football Foundation report confirmed that the current maintenance regime is appropriate and recommends continued implementation of:

- Deep tine aeration;
- Overseeding;
- Fertiliser application;
- Weed control; and
- Top dressing where funding allows.

Penhill Recreation Ground

PitchPower assessments recorded:

Pitch	Rating
Pitch 1	Good (64%)
Pitch 2	Advanced (67%)
Pitch 3	Good (64%)

The Football Foundation report specifically notes that many of the recommended maintenance activities are already being undertaken by the Council and that current practices should continue.

The achievement of an Advanced rating on one pitch demonstrates the positive impact of the Council's ongoing maintenance investment.

Moredon Sporting Hub

PitchPower inspections recorded:

Pitch	Rating
11v11 Pitch 1	Good (64%)
11v11 Pitch 2	Good (64%)
9v9 Pitch	Basic (64%)

Although Moredon Sporting Hub is not currently funded through the Football Foundation maintenance grant programme, the Football Foundation recommendations mirror those provided for other sites and support the enhancement works already completed by the Council.

The assessment identifies opportunities for continued improvement through ongoing aeration, overseeding, fertiliser application and top dressing.

6. Assessment of Outcomes

The Football Foundation reports demonstrate that the Council's maintenance strategy aligns closely with national best practice guidance.

Key findings include:

- All assessed sites achieved Good or above ratings across the majority of pitches;
- One pitch at Penhill Recreation Ground achieved an Advanced rating;
- The Football Foundation recommendations directly reflect the maintenance programme already being delivered by the Council;
- The enhancement works approved by Members have addressed the key priority actions identified through PitchPower inspections;
- The Council's decision to apply the same maintenance standards at Moredon Sporting Hub ensures consistency across the football estate despite the site not currently being part of the grant-funded programme.

Overall, the assessment outcomes demonstrate that the Council's football pitches continue to perform well and compare favourably with many grassroots football facilities nationally.

6a. Pitch Misuse

Members will be aware that investment in pitch enhancement works can only be fully realised where pitches are afforded appropriate recovery periods and managed in accordance with the Council's booking arrangements.

During recent seasons, the Council has experienced a number of instances of unauthorised football activity, including training sessions and organised fixtures taking place without prior booking or permission. Such activity can result in unnecessary wear, particularly during periods of pitch renovation and recovery, reducing the effectiveness of maintenance investment and increasing future maintenance costs.

To protect the Council's investment and support long-term pitch quality, officers have implemented a range of measures including:

- Removal of goal posts at the conclusion of the playing season to discourage unauthorised use;
- Communication with local football leagues regarding booking requirements and pitch availability;
- Direct engagement with clubs identified as undertaking unauthorised activity;
- Increased monitoring of sites during the close season;
- Reinforcement of the Council's booking procedures and conditions of use; and
- Coordination of maintenance and recovery periods to ensure pitches are rested where required.

Officers will continue to monitor site usage and take appropriate action where unauthorised use is identified.

Protecting pitches during renovation and recovery periods remains an important element of maintaining Football Foundation standards and safeguarding the Council's investment in its sports facilities.

7. Future Priorities

Officers will continue to monitor pitch performance throughout the 2026/27 season.

Future works include:

- Completion of Autumn Verti-Quake works;
- Continued annual weed control programme;
- Ongoing overseeding and fertilisation;
- Targeted goalmouth renovation works;
- Investigation of top-dressing opportunities where external funding permits;

8. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. **NOTE** the completion of the 2026 grass pitch enhancement programme.
2. **NOTE** the outcomes of the Football Foundation PitchPower assessments.
3. **NOTE** that Moredon Sporting Hub has received the same enhancement works despite not currently forming part of the Football Foundation maintenance grant programme.
4. **NOTE** the spend to date and anticipated reimbursement from the Swindon Saturday and Sunday Football Leagues through the Football Foundation maintenance funding arrangement.
5. **ENDORSE** the continuation of the Council's structured grass pitch maintenance programme for the 2026/27 season.