

# Liphook United Football Club Pitch Maintenance Agreement

Comments from Alex Bray on behalf of Liphook United Football Club.

As you are aware, the club intends to seek support from the Football Foundation to help improve the playing pitches at the Recreation Ground to increase their resilience in poor weather and to reduce the number of games being cancelled. This is a charity, funded by the Football Association and professional clubs which is specifically focused on grass roots football. It provides grants, which are tapered over a multi year period, which we hope to secure. This would allow the club to break the current cycle and become self sustaining so we can contribute more towards pitch maintenance moving forwards. At present, when the Recreation Ground is unplayable, I either have to pay for teams to hire pitches elsewhere at considerable expenses or postpone the fixtures. As an example, it costs between £160 - £260 to hire the 3G pitch at Petersfield for the adults to play a match, which is simply not sustainable for the club long term. With more resilient pitches, our costs will decrease and allow us to use the clubs funds to contribute more towards keeping them that way.

You may well have seen them, but we have already been successful in securing new goals for the adults teams from this charity, so we believe we have a reasonable chance of securing assistance with the pitches too.

We have sought advice from the Football Association and in order to secure the funding for pitch improvements, the club needs to show a) that it has permission to use the pitches (the timing of the lease expiring is rather unfortunate in that regard) and b) that it has an agreement to carry out the works. Last year, the Football Foundation inspected the pitches at the Recreation Ground and prepared a report, outlining what works it recommended to improve them (attached). I have therefore taken the liberty of preparing a draft 'pitch maintenance agreement' setting out the work the club proposes to carry out if successful in securing the grant, as well as the work that Dugg has indicated the Grounds team would be able to carry out (also attached). This has been discussed at length with Dugg, who I am sure will provide his feedback/advice at the meeting if it is possible to add this to the agenda? It is only a first draft, and I would be happy to consider amendments.

In short, I am trying to take a forward looking view, to ensure the long term viability of football at the Recreation Ground. But, in order to be successful and have funding in place ready for next season, I do need to move relatively quickly to secure the new lease and if appropriate the pitch maintenance agreement. Without these in place, I can't seek the desired support from the Football Foundation so would welcome a discussion on the topic with the councillors on 6 February.