

Porlock Recreation Ground Management Committee

Charity No. 304615

Community Update October 2017

Dear All

A lot has been going on recently so it would seem timely to provide you with a brief update of what the Recreation Ground Committee has been doing over the past few months.

Legacy

Recent and committed improvements

The generous legacy left by Susan Taylor has enabled us to be less cautious about keeping reserve funds that we had previously accrued. This has allowed us to undertake a refurbishment of the children's play area, commission lawyers to advise on constitution, investment and property matters, give the toilets a face lift and improve the new entrance in Parson's Street (walling, new pedestrian entrance, and gates).

More recently we have:

- Purchased new equipment for mowing and aerating the grass which we hope will bring an improvement to the quality of the pitches.
- Taken professional advice regarding pitch improvement and maintenance
- Ordered resurfacing of the MUGA.
- Installed dog waste bins
- Arranged improved signage

Some of these items had been in our plans for a while but completing them quickly would have stretched funds available prior to the legacy. In context, the cost of these initiatives is equivalent to several years of typical income, most of which comes from the Country Fair.

Investment

Having taken professional advice, we have agreed an investment policy that is now in place. Following this policy (which you can read here <https://goo.gl/FfUpSw>) the majority of funds we have received so far are currently invested. This has been done for three main reasons:

- a) The Governing Document requires us to invest surplus funds. The Charity Commission also expects this and that charities will necessarily have to weigh up risk and return when making investments.
- b) It makes sense to receive income or grow the funds rather than let the value erode due to inflation whilst potential longer term uses of the legacy are evaluated.
- c) Investment for the future was a popular response to our "request" for ideas consultation.

Next steps

Evaluation and subsequent decisions about the use of the bulk of the legacy will still follow the process outlined in the letter sent to the community in February but we fully expect this to take considerable time. Furthermore, we have not yet received all the funds from the estate and so at this stage do not know how much the full legacy will be.

Constitution and New CIO

We have also been working hard with lawyers on writing the constitution for the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The new constitution seeks to:

- define the existing area of land in a modern way affording greater protection to it
- broaden democratic representation by increasing the number of elected trustees and involvement of Porlock Parish Council
- modernise the list of appointing organisations
- improve the stability of the Charity
- clarify eligible voters (ie, those who can vote at the Annual Community Meeting)
- remove the personal liability that trustees currently have

At the public meeting on 15th June there was some discussion about whether moving to a CIO was the best way resolve the personal liability issue. Further legal advice has been taken on this matter which stated that:

“...insurance can go far in reducing the liability but, in the event of a claim, the claim would be brought against the trustees in their individual names, against their personal assets. This may cause significant stress should litigation occur. Moreover, a claim would then need to be made to the insurance company to reclaim any losses. Even if the losses were covered, personal litigation may affect trustees’ individual credit rating.”

In conclusion, we have been advised that the CIO approach is the best way to resolve this issue and achieve a modern constitution in line with current legislation.

We are now in the final stages of completing this work and will submit it to the Charity Commission in the next few weeks. Once they have given approval we will be transferring our assets to the new CIO and from there on will operate from this new organisation.

Other News

1. Our annual Country Fair in August was a great success and we had record numbers of visitors and stall holders who made the most of a wonderful sunny day. For this year only the entry to the Fair was reduced to £1 to acknowledge the legacy and prompted by Susan Taylor’s family, our generous sponsors donated their fees directly to the National Autism Society. In addition we enabled collection of nearly £500 for the Save Our Buses Campaign. Thank you to everyone who helped to make the fair a roaring success.

2. We are always looking for people who would like to become involved either as a committee member or with a specific project. If you would like to be involved please don’t hesitate to contact us by email porlockrecground@gmail.com or call Russell on 07715 325831.

Best wishes

Porlock Recreation Ground Committee