

# THE PLAYING FIELD

*Newsletter of  
Surrey Playing Fields - April 2016*



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## **RETIREMENT OF MIKE CLARK**

**Mike Clark**, the Borough Development Officer for Guildford, has had to retire due to ill health.

He has had a lifetime of practical involvement in playing, administrating, officiating or otherwise supporting sport. Probably his first recognised involvement in sport in Surrey was when, in the late 1960s, he was asked to build the initial sports facilities at the University of Surrey, by Dr Peter Leggett the then Vice-Chancellor. This involved substantial indoor facilities on the main campus as well as outdoor pitches and tennis courts, with suitable changing and social accommodation across the A3 on what is now known as Manor Park. The indoor, three storey building housed a 5 badminton court sports hall, dance studio, four squash courts, a climbing wall and weight training area and a bar and was completed in 1971 for the princely sum of £115,000. The outdoor provision was mainly 18 changing rooms and a bar/social area that cost £40,000 in the same year. (Some four decades later, £100,000 was the estimated cost of demolition of the pavilion!) The drainage of the pitches was steadily improved over many years to make them some of the best in Surrey. Certainly if the matches were called off at the University, no-one else was playing either.

Mike started working for the Surrey Playing Fields Association in May 1988 and later took over as Borough Development Officer for Guildford, where he has actively supported the work of some of the major clubs in the area, including Wey Kayak Club and Guildford Archery Club. His knowledge of the area has been invaluable. He was Chairman of Sport Guildford and involved with local arts. Wherever one went in the area, you met someone who



knew Dr. Clark. Swimming has always been his real interest, particularly Water Polo where he has been an absolute stalwart for local clubs as well as nationally. He has been a powerful and testing combination of Treasurer, Coach and Referee for nearly 50 years. Mike is the best possible example to demonstrate that without the involvement of some highly key, and very keen, “nutters” some sports simply could not survive. His invaluable specialist advice during the design and build of the brand new 50 metre swimming pool as part of Surrey Sports Park recently means he has directly contributed to the provision of a major legacy, which will underpin the ability of the people of Guildford seriously to compete in both swimming and water polo for the foreseeable future.

Mike has been recognised for his outstanding commitment by British University and Colleges Sport (the competition structure for universities) where he has worked tirelessly, particularly for water polo and cross country. He was also selected as a torch carrier ahead of the 2012 London Olympics.

We hugely appreciate his incredible stamina and long-standing enthusiasm and commitment and wish him a long and well-earned retirement. Your friends at SPF will miss working with you and trust that we can stay in touch with a man who always gives wise advice.

*For sports help throughout Surrey*  
**Affiliated to the National Playing Fields Association**

The work of the Surrey County Playing Fields Association is funded by subscriptions from local authorities at county and district levels and parish and town councils. It also receives funding from Sports Clubs and individuals. Details are in our Annual Report.

We thank them all.

## Organisations on SCPFA Advisory Committee

Surrey County Council

Surrey County Football Association

Surrey County Rugby Football Union

Surrey Sports Board

Surrey Community Action

Active Surrey

Surrey County Lawn Tennis Association

Surrey Cricket Foundation

Surrey County Athletic Association

We are grateful for their support and wise counsel

## FROM THE COUNTY SEC'S DESK

### A DAY AT THE KIA OVAL



*Mike Armitage at the SPF Stand*

It is usually fun to be at the Kia Oval. On Sunday 20th March the Surrey Cricket Foundation held the Dataquest Club Conference there. The Conference included a number of workshops aimed at improving the quality of cricket in the county and how to increase the level of participation. It is realised that young people should be encouraged to be volunteers and this can be very rewarding; Surrey Playing Fields has had this as an objective for many years. Clubs need to have plans to maintain and improve their facilities. This not only covers play and practice, but also covers the social side of the game. Accordingly, there were talks on funding and facility development.

Surrey Playing Fields had a stand in the exhibition area. Most people there were selling equipment or services. These ranged from insurance to cricket nets and methods to help coaches when monitoring the progress of players. It was the area where refreshments were served which led to the stands being busy. We were selling our free services and explaining how to apply to us for grants and loans. The stand was run by Mike Armitage, assisted by Jim Faulkner. Mike was excellent at ensuring the leaflet explaining our services was widely distributed.

We provided a powerpoint presentation on our activities and had our website showing on a tablet computer. Business was brisk and we had a significant number of enquiries which have been passed on to the appropriate people in our organisation.

It was not just work. Mike and I have been involved in cricket for many years and it was very pleasant to have so many friends call in to see us. As well as the social chat, we learnt about the problems which many clubs face. We had produced a breakdown of the amount of money we have put into cricket over the last 15 years. Although we named the clubs supported in the different categories we cover, we did not show which money went to an individual club. As we move through the years, club committees change and several visitors did not realise that they had received assistance from SPF. A number of people involved in the support of cricket were surprised to see how much we had done.

In addition to the people manning the stand, our Director, David Gill, was working there in his position as a Trustee of the Surrey Cricket Foundation.

We would like to thank the organisers for arranging such a successful event. Those Cricket Clubs which did not attend should look out for the 2017 Conference. They are likely to learn things which will be of benefit.

## **PROTECTING PLAYING FIELDS**

Terry Housden, from Fields in Trust, gave the final presentation at the seminar “Beyond the Six Acre Standard”. He explained that it is not only important to have sports fields and play areas located in the correct locations; but that it is important to secure them for community use.

The way that Fields in Trust works is for the landowner to retain the field so that ownership and management are in local hands. The landowner agrees a deed with FIT. This will provide some security and maintain the use of the land for leisure use. This does allow for the facility to be improved.

In Surrey we have over 50 King George V and QEII Fields. The latest project is to secure Centenary Fields as a memorial to those involved in the First World War. Fields in Trust are working with the Royal British Legion to try to have at least one field in each borough. They are close to completing the paperwork for fields in Hersham and Redhill. Only one borough, Surrey Heath, is not taking part.

There are other deeds which Fields in Trust use. We are expecting to secure a field in Ewell in the near future. Full details of the schemes are available on the Fields in Trust website.

## **RETIREMENT OF WILLIAM EVE**

William Eve has been with us since the early 1980s when his father, Jack Eve, was chairman of both Surrey County Council and the Surrey County Playing Fields Association. He was the Borough Development Officer for Epsom and Ewell. Prior to that, he looked after Reigate and Banstead. William, unlike many of our volunteers, is still in full time employment. He runs a sports equipment company and is extremely busy. He is leaving us to concentrate on his business. We thank him for working for us whilst our Association has evolved, we know many clubs have benefitted from his support.

## **BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT OFFICER - MOLE VALLEY**

We have not issued a newsletter since December. We rather belatedly welcome Bob Higson, who joined us in January. Bob is a member of Dorking RFC who has already asked for a list of all clubs in his area so that he can contact them. He is a retired solicitor who should provide some gravity when we are considering how best to improve our Association. His contact details are on the back of this newsletter. If you are situated in Mole Valley, please contact him for assistance from SPF.

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEW “PLAYING FIELD” EDITOR**

We all know what a tremendous amount that Jim Faulkner does for SPF and to help reduce this slightly Don Raffin had agreed to take over the production of our quarterly newsletter. Don is a retired bank manager who in his role as secretary of his local Rotary Club, has produced their newsletters for many years. On the sporting side Don was a keen Rugby player but is now just a spectator, being a member at Harlequins. This is his first issue and he requests that future articles are sent to him; details are on the last page of this newsletter.

## CLEANER LOCAL PLAY

With the increasing issue of child obesity with time spent anywhere but outside, are we doing enough to encourage children's use of outdoor space? Whilst we perhaps appreciate that children are the greatest users of our open spaces, are such uses just incidental movement, to and from school or the shops or friends' homes, rather than play activities with the important cognitive, physical and social development opportunities that they bring?

Yes, the financial cut backs are biting deep, equipped play provision is suffering, becoming run down and in some cases just plain dirty. Whilst new vanity projects are still there, the important maintenance of essential local play provision is finding it hard. The understanding of the needs for children's play remains crucial, not just for new play areas but in ensuring how play areas are able to continue.

Take in a visit and accompany a group of younger (3 - 5) and older (6 - 8) children at play, importantly away from the latest prestige play area. Yes it is important to keep local home based play areas exciting; that's their play territory. If there is insufficient finance to replace broken or old equipment, then aspirations should be re-tuned to the available budgets so as to keep play areas vibrant and, importantly, clean. Yes it is important not just to graffiti bust the visible gate-side views of equipment but, importantly, also under and on the decks where children are playing. Yes it is key to keep the play areas cleaner than the footpaths leading to them and not to accept the cigarette ends, bottle tops, broken glass and other litter often ignored as being too small or difficult to bother with. Children are expected to play on the ground surface, as are young children to crawl, picking up anything, exploring by touch, and sometimes taste what they find.

Encouragement of children into equipped play areas as a safer and more stimulating play place intensifies as our communities' density increases and concerns of safety issues grow. The increasing need for



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effective play opportunities does not always mean the need for new provision; present facilities and spaces can often, with increased equipment, address needs. Careful selection in the regular maintenance and repair of items can frequently enable other cheaper maintainable items to be repaired, albeit abandoning and removing larger, more expensive or newer items. The need to encourage children to use the play area remains, rather than provide just empty swing bays or seat-less cable ways. It is important to maintain a range for differing play development that does not just focus on large items, platform play or agility courses. Children also need equipment for individual or small group play where they are not overrun by older running groups.

The choice for new or replacement provision is not just about selecting the highest, or the equipment with the most natural timber, it is about ensuring that they are also robust and able to resist vandalism and crucially be quickly and easily maintainable.

We cannot, thankfully, stop children playing, we just need to ensure that the opportunities are there.

Jean Wenger  
 Surrey Playing Field Play Advisor

April 2016

## SURREY FOOTBALL – PITCH MAINTENANCE

Surrey FA is working in partnership with the FA Facilities and Investment Team and Institute of Groundsmanship to develop a grass pitch maintenance service which can be utilised by grassroots football clubs. The aim is to improve the quality of grass pitches.

The need for this service is more relevant now than ever, given the current economic times and the pressures facing grass roots football. The key principles behind the service are to provide football clubs with advice and practical solutions on a number of areas.

Surrey will be working with the IOG South East Regional Pitch Advisor, Darren Symonds, to provide visits to local clubs in the county. To qualify for a visit, a club will need to own their own site or be responsible for maintenance of the grass pitches.

The scheme provides:

Access to expert advice at a substantial cost saving compared to an independent agronomist report, pitch maintenance advice and support tailored to the needs, budget, expertise and equipment available, twelve months Grassroots Club or Individual Membership to the Institute of Groundsmanship (worth £65 or £48), potential to access external funding for pitch development and/or maintenance equipment.

The cost for the programme is £100 per facility which includes two visits, a report and IOG membership for a 12 month period. If a club holds FA Charter Standard Club Status, then the cost will be £50 with Surrey FA subsidising the rest of the cost. Clubs will be required to pay Surrey FA 14 days in advance of the visit following receipt of an invoice.

For more information or further support surrounding the Pitch Improvement Programme, please contact:  
SURREY FA

Tel: 01372 373 543

Email: [info@surreyfa.com](mailto:info@surreyfa.com)

Alternatively, use the Surrey FA website -

<http://www.surreyfa.com/news/2016/mar/pitch-improvement-programme-2016> .



Surrey Playing Fields have noted the trend for Clubs being asked to maintain the grounds which they use. This scheme will assist organisations to make best use of their resources when carrying out this task.



## BEYOND THE SIX ACRE STANDARD

In October 2015 Fields in Trust produced an update to the Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play. In the light of all the housing development in Surrey this is an important document for planning and leisure professionals.

Surrey Playing Fields and Surrey Leisure Officers organised a seminar at the end of March to help planning and leisure professionals, developers and others involved in outdoor sport and play to understand the implications. Over 50 people, including the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, attended the meeting at Spelthorne Borough Council offices.

Tim Smith and Paul Garber, both Trustees of Fields in Trust, gave the presentation which was chaired by Gerry Ceaser, Chairman of Surrey Playing Fields. Tim and Paul were joint authors of the guidance together with Dr. Ann Heywood, who unfortunately was unable to attend.

Fields in Trust's benchmark standards, or local guidance derived from them, were widely used by local authorities for many years and they were referred to by other bodies, including Sport England, who used to refer to them for benchmarking purposes. 75% of LPAs in a survey commissioned by Fields in Trust in 2014 use the PDOSP or guidance that promotes equivalent levels of provision demonstrating the continuing relevance of Fields in Trust's benchmark guidelines.

The 2015 guidance backed up by research retains the same headline rates of provision, but draws out new recommendations for accessibility, the application of standards and the minimum dimensions of formal outdoor space. The standards also no longer differentiate between urban and rural areas.

Using this current guidance will help to ensure that the provision of outdoor sport, play and informal open space is of a sufficient size to enable effective use; is situated in an accessible location and in close proximity to dwellings; and of a quality to maintain longevity and to encourage its continued use. It is recommended that Equipped/Designated Play Spaces be promoted in the form of: Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) aimed at children who can go out to play independently, Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) aimed at older children. These can be complemented by other facilities including Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and skateboard parks etc.

This document is not only for use by planning professionals. It should be referenced by people producing neighbourhood plans. It is available as a free download from the Fields in Trust Website, [www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org).



The picture shows Gerry Ceaser who chaired the meeting, Terry Housden, Tim Smith, Paul Garber (Speakers from Fields in Trust) and John Brooks from Spelthorne BC (who helped organise the seminar).

We thank Spelthorne Borough Council for the use of their facilities.

## Surrey Playing Field Contacts

We have a contact for each council area in Surrey. We have one officer who looks after county wide projects; he can also put you in touch with the officer who is appropriate for your request.

The details are shown below:

### County Development Officer

Mr Barry Hitchcock, MBE, Tel: 01483 410165 email: barry.hitchcock@gmx.co.uk

### Borough Development Officers

<b>Elmbridge</b>	Mr Mike Armitage, Tel: 07930 405788, email: mike.j.armitage@btinternet.com
<b>Epsom &amp; Ewell</b>	Vacant - Contact Barry Hitchcock - details above
<b>Guildford</b>	Mrs Heather Dean, Tel: 01483 525283, email: heather.dean@ukgateway.net
<b>Mole Valley</b>	Mr Bob Higson, Tel: 01306 886043, email: r1hgn@higsonweb.com
<b>Reigate &amp; Banstead</b>	Mr Mike Hughes, Tel: 0208 668 3314, email: mikehughes60@gmail.com
<b>Runnymede</b>	Mr Keith Heal, Tel: 01784 435423, email: wkheal@sky.com
<b>Spelthorne</b>	Mrs Shirley Winson, email: shirleywinson21@gmail.com
<b>Surrey Heath</b>	Mr Grant Simmons, email: gsimmmons@ravenscote.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Tandridge</b>	Mr Denham Earl, Tel: 020 8660 6621, email: dm_laearl@hotmail.com
<b>Waverley - Eastern</b>	Mr Martin Maybrey BEM, Tel: 01483 893209, email: martin.maybrey@btinternet.com
<b>Waverley - Western</b>	Mr Brian Greig, Tel: 01252 793762, email: briangreig@fsmail.net
<b>Woking</b>	Cllr Ian Eastwood, Tel 01483 481864, email: cllrian.eastwood@woking.gov.uk

Other Officers you may need to contact are:

<b>Director</b>	Mr David Gill, Tel: 07798 667662, email: dandcgill@sky.com
<b>Honorary Secretary</b>	Mr Jim Faulkner, Tel: 01483 275628, email: jim_faulkner@talk21.com
<b>Honorary Planning Officer</b>	Mr Paul Garber Dip TP, Dairy House, The Street, Capel, Dorking RH5 5ER Tel: 01306 711015, email: pgarber@btinternet.com
<b>Children's Play Provision and Safety Advisor</b>	Mr Jean Wenger MIEW RPIIAM, 50 Hurst Park Road, Twyford, RG10 0EY. Tel. 07970 764 804, email: jeanwenger@activerms.org

## New Borough Development Officer for Guildford

We are pleased to say that we have a replacement officer for the Guildford Area. Mrs. Heather Dean has been the Hon. Secretary of Sport Guildford and has worked with Mike Clark for a number of years. She has also been a hard working member of Merrow Cricket Club. Do not be concerned in Guildford - your area will continue to be well looked after.

We will provide a fuller introduction later. Her contact details are shown higher up on this page.

## Vacancy - New Borough Development Officer for Epsom & Ewell

Following the retirement of William Eve (see page 3) this leaves us needing a Borough Development Officer for the Epsom & Ewell area. If anyone is interested in volunteering to be part of our friendly team, please contact our County Development Officer, Barry Hitchcock, whose details are shown above.

This newsletter is produced quarterly by Surrey Playing Fields

[www.surreyplayingfields.co.uk](http://www.surreyplayingfields.co.uk)

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