

Summer on our playgrounds and playing fields

The warm weather has finally arrived and no doubt many of you are making the most of your outdoor recreation spaces, whether to play sport, watch others playing sport, have a picnic, go for a run, go for a walk, meet friends, spend time outdoors or enjoy the play area with your family. Our local recreation spaces offer so much for everyone.

At OPFA we are always impressed by the hard work across the county that goes into ensuring that these are the best that they can be for the community. We know that for the most part this hard work is done by volunteers. A good example of this is on page 3 where the community of Barford St Michael are now able to enjoy a new play area thanks to the hard work and dedication of a group of volunteers.

We know that these kind of improvement projects take a lot of time and energy. Don't forget that we are here to help, with advice and moral support to help you achieve the best for your community. If you are visiting your local outdoor space more often during the summer months, and think of things that could be improved, do get in touch for help, we would love to hear from you.

**INCLUDED IN THIS
ISSUE:**

**New play area for
Barford**

St Michael

**Website for
groundsmen and
open space
managers**

SALTEX 2019

**CASC Scheme
Podcast**

**Cherwell Love
Where You Live
Volunteer Awards**

**Fields in Trust
Green Space
Index**

Funding Update



How can we help you?

The OPFA advice service is wide ranging and varied. No question is too silly or too small! Just some of the practical ways that we can help you include:

- Site visits to give on the spot advice about playing fields or playgrounds, including facilities for toddlers and teenagers
- A regularly updated series of information sheets covering a wide range of topics
- Support and advice on new projects such as a new children's play area, pavilion or sports ground
- Advice on skate park and wheeled sports facilities
- Advice on teen facilities
- Guidance on standards and legislation affecting play and sporting facilities
- Local examples of other successful projects, with local people to contact
- Advice and information on a wide range of suppliers and manufacturers
- Regular networking and training events
- Identifying funding opportunities
- Advice on consultations
- Project management advice
- What to do if your local playing field is threatened with redevelopment
- Advice on managing a charitable playing field
- Maintenance and inspection information

Contact us for help and support on 01295 817662 or oxfordshirepfa@gmail.com



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New play area for Barford St Michael

Carole Coppin, part of the group working to improve the West Close play area in Barford St Michael, writes about their successful project.

The Parish Council circulated a questionnaire to village residents, the results of which showed strong support for a playground. Pre-planning advice was obtained showing the types of structures likely to be approved (timber construction, the choice of equipment, the best site with respect to public footpaths and leaving as much open land as possible for other village residents to use).

A committee of enthusiastic parents was formed which obtained quotes from various providers with a shortlist of three which was put before the Parish Council along with a document that outlined the intentions for the playground and addressed any potential issues and concerns that were thought likely to arise. A full village consultation was then called and the area of the field to be used was pegged out to enable villagers to see exactly where the equipment was intended to be.

The outcome of the consultation was overwhelmingly positive, so a planning application was submitted to the local authority and of 29 comments only 2 raised concerns while 27 were very enthusiastic about the project.

The PC set aside funds for the project amounting to around 20% of the total needed. The PC made the fundraising group a sub-committee of the Council. We opened a Lloyds Treasurers account as this seemed to suit our needs. We set it up so that any 2 of 3 signatories could sign but chose not to have internet banking services for added security.

The fundraising sub-committee submitted a bid for funds to the Community Fund (Lottery) but this first bid was rejected as applications can only come from the landowner which was the PC. We then resubmitted the exact same bid changing the name of the legally responsible person to the Parish Clerk (this error added another 8 weeks to the process so we should have read the guidelines properly!) In due course the bid was accepted and the grant was transferred to our account within a few weeks. With various fundraising activities around the village we now had just £20,000 to find.

We contacted Nicole at the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association who suggested that the Cherwell District Council's Infrastructure Grant might be suitable. We

applied to Cherwell DC for a grant of £19,750 because grants of £20,000 came into a different category and this bid was successful. This grant meant we had enough money to cover the construction costs but we did continue with local fundraising events to build funds for future maintenance etc. We were able to agree a start date for the build and at that point we paid a 20% deposit plus VAT. Although the PC is able to reclaim VAT on purchases, the full sum had to be paid and the VAT reclaimed later.

Construction then began and we requested to draw down the funds promised by Cherwell. The normal procedure for this type of grant would be to get the work done, pay all costs and then submit the receipts to request the grant. This was not possible for us as the PC is very small and doesn't have sufficient funds to cover such a large sum, however Cherwell DC were very helpful and were able to make an exception in our case. The work was completed on time and to a very good standard. We held onto the final payment until the last few details were sorted out (a contractor had left rubbish on the site and one of the bits of equipment had to be replaced).

We installed a board in the field with names of our main sponsors with a large framed notice with photographs in the village hall listing everyone who had made a donation.



Website for groundsmen and open space managers

Pitchcare is a useful website for those involved in looking after outdoor recreation spaces. It includes many useful articles, as well as month by month grounds care diaries including maintenance regimes.

www.pitchcare.com

SALTEX 2019

SALTEX is an annual turf management event for grounds care volunteers, professionals and manufacturers. It will take place at the NEC in Birmingham on 30-31 October 2019. Registration to attend is open on the SALTEX website. Attendance is free.

www.iogsaltex.com

CASC Scheme Podcast

A recent edition of the Sport and Recreation Alliance podcast was dedicated to discussing the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) scheme. This scheme enables community sports clubs to register with HMRC to benefit from a range of tax and giving benefits. The podcast webpage also includes links to useful articles on CASCs. The podcast and associated articles should be of interest to all amateur sports clubs in our county.

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/241221/1248788-episode-6-improve-your-club-finances-your-101-guide-to-the-community-amateur-sports-club-scheme>

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Cherwell Love Where You live Volunteer Awards 2019

These awards celebrate the work done by volunteers in Cherwell. There are many hard working volunteers who help to run and improve their community outdoor sport and play facilities and sports clubs. This is a great opportunity to give them the recognition they deserve. You can nominate a local volunteer to win any of the following categories:

- Volunteer of the year
- Young Volunteer (under 18)
- Voluntary Organisation of the Year
- Lifetime Volunteer
- Good Neighbour

Nominations are open from 1st July—31 August

<https://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/cherwell-awards>



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Fields in Trust Green Space Index

Fields in Trust, who work to preserve publicly accessible open spaces in perpetuity have released their Green Space Index, available on their website. This is a detailed analysis of the provision of public open spaces across the country. This is the first time that green spaces have been analysed in this way and Fields in Trust intend to update it annually. This will provide good evidence not only of the vital importance that such spaces play in the health and well-being of our nation, but also enable a picture of how much green space is lost for good year on year.

Fields in Trust say that there are 216k hectares of green space provision in Britain, which equates to 35.22 sqm per person. Their data includes the number of people not living within a 10 minute walk of a green space.

If you are in the process of applying for funding to improve the quality of your local outdoor spaces for sport and play, or to increase your provision, then you may find the information from the Green Space Index a useful tool to help to make your case.

It is interesting to note that of the 216k hectares of green space provision, only 12.3k (5.7%) hectares are legally protected. If you are interested in legally protecting your local outdoor space for generations to come and ensuring that it is never lost, then Fields in Trust will be able to help you. They enter into a legal deed of dedication with the landowner that protects the site in perpetuity.

<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/>

<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/green-space-index>



Funding update



Cherwell Community Infrastructure grant. Cherwell District Council has

published the following information on their website: 'Due to the popularity of this highly successful grant funding programme, the budget is now fully committed until 1 April 2020. A new round will run for the financial year 2020-2021 and the deadline for applications will be 5:00pm on 31 December 2019.'

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/290/community-grants/2>

The **Les Mills Fund for Children** offers grants of up to £1000 for registered charities and accountable non-profit organisations who are working to improve the education and physical and emotional well-being of children aged 0-16. The work of the charity or organization must fall into one or more of the following categories

- Living in poverty
- Physical and mental health problems
- Health and wellbeing
- Living with disability

The deadline for the next round is 18 November 2019.

<https://lesmillsfundforchildren.org.uk/apply/>

Oxfordshire County Council Councillor Priority Fund All County Councillors have a budget of £15,000 to support priorities in their area. They are responsible for deciding how the funding should be allocated. Applicants should discuss their project at an early stage with their Councillor, in order to get their support. The final deadline for applications is 31st January 2020. Funding is awarded on a rolling basis, so early applications are advised.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/thriving-communities/councillor-priority-fund>

Cherwell District Council has launched the **Cherwell Community Lottery**. The lottery is a way of fundraising for local groups, societies and charities. Those who participate are able to benefit from tickets bought by their supporters; fifty percent of each £1 ticket sale goes to the local good cause partner (a further ten percent goes into a centrally held good cause fund). Participating groups are provided with a dedicated page on the lottery website, and bespoke branded

materials to help raise awareness and drive ticket sales.

By buying a ticket, lottery players are able to support a local cause of their choice, as well as be in with a chance to win a prize. The top prize is £25,000.

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/3/leisure-and-culture/629/cherwell-lottery>

The Thomas Cook Children's Charity Community Grant scheme funds projects that provide a clear benefit for young people up to the age of 18. Registered charities, schools and other recognisable and accountable community causes can apply for projects that are related to improving children's lives. The grants committee meets on a monthly basis. Grants must be submitted online by the 1st of every month. The charity will not fund the purchase of land or buildings.

<https://thomascookchildrenscharity.com/community-grants/>

Sport England Top Tips for Funding Applications

OPFA recently attended a talk by Sport England on applying to their Community Asset Fund. These were the top tips for those applying. They are useful as they can be used for any funding application:

- Read the guidance
- Take your time
- Get help
- Ensure the need and impact for the project are clear
- Be open and honest
- Talk to Sport England

In this instance, Sport England suggested that help is available from Active Oxfordshire. Don't forget that OPFA can also give guidance on funding applications, in particular for playground equipment.

The last point is important for any funder. By discussing your project up front with the funder you are applying to, you can be sure that your project is eligible and you are not wasting valuable time.

<https://www.sportengland.org/funding/community-asset-fund/>



Helping communities make
good space for sport and play

Colin Sanders
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Banbury,
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Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association is a registered charity (no. 304398). We work across Oxfordshire.

Our aim is to ensure that people of all ages, including people with disabilities, have access to good quality local outdoor sport and recreational facilities, including children's play.

The OPFA is the only non-commercial organisation in the county able to provide a comprehensive and impartial playing space advice service for local Oxfordshire groups. If you are working on an outdoor recreation project in your community, we would love to hear from you.

Phone: 01295 817662 Web: www.opfa.org.uk E-mail: oxfordshirepfa@gmail.com

Information sheets available

OPFA has many information sheets on different topics covering all aspects of outdoor recreation provision. We have recently produced a new one on Pitch Maintenance. The full list of information sheets is opposite.

Please contact OPFA if you would find any of them useful. We continue to produce information as the need arises, and also have access to a lot of information from our partner organisations.

- Terms of reference for a Parish Council Committee responsible for the management of land.
- Maintenance contractors
- Pitch Maintenance
- Accessible Play Areas
- Accidents
- Balls Walls
- BMX Info
- Playground Fencing and Gates
- Funding Opportunities
- Playground Inspections
- Managing Charitable Playing Fields
- Maintenance Contractors
- Playground Notices
- Planning and Providing for a Wheeled Sport Facility
- Problems with Dogs
- Project Plan – Play Area Development
- Project Plan – Skate Park Development
- Risk Management and Risk Assessments
- Playground Legislation, Standards and Guidelines