

## **Moredon Sports Hub Operational Update**

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### **Staffing Update**

Paula Marshall has now joined the reception team. Following a period away from her previous finance role, Paula has transitioned successfully into reception and has settled into the team well. She has quickly picked up the requirements of the role and is making a positive contribution. With Paula now providing reception cover, we have been able to reduce our reliance on agency reception staff, which is expected to provide a saving of approximately £1,000 per month in agency expenditure.

Amy Morris has now been with Moredon Sporting Hub for three months and has settled into the role extremely well. Amy has received numerous positive comments from customers and is already making a strong contribution to the Hub. She is currently taking the lead on bookings and working through a number of existing and potential commercial opportunities, with the aim of maximising utilisation and generating additional revenue.

We are currently recruiting for a Weekend/Flexible Duty Manager position for 19 hours per week, which is a replacement for Mark, who left the Hub in May. Following Mark's departure, I initially took the decision to operate without replacing the hours in an attempt to generate savings. However, this has proved counterproductive, placing additional pressure on the existing team, increasing colleague hours and ultimately contributing to higher agency expenditure. We therefore consider filling the role to be important in strengthening the Duty Manager structure and providing better value operationally.

### **EMR – Bike Skills Area**

Progress with the Bike Skills Area project has presented some challenges. A Grant allocation of £5,000 was approved to convert the area behind the Chambers into a BMX/Bike Skills facility. I have held a meeting with Joe Beale (Project lead) regarding the project and have requested that meaningful progress is demonstrated by the end of September.

I remain concerned about the current pace and progression of the project and will continue to work closely with Joe to establish a clear plan and timescales. I will provide a further update once there is greater clarity around the next steps.

### **HAF Cycle Camp**

Becky's HAF Cycle Camp has been a significant success, with in excess of 120 children attending across the summer programme. The programme has provided a valuable opportunity to engage children in cycling and develop their skills in a safe and inclusive environment. Ultimately, resulting in central HAF team requesting the centre to take on more children.

We have also now received the outcome of our HAF audit, which resulted in a positive Green RAG rating. A small number of areas were identified for improvement, including additional controls around DBS checks for volunteers and clearer advertising of the food provision. However, given this was our first HAF audit, the overall outcome is very positive and provides a strong foundation for future delivery.

#### **MSH Football Pitches update.**

The prolonged period of hot and dry weather over the summer has had a significant impact on the condition of the grass pitches. In conjunction with our partner club, FC Abbey Meads, we have made the decision to temporarily reduce use of one the 11-a-side pitch and one 9-a-side pitch.

This will allow the affected areas to rest and recover, with the intention of reintroducing the pitches in late September, subject to the condition of the ground.

#### **Cycle Track update**

There continue to be a number of concerns regarding the condition of the cycle track, with the prolonged hot and dry weather appearing to have exacerbated some of the existing issues.

The issues currently being observed include additional and larger cracks within the tarmac, increased weed growth through the surface, a reduction in the height of the run-off area and areas where bubbles have appeared within the track surface. This has resulted in some events being cancelled on safety grounds.

A meeting has now taken place involving SBC, CSNPC and the relevant parties to discuss the condition of the track and potential next steps. We are expecting an intrusive survey to be undertaken in the near future, which will provide a more detailed assessment of the underlying condition and help determine the appropriate remedial works and next steps.

I will continue to monitor the situation closely from a CSNPC prospective and provide further updates when available.

#### **Additional AWP Pitch**

We have experienced some challenges in exploring the feasibility of accommodating both the existing cricket wickets and an additional AWP pitch within the available space. Following discussions between CSNPC and the Football Foundation, we have engaged with the ECB to understand the potential impact on cricket provision.

The ECB has provided feedback that they would not support the proposed project, as they consider that the introduction of an additional AWP pitch would reduce the options currently available for cricket at the site.

I will continue to consider the available options and balance the demand for additional football provision with the need to protect and maintain the existing cricket provision.

### **Cricket Net**

Following the introduction of the cricket net this season, Blue Brigade have now proposed relocating the net to an alternative area on the opposite side of the AWP pitch. This could provide an opportunity to establish a more permanent cricket net location, rather than a temporary arrangement. However, the proposed location would require some preparation, including a subbase, ground matting and appropriate fixings/installation works.

I believe that further investment in cricket provision at the Hub would have a positive impact on the sport, particularly by providing an all-year-round facility that would allow players to practise during the winter period.

A contractor has now attended the Hub to assess the proposed location and establish the requirements of the project, including the necessary ground preparation and matting. Based on the initial assessment, the project is currently estimated to cost in the region of £10,000.

Blue Brigade have previously indicated that they would be able to make a £500 contribution towards the project.

### **Cricket Season Summary**

The Hub has experienced a number of challenges with some of the cricket clubs and associated behaviour during the summer season, particularly on Saturdays. These have included individuals consuming alcohol from glass bottles on the playing field following fixtures, refusal to follow reasonable safety instructions from staff, including myself, and incidents of verbal abuse towards staff members, which have also resulted in customers approaching me to raise concerns.

There have also been disputes between teams regarding pitch allocations which, on occasions, have escalated to a point where I have had concerns regarding the potential for physical confrontation. Additional issues have included litter and waste being left on site and the failure to return 16 cricket bats following use.

I met with the league and Wiltshire County Cricket on 2nd September to discuss the challenges experienced during the season. The league and WCC has been supportive and we are working together to put stronger arrangements in place ahead of the 2027 season. This will include the introduction of a pre-season captains' meeting and a suitable Service Level Agreement for each team, setting out expectations around behaviour, use of facilities, responsibilities and site standards.

The league has also raised concerns regarding the condition of the field and wicket strip, particularly around the edge of the wicket leading towards the run-up. WCC are currently investigating their concerns with the company who installed the strip.

### **Softball Season Summary**

The softball season has been a positive one, with the programme running particularly well throughout the year.

I am hopeful that we will be able to introduce Friday softball sessions next year, with this potentially providing an opportunity to support youth and female development and participation within the sport.

The Hub also hosted two softball tournaments during the year, both of which went particularly well. There were no major incidents and both events generated strong additional trade for the café.

There is also potential for one of the tournaments to be developed into a weekend event next year. Discussions around this are still at an early stage, but this could provide an opportunity to further increase participation, footfall and café revenue if progressed.

### **MSH Office Update**

There has been some interest in the MSH office, including from a massage therapist/PT who was interested in hiring the room on a long-term basis. However, she has recently found out that she is pregnant and has therefore asked whether the room could be held for her for a year.

I have advised that, if the room is still available in a year's time, she would be welcome to hire it at that point. In the short term, we are therefore looking to maximise the use of the space by converting the room into a training suite. The first booking for the office area is already scheduled for 21 September.

### **Mower Update**

I am currently attempting to source a suitable mower for Purton CC. Unfortunately, this has proved more significantly more challenging than anticipated, particularly due to the age and condition of the available machinery, as well as the expectations around factors such as service history and maintenance records.

I will continue to explore suitable options to ensure that any mower provided is reliable, fit for purpose and represents good value for money.