

26th July 2023

Cricket Club request to water wicket with hose and sprinkler

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In June, Wroughton Wranglers Cricket Club (WWCC) requested that WPC allowed them to water the cricket wicket using a hose attached to the tap in the garage next to the Weir Field pavilion. The hose is laid down the centre of the Weir Field to the wicket, where it is attached to a sprinkler.
- 1.2 The office was concerned that when the hose was in use, there were no apparent actions taken to mitigate the risk of trips and falls. The office therefore insisted that WWCC stopped using the hose with immediate effect until a risk assessment had been provided, along with any other relevant information, to be put before the earliest committee meeting for a decision, which would be F&GP on 17th July. WWCC then asked that an urgent decision be made, as the wicket could be deemed unsafe to use if it was not maintained to a high enough standard, which meant watering was required.
- 1.3 Context: the Club has rebuilt its membership to approx 30 members, many of whom live locally, including a number of new members. In 2024 they will start children's training sessions through Wiltshire Cricket, possibly during school holidays, and this could be including children as young as 4 years old. They have not considered rainwater harvesting for 2 reasons: 1) because it would take as much as they could collect to water each wicket once, and 2) because they hope to move onto the Hills site within the medium term (date as yet unknown) and they don't want to put money into the Weir Field site, only to move sites in possibly a couple of years.
- 1.4 Please see the following link for advice by Sport England, particularly page 2 regarding hosepipe bans and pages 8-10 which address the needs of cricket clubs: *'Frequently asked questions on how to manage sports facilities to minimise the impact of drought conditions'*
<https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/drought-faqs.pdf?VersionId=haa4tUcchM2noCN3AFKzuaEamUJ9GjI>
- 1.5 The Grounds Team Manager has confirmed that the water supply to the garage is mains drinking water. This would mean that any hosepipe ban for this area would apply to WWCC.

2.0 Report Details

- 2.1 Please see attached:
 - WWYC Risk Assessment (Appendix 1)
 - Report from Martin Wasdell, Wiltshire County Pitch Advisor (Appendix 2)

Open Spaces Committee

The same day I received the report, I asked Martin Wasdell to confirm whether or not the cricket pitch was safe to play on and whether or not it would require watering with the hose on any day on which it rained. He advised as follows:

'no i can't confirm this. I am not on site. What I will say is that the cracks that are there, on the particular track in question, and on the rest of the square, are large and will only get larger without regular watering. Cracks if allowed to develop to this size require 3 times as much water to close them than would have been used by regular watering to stop them developing to this size in the first place. A few rain showers will have no affect whatsoever. Clay, which a cricket square is, once allowed to dry completely, becomes hydrophobic (small amounts of water will just sit on the surface and not be absorbed), and take lots of moisture for them to become plyable again. If not it's like putting a roller over a load of house bricks, it will just break to dust.'

3.0 The Open Spaces Committee made an urgent decision via email agreeing that WWCC could use a hose and sprinkler to water the cricket wicket subject to the following conditions:

1. WWCC assumes all liability for any accident or injury to any member of the public in connection with the watering of the cricket wicket. WWCC must notify their own insurers of this and notify Wroughton Parish Council immediately if their insurers raise any concerns or stipulate any conditions.
2. WWCC assumes liability for any damage which occurs whilst the hose is in use and the garage doors are open, including ensuring that any chemicals or hazardous substances are locked away in accordance with COSHH.
3. WWCC must circulate a copy of the risk assessment to all club members to ensure that anyone who sets out and/ or uses the hose and sprinkler is aware of the content and therefore their liabilities and responsibilities.
4. WWCC must keep an up-to-date water usage log on the garage wall, detailing the dates the hose is used and the start/ finish time for water usage.
5. WPC will charge a nominal £50.00 for the use of the hose for the season. If, when the water bill is received, more than £50 of additional water has been used compared to the same time last year, WPC will invoice WWCC for the difference.
6. Every time the hose is laid out:
 - WWCC must put out a minimum of 2 hazard warning signs on the path outside the pavilion/ garage, and a minimum of 4 additional warning signs across the hose on the Weir Field itself.
 - WWCC must have a minimum of 2 'lookouts', who should warn any members of the public using the field to look out for the hose so they do not trip and fall.
7. WPC reserves the right to review this decision at any point in time.

3.0 Recommendation:

The Committee note Members' interim decision and formally confirm it for the rest of the season.