

## **Steyne Park Working Group Meeting 5th December 2024**

**Present:** Cllr H Brabazon, Cllr M Groom, Cllr C Adams, Mr James Hendy, Mr Gregor Hopkins, Mr Arron Grist.

### **Background:**

The reasons for regenerating Steyne Park:

- The playground looks tired and the facilities are not exciting or challenging. They do not encourage multiplay and there is not enough for all ages to enjoy.
- The park does not draw you in. No paths to walk on, no shade in the limited seating areas, no sense of cohesion between the two fields.
- The skate park is coming to the end of its life and is not challenging.
- The basketball pitch surface is degraded. There are no line markings.
- The changing rooms are inadequate (no toilets) and are rarely used.
- The football fields do not have sufficient drainage and are too close to the playground.
- There are inadequate facilities/provision for disabled access.

Following initial consultation the following wish list was created:

- New 3G 9-a-side all weather pitch
- New inclusive bigger playground with more equipment for all ages
- Refurbish the basketball pitch with markings for multi-use
- Perimeter path round both fields with trim trail, suitable for walkers, joggers, buggies, wheelchairs, cyclists.
- New changing rooms
- New pump track or skate park

### **Work to date.**

Cllr H Brabazon has produced a rough draft of a revised layout of Steyne Park based on consultation and discussions to date (attached).

### **Forward Plan.**

While more information on each element of the project is listed below, the WG discussed the following issues:

1. **Drainage.** A proper survey and plan to improve drainage was key. Drainage in the park needs to be looked at holistically, so that the planned new areas of hard standing/artificial pitches remain dry, but the run-off does not further exacerbate the known problems with the combined sewer in Steyne Road. **It was agreed to carry out further research and gather advice/estimates of costings.**
2. **Consultation:** Further consultation with residents, user groups and the BYCC is key for a variety of reasons:
  - It's important to provide the facilities that residents actually want/need, rather than imposing facilities on them. This means consulting user groups, residents neighbouring the park, and the wider community.

- It is essential to be able to prove community consultation (and involvement) when applying for funding.

**It was agreed that we should investigate how to achieve draft visuals of the proposed improvements.** These would help 'carry' public opinion with us as well as aiding funding applications with 'before' and 'after' drawings. In addition, people's comments could aid and abet in refining plans.

*(Note: Tillie Palmer is a landscape architect and will be discussing possibilities with HB next week. Arron will make enquiries amongst colleagues).*

### 3. **Funding & Future Governance:**

Funding applications can practically be a full-time exercise, particularly when looking at a project on this scale. Playground providers can aid and assist as part of their contract. Many organisations require match funding. This would be a problem for the Parish. Many funders exclude applications from Town and Parish Councils, which reduces the funding pool available. They will, however, fund community groups and charities – this is possible, but then you have the problem of who then owns the asset.

**Consideration needs to be given sooner rather than later about who owns and is responsible for maintaining the new assets.** As the IOWC is the landlord on the Old School Field, will it be responsible for hiring out the new 3G pitch, and receiving the income? Or, as the tenant, would it be BPC? Or the BYCC which is registered as a charity? Or, if the Footballers form a community group to get the funding, will they then be responsible for maintenance and hiring and receiving the income?

### 4. **Football Pitch(es)**

**The proposed new layout:** to site a 3G 9-a-side pitch alongside the hedge in the Old School Field, and lose one adult pitch on the playground side, reorienting the remaining one to go east/west instead of north/south. This would allow a great, safer separation from the playground area (and, incidentally, lessen the chances of balls being kicked into neighbouring gardens). There are no 3G pitches on this eastern end of the Island. James Hendy has been instrumental in researching and planning details for the 3G pitch, forming a strong relationship with the responsible bodies. Further meetings with the IOWC and the FA were planned for February 2025. **It was agreed that driving decisions and implementation would be the first priority in the regeneration exercise, to ensure that Bembridge was chosen for the 3G pitch in east IOW and that the WG would concentrate on achieving progress on this.**

5. **Perimeter Path & Trim Trail:** Arron Grist, representing Isle Access (a charity providing disabled cycling) was welcomed to the WG. He was enthusiastic about the idea of having a wide path, suitable for a variety of users (joggers, walkers, wheelchairs, able-bodied and disabled cyclists). He pointed out that creating French drains before creating the surface for the path (i.e. digging below

the surface clay to the gravel below) might assist with drainage solutions. **He agreed to look into specifications for the path (width, surface etc)**

6. **Playground (and Basketball Pitch):** The outline plan is for the adult gym equipment to be removed, and the playground extended up to the 'boat mound' (bearing in mind the badger sett in the far corner of the field). The brief is to 'zone' the playground into age related areas: 1-3, 4-8, 9+, and to make the equipment inclusive, interesting and more challenging with more multi-play modules rather than single-use apparatus.

Four Playground providers had been contacted: Playdale, Sovereign, Kompan and Proludic. Cllr H Brabazon circulated the outline suggestions from Playdale (attached). Details were awaited from Sovereign and Kompan. Proludic had been helpful but required a better brief, preferably with some funding ideas.

Cllr H Brabazon had also been through the catalogues and circulated examples of the offerings (attached). These are not directly comparable but could be useful for some sort of compare and contrast. The costings shown on 3 of the 4 are just for the equipment.

It is important to note that all 4 providers could also be contracted to refurbish the **Basketball Pitch** with a new surface and end walls and contrasting line markings to allow basketball, hockey, tennis etc.

7. **Lease on the Old School Field:** BPC does not own this field; it is leased through the Education Department of the IOWC. The lease is restrictive in that it requires that the land be returned to its original condition at the end of the term. The lease has 40 years to run. Most funding providers will not consider funding if lease terms are less than 15 years. Discussions with a representative of the IOWC (Allen White) indicate that they would probably look favourably on a variation allowing the planned development (i.e. the 3G field, the perimeter path and – no doubt – the required drainage works). We await feedback, but it is essential that we have permission/variation/agreement from our landlord before we proceed.

#### 8. **Changing Rooms**

The current changing rooms are not fit for purpose. They are too close to the playground (safeguarding) and do not have toilets. It would be much better to demolish them and start afresh with a new building between the BYCC and the skate park. If the hedge between the fields was removed in this area, then the facilities could be used for both the existing pitch and the new one (and others) on the Old School Field.

#### 9. **Pump track/skatepark**

- Skate parks are designed for a wide range of users, while pump tracks are often designed for younger riders or all ages and abilities. Pump tracks are usually smaller and have lower features than skate parks.

- Skate parks are designed for skateboarders, while pump tracks are designed for all wheeled sports, including bikes, scooters, skateboards, and wheelchairs

Whether to have either or neither will depend on much more consultation than has hitherto taken place. The important consideration will be to make it big enough and interesting enough to ensure that it is used.

#### **10. Planning permission**

While we probably do not need planning permission for the extended playground or the basketball pitch (we are improving what is already there), it would probably be best to include this in a plan. Development would have to be staged, but in order to proceed intelligently, there should be an outline plan for the whole park, and then specific details for individual elements (3G pitch, playground, perimeter path, changing rooms, pump track). Those plans (and permission) would also be necessary for funding applications.

#### **11. Project Management**

It is fair to say that Councillors and Parishioners (no matter how enthusiastic) are not likely to have the necessary expertise to anticipate problems, negotiate the various rules & regulations, identify the best contractors, specify accurate tenders, oversee the works. Cllr H Brabazon will carry out research of specialist consultants who may be able to provide assistance.