

THE PLAYING FIELD



Newsletter of
Surrey Playing Fields - June 2019

Changing use of Playing Fields



A Trim Trail at Copthorne King George V Field

A lung for the community is a phrase which has been used for many years. I used to wonder about this and what it meant. My traditional view was that playing fields were used for organized sport, somewhere where boys ran about and let off steam, places where older people sat and often enjoyed formal gardens. Even the play areas were mainly equipped for boys. The sport was based around teams working to standards set by national governing bodies.

If you now look at playing fields you will see: people in exercise groups, fun runs taking place, fitness walking, trim trails. There will be far less traditional team games, there will be a lot more women's sport.

In other parts of this newsletter we will provide further information on the growth of women's sport. For now, let us consider why there is less traditional sport. Lifestyles have changed. People seem to have less time to play sport; they spend time on other activities which were not available or fashionable in the past. Several sports increased the distances to travel to play – with heavier traffic this has dissuaded casual players from taking part in sport. There are less volunteers available to run traditional sports played in formal leagues. People often just wish to turn up to take part when they have time. This was how children used to play before the formation of structured sport for younger people. This makes life challenging for those who provide sporting facilities and manage organisations.

There are other considerations. Being outside is considered part of a healthy lifestyle. Fields in Trust's research highlights not only the vital role that outdoor spaces play in improving our health, but also their economic value. They consider our parks to be precious and want to improve access to them for everyone - including the young, isolated and the vulnerable. This is endorsed by Rishi Sunak MP, Parks and Green Spaces Minister. Their calculations show parks and green spaces are estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year, based solely on a reduction in GP visits and excluding any additional savings from prescribing or referrals.

Active Surrey organized the 2019 Specsavers Surrey Youth Games in the middle of June. The emphasis was for young people to get the chance to try out new activities which they would hopefully continue to play. Surrey Playing Fields consider this a most worthwhile objective. We would like to see more effort spent on assisting older people to take part in more exercise.

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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 on our Website.

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
Surrey County Netball Association

We are grateful for their support and wise counsel

Recent Projects

Cranleigh Cricket Club

The Club play on common land. They maintain the square and the outfield and the surrounding ground. As the Club is based in an area which is considered a significant part of the village, they need to keep the ground very tidy. The Pavilion is close to the main road leading to the High Street and its surrounds need to be smart. SPF provided financial support towards the cost of a new mower which was purchased from a local company, Cranleigh Garden Machinery.



Martin Maybrey, Borough Development Officer for the Eastern half of Waverley Borough with Dave Griffiths, Cranleigh Cricket Club Secretary.

Coopers Hill Lawn Tennis Club

This Club is a section of the charity Coopers Hill Recreational Trust. They had to refurbish their Clubhouse.

Sporting circles now realise that to maintain and increase membership you have provide smart facilities.

Alan Greig (Borough Development Officer for Runnymede) identified that they needed to replace the old plastic “garden” furniture with more substantial, and permanent, chairs and tables. We provided a grant towards their purchase.

Other Development Officers have been equally successful, but appear to be too shy to provide details of their achievements.



The 2019 Specsavers Surrey Youth Games

The 23rd Youth Games, held on 15th and 16th June, saw sporting talent and fair play shine through for well over a thousand Surrey families as the weather (mostly) played its part.

Young people from every borough and district in Surrey came together to take part in the county’s largest annual multi-sport event – all for free. Almost 1500 children and their parents descended on the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford to take part in two days of competition and activities organised by Active Surrey.

Prior to the Games over 3000 free training places across Surrey’s boroughs and districts had been taken up by beginners with little experience of the sports they later competed in. During the Games weekend more than 200 teams with players aged 6 to 16 took part in 21 separate events ranging from boxing to boccia and squash to lacrosse.

While most of the events had a competitive element, the emphasis was very much on celebrating what the participants had achieved as newcomers to their sport and recognising fair play. Some events, such as football, judo and the 2km running also saw individual rather than team medals awarded.

Waverley were awarded the prestigious Gerry Ceaser Fair Play Trophy for the attitude and sportsmanship demonstrated by their young people across the weekend. Nominations were made by those running every sport, as well as each of the borough / district team organisers. Alongside the trophy Waverley will receive a cheque for sports equipment from the Surrey Playing Fields Association. The cheque and a certificate will be presented at the SPF Annual General Meeting.

Fair Play position	Borough / District
1 st	Waverley
2 nd	Guildford
3 rd	Epsom & Ewell

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games are there to give ‘non sporty’ children a chance; Epsom & Ewell had done a particularly good job of getting children into training with 426 places taken up prior to the Games. However, it was Spelthorne who ended up entering the most teams on the weekend and gained the ‘Highest Team Entry’ award, with Runnymede missing out by the narrowest of margins.

While the emphasis of the Games is now very much on participation first, and competition second, Spelthorne topped the medal table with 5 golds, 5 silvers and 3 bronze. In second place were Elmbridge who scooped 3 golds, while Epsom & Ewell just edged out a terrific performance from Tandridge who punched above their weight to finish fourth.



Better Play Opportunities for All Children

With the differing recreational provision provided to communities across the rural and densely populated housing areas in Surrey, there is often considerable misunderstanding on what the wider play needs of children are. What do, or should children get from our playgrounds? Importantly, what provision could provide the widest ranging play opportunities?

It is widely appreciated that children need an allocated space, where play is encouraged. What is so often struggled with, is providing prospects for children with differing abilities. Even where understanding is there, the range of opportunities that can provide for varying abilities often remains a difficulty. The answer that is often provided, being a 'token' item of playground equipment such as a surface level roundabout, and job done; and we have a percentage of our playground equipment that addresses children with disabilities. Sadly, this, 'one size fits all' answer is all too frequently seen, and often demonstrates the lack of understanding needed to address the wider community needs. That initial and positive meaning decision of, 'let's make sure that every playground has at least one item that is accessible to all', misses the point. Children are not all equal in ability, and their capabilities range significantly from physical to psychological difficulties and even issues often regarded as minor, such as confidence in their balancing skills or experiencing height and movement. As important, children's wider play experiences and the understandings gained, will form part of their onward development.

Excellent as roundabouts are, the overall playground provision needs to provide more, and so bring wider opportunities and benefits to our children. The playground equipment, in the main, is not the limiting factor, it's the child's ability to get to or onto it. If the playground is located across an often muddy and wet expanse of grass or other access obstacle, then it may not only be the child that has difficulties. Their carer, their aunt or grandparent may be the one with the access difficulties and therefore preventing usage, 'sorry not today, we will have to come back another time'.

Similarly, once within the playground how long will the child be encouraged or allowed to play with no adult seating provided, 10 minutes?

With the choice of playground equipment, again it's access, if the child has mobility difficulties, then a firm and stable access, at all times of the year, will positively encourage the use of most items. Children with more severe ability difficulties can often use an item, maybe not fully, however, they are able use it to some degree, possibly assisted by their carer.

Swings, both the traditional flat seat units and the ever popular, all ages all abilities, group or 'basket' seat, as well as slides serve well, if access can be gained both by the user and carer. Agility and social play items such as 'oxo' panels, sound generating items and finger tracing game panels can offer a carer with a child quality play opportunities. The range of items now available to improve our playgrounds are out there, and far more numerous than were ever previously available.

Remember you need to provide easy access for the user and the person looking after them.

Jean Wenger - Surrey Playing Fields Play Advisor - June 2019





Robust SAFETY Inspections

Play & Sports areas, Parks, Ponds, Schools & Gyms

- Detailed reports inspecting to approved UK & EU Standards
- Risk Benefit Assessment & Guidance for prioritising actions
- Identifying photographs & advice on problems found
- Quality 'Seal' RPII Annual Play Inspectors
- Independent of any manufacturer or maintenance company
- Training courses & RPII Exam Qualifications
- Surrey County PFA Children's Play Advisor
- Institute of Expert Witnesses – full member 

Contact Today – Active Risk Management Services Ltd.

07970 764 804

info@ActiveRMS.org



Women's Sport in Surrey

Netball

Congratulations to Maureen Clark, who received her England Netball Honorary Life Membership Award. It was presented by Lindsay Sartori, EN Honorary President in front of a full crowd at the CopperBox Arena on Sunday 20th January before the Roses became victorious over the Aussie Diamonds.

Maureen was honoured for her 45 years service to netball across all spectrums, having only recently stepped down as the London and South East Regional Chair last September. She still continues to volunteer within netball.



Maureen is a very active member of Croydon Playing Fields Association and has worked closely with Surrey Playing Fields for many years.

Those of you who have attended our AGM may well have met her. She has provided much wise advice on the importance of sport and on the value of the playing fields movement.

A Talk on Netball given to Croydon Playing Fields Association

The question posed to me by Croydon Playing Fields was “how did netball suddenly become so popular”. Well I definitely cannot say that it happened overnight – Netball in England started way back in the 1920s at a college in Kent. In 2018 YouGov PLC conducted a survey on behalf of England Netball which showed that 27% of adults in Great Britain still think that netball is an ‘old-fashioned’ sport.

Changes over the years of the international rules have made the game faster with far less whistle being blown and this has made it easier for spectators to watch and understand. In 2006 England Netball changed the competitive structure and franchises were invited to bid for the opportunity of having a team play in the newly formed Superleague. England players pre Superleague were all amateurs but since then nominal payment is made to players and they are now classified as professional. However, I am sure most England players also require careers outside of the game.

Australia and New Zealand run a netball league and many of our top players have been invited to play for various clubs in those countries. The competition within the ANZ league is fierce and there is no doubt that our players have benefitted from that playing experience. Also, players from all over the world have been invited to play in our own Superleague teams, which has advantages all round.

Sky TV started showing the Superleague matches from the start, which meant that more people had the opportunity to watch our sport. For all of my playing life we had local leagues, county leagues and national leagues. All the counties played against one another and players were talent-spotted at events such as Inter-County Tournaments. Now we have training camps for our players and they are all given very best advice on items such as nutrition and strength and conditioning. Becoming an England Rose is tough, but our top players thrive and the proof was seen by all at the Commonwealth Games held on the Gold Coast of Australia last year. There is no doubt that the last second goal scored to beat Australia was magical for all netball fans throughout England. Since then netball has been on everyone's lips and receiving BBC's Greatest Sporting Moment of the Year and Team of the Year accolades at the Sports Personality of the Year Awards Ceremony was the icing on the cake for our England Roses.

England Netball have been encouraging ladies to get involved in the sport by introducing new ‘products’ to give more opportunities to play, such as Back to Netball, Netball Now and Walking Netball; all these with the encouragement and support of Sport England and the Government. Potentially Walking Netball could save the NHS a vast amount of money. It must be healthier to get a ‘wobble’ on, rather than being lonely and depressed on a sofa at home.

Maureen Clark
President, Surrey County Netball Association

PTO

Women's Sport in Surrey (Continued)

This June has been full of Women's Sport. There has been football and cricket on the television together with tennis and golf. The number of girls taking part in Surrey Youth games has shown that there is an appetite for taking part in sport. There are significant support and development projects provided by Cricket and Football. There should be enough cricket pitches to cope with this demand as the fall in registered cricketers in the country since 2008 is 150,000, down from 428,000 to 278,000 in 2016. Surrey are supporting role out pitches which could provide additional capacity.

We know of projects in neighbouring counties to provide outdoor exercise groups. There are more women than men taking part. We would like to hear of such groups in Surrey and find out if they need assistance.

We have received reports on the introduction of women's rugby to existing clubs. It appears that after some initial resistance, most are becoming an important section of their clubs.

There are more women of all ages taking part in sport and physical exercise. Much of this takes place outdoors. Some of this is indoors in local halls. A significant amount is in sports pavilions being used when not in use for their main sport. This provides challenges and opportunities. I have been informed of groups moving away from sports clubs because they are not clean and family friendly. We must accept older people returning to sport are looking for company as much as for competition. In Britain for many years there has been a tradition in tennis of social doubles. This has a significant place in keeping healthy. It is also important that younger people have their place in a club, not always as competitive individuals.

One important statement made at Surrey Youth Games was that they are encouraging youngsters to join clubs. These clubs need to be welcoming and have the correct facilities. There is a shortage of suitable ladies changing rooms, showers and toilets. We have spent many years improving access for disabled players and spectators. We need look at the wider needs.

Maureen Clark has advised how netball uses one location for several matches played after each other. This allows officials to stay on site and gives time for new umpires to be trained. Many years ago there was an initiative to increase participation in cricket by playing 6 a side games in the evening. They had several games in the evening on one ground and were quite popular for a while.

There is usually an increase in participation in sport after a major sporting event, especially if there is success for a home country. The challenge is to welcome people, provide assistance, and accept that many will not continue after taking up a sport or exercise. People are likely to sample many activities before finding one or more that suits them.

The NHS is telling us that people need to lead a healthy life. Exercise is a significant part of this. The art is to convince people that it can be fun to take part. Not all sport has to be extremely competitive. Play at a level that suits you. You can make friends and enjoy a social life with like minded people. Ladies please take note, there are many men playing sport who have taken this on board.

There are many initiatives out there, encouraging girls and women into sport. I would recommend that people use these. However, remember there is a social life attached to most sports. You do not have to a world beater to take part.



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 Mike Armitage, Tel: 07930 405788, email: mike.j.armitage@btinternet.com

Borough Development Officers

Elmbridge	Mr Mike Armitage, Tel: 07930 405788, email: mike.j.armitage@btinternet.com
Epsom & Ewell	Mr Andrew Tibble, Tel: 07773 149755, email: atibble@hotmail.co.uk
Guildford	Vacant
Mole Valley	Mr Bob Higson, Tel: 01306 886043, email: r1hgn@higsonweb.com
Reigate & Banstead	Mr Mike Hughes, Tel: 0208 668 3314, email: mikehhughes60@gmail.com
Runnymede	Mr Alan Greig, Tel: 01784 741022, email: a.greig3@ntlworld.com
Spelthorne	Mrs Shirley Winson, email: shirleywinson21@gmail.com
Surrey Heath	Grant Simmons - email: grant24simmons@gmail.com
Tandridge	Mr Denham Earl, Tel: 020 8660 6621, email: dm_laearl@hotmail.com
Waverley - Eastern	Mr Martin Maybrey BEM, Tel: 01483 893209, email: martin.maybrey@btinternet.com
Waverley - Western	Mr Brian Greig, Tel: 01252 793762, email: briangreig59@gmail.com
Woking	Vacant

Other Officers you may need to contact are:

Honorary Secretary	Mrs Heather Dean, Tel:01483 535283, email: surreyplayingfields@gmail.com
Children's Play Provision	Mr Jean Wenger MIEW RPII _{AM} , 50 Hurst Park Road, Twyford, RG10 0EY. Tel: 07970 764 804, email: jeanwenger@activerms.org
Webmaster	Mr Alex Gear, Tel: 07532 741653, email: alexander.gear@gmail.com

Need for Volunteers

You will see from the above list of contacts that we have a need for more volunteers. We have been in existence for over 90 years and have had a significant effect, working with partners, on sport and play in Surrey. People have worked with us from a variety of backgrounds. Some have been able to spend some time assisting others just a few hours a year. If you are interested, please contact our Hon. Secretary, Heather Dean whose details are above.

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For sports help throughout Surrey