

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Background

Cobham Parish Council owns the sports pavilion and recreation grounds situated in Cobham Village, DA123BN. The Parish Council leases the building and grounds to Cobham Sports Club. As per the lease agreement which states that any changes must be approved by the Parish Council, Cobham Sports Club has approached the Parish Council regarding its request to extend the patio area to the front and to improve accessibility. The Parish Council is supportive of the proposal, but as per our lease agreement, the Sports Association is the applicant in the planning application.

The Proposal

Cobham Sports Association has sought quotes and is applying for grants to carry out some much-needed work to ensure that the sports club building is more accessible, as well as being able to accommodate the growing numbers of young people participating in sport in the village. This will be achieved by:

- Installing disabled access ramp in to the pavilion building, as well as providing access on to the patio area so all the key areas of the club are wheelchair accessible.
- Extending the patio to accommodate access and to improve seating facilities.
- Removing crumbling walls and steps to improve overall safety
- Improve overall visual amenity by replacing brick walls with white picket fence in-keeping with a conservation area and a village sports club
- In the longer term, the plan is to fundraise for a retractable awning to offer year-round protection from the elements.

The Need

In the heart of Cobham stands the aging sports club building that serves so many in our community - but it's bursting at the seams! As the club continues to expand, the outdoor space needs to keep-up!

As the Sports Association and membership of the various clubs has grown, the club's facilities and outdoor seating area have felt the strain. It is no longer big enough to accommodate all the teams.

The project will benefit so many within our community - all the members of the football, cricket and tennis clubs - their families and the local community. By ensuring the proposal meets accessibility requirements, we are also ensuring that the facilities can be enjoyed by all.

The proposal has been shared amongst the Sports Club members and is widely supported.

The Sports Club's success

Cobham Sports Association is the umbrella organisation for Cobham Cricket Club, Cobham Football Club and Cobham Tennis club. The clubs are run by a team of dedicated volunteers without a single paid employee - testament to the vitally important role that the Sports Association plays in the community. Visit on any weekend and you will find a real community hub - a safe space for the whole family to keep fit and healthy -and socialise. You will often find the youngest members of the community and our oldest members all watching a game of cricket or football together. We have football teams in almost every age group from U7s to U18s, including girls' teams, and a popular Cricket colts section which welcomes around 100 children on Mondays during Summer, and a hugely successful women's team which is expanding weekly! Many of our youngest sportsmen and women continue all the way through to the adult teams.

Access

A key part of this project is ensuring that both the pavilion and the patio area are fully accessible. A ramp into the pavilion is an overdue requirement. By removing the patio wall and replacing this with a gate and fence, direct access on to the patio will also be achieved.

Design

No sports playing space will be lost. As can be seen in the photo below, tables are currently positioned on the grass area so the plan is that those closest to the existing patio will now just be incorporated into the extended area. The front brick wall which is crumbling will be removed so the patio can be extended. A new and traditional white picket fence will surround it, thus further enhancing the character by giving the space a true village-Cricket feel. A suitable surface will be carefully considered.



Planning Policies

Having checked the various planning policies, the initial thinking was that planning permission was not required, however informal early planning advice suggested that it may be required due to the Conservation Area status in Cobham.

By making sure the picket fence is traditional in style, we are supporting the Appraisal's aim of 'enhancing the character' of the area. Nothing in the proposal contravenes Green Belt policy nor negatively impacts the openness of the Green belt. The plans support the key policy CS13 (Green Space, Sport & Recreation). In addition, the football club are working with Kent FA in improving the drainage on the football pitches, which supports needs outlined in Gravesham Borough Council's Pitch Assessment report.

We hope that GBC shares our view that by ensuring that the building is fully accessible and that the sporting facilities are improved for local families, particularly children and our relatively-new girls'/ladies' teams, we are supporting national aims of improving sporting facilities for all. The proposal will improve the overall visual outlook too.

