

Corfe Castle Parish meeting 9 March

Report from outside bodies

Briefing note on the Corfe Castle Sports Trust

- 1- There was a discussion on the Sports Trust during the Public session at the last meeting and this note sets out where the Trust is now.
- 2- A meeting of the Trust was held on 20 February to review all current activities and actions taken since the last meeting on May 2025.
- 3- The site and building are in good order and special thanks are due to Colin Fuller who organises repairs quickly
- 4- There are three football teams (league/veterans/youth using the site. At one time there were more teams but players lived far away and the club therefore reformed to make it a local team.
- 5- The Trust welcomes bookings and there are a few lettings to other organisations to boost income. Eg as a base for the Purbeck runners.
- 6- The Trust-again thanks to Colin- has made good progress in the Project to install adult exercise equipment on the site. A tortuous planning process has been successfully navigated and a report on letting a contract is either on the March CCPC agenda or soon afterwards.
- 7- **The main perennial issues for the Trust are finance and capacity;**
- 8- Finance. The site and buildings cost about £5-6k to run (after a large PC contribution to grounds maintenance). The major items of expenditure are insurance (£1692), Utilities-gas water sewerage (£1626), grass cutting £546) Fire protection and alarms (£208) plus pavilion maintenance (quite a variable figure). Rent payment to the NT is only £40.
- 9- The main issue is income. Fees for hiring the pitches raises £1300. The other major source with gift aid is direct debit donations from villagers at the time the Trust started.(about £1k) but this a diminishing source.
- 10- In 24/25 there was a joint project with the football club to raise funds including "toy Pig racing". £2390 was raised and there was a small overall surplus of £453. Changes at the football club meant there was not a fundraising event in 25/26 and the Trust made a significant loss. Pitch fees cannot be raised dramatically as they are relatively low elsewhere so to bridge the gap there must be a significant fund-raising event each year. The trust also needs to invest most of its reserves in income bearing accounts and this is being actioned.
- 11- The trust received substantial Government funding during Covid and reserves are currently about £38k. There is no immediate risk of financial failure, but the reserves ought to be large enough to deal with wear and tear on the fabric and services.

- 12- The other issue is **capacity** of the Trust. The constitution gives the majority of the 5 Trust places to PC nominees. While these three can exercise the oversight required of a Trust the nominees have normally not seen it as their role to be fund raisers or sports organisers. The constitution says the trust must meet (only) twice a year.
- 13- There have been CVN appeals for more direct debits and for organisers but there has been a limited response. As the Trust was putting too much workload on one Trustee and his wife the trustees held their **own strategic review** in 2024 and considered options such as devolving more responsibility to the football club or asking the PC to add capacity by organising repairs etc. At that time the football club was having a change of leadership, so devolution was not an option. Asking the PC to help administer the Trust would be expensive and deter potential donors. The Trustees therefore resolved to seek more candidates for supporters and possible Trustees based on the current constitution.
- 14- There has been an expression from the organiser of the football club to become a Trustee which if agreed which would bring the Trust and football club closer together. The Trust has expressions of interest from three more people, and it will seek to involve them in the work of the Trust. There have been separate expressions of interest in becoming Secretary and separately Treasurer which will be followed up.
- 15- An task for the next Trust meeting will be a plan for fundraising to ensure income and expenditure match.

Steve Clarke, Council nominee on the Sports Trust.

2 March 2026