**INFORMATION FOR APRIL 2025 MEETING**

**Rose of Northamptonshire Awards**

Do you have that special someone in your community who deserves recognition for all they do?  It might be an unsung community volunteer who just quietly goes about their business helping others, or a councillor who is retiring this May after years of sterling public service, or that person who never expects thanks or praise but deserves it, nonetheless.  If so, please consider nominating them for a Rose of Northamptonshire Award.  Run by the Northamptonshire Community Foundation (NCF) in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), **nominations for the 2025 awards are now open**, and the process is quick and simple.  For all the details, please visit [**https://www.ncf.uk.com/our-work/rose-of-northamptonshire-awards.**](https://www.northantscalc.com/r/HFr/m/67016)  Nominations close on **Tuesday 22 April 2025**.

Correspondence from Grounds Maintenance Contractor and resident about hiring out of the playing field to Wittering Premiair Football Club

**PLAYING FIELD AND PAVILION HIRE**.

Good evening,

Mr Chairman and members of the P C I speak to you this evening as the GMC and a resident of the village.

I helped draft the business plan and current hire agreement for WPFC. I have also read the playing field and pavilion rental proposal for this meeting.

I would like to address the rental agreement with WPFC. It was signed in Jan 2024. There is a copy of it in the minutes of the parish council meeting on Jan 2024 if anybody would like to look at it. Paragraph 8 of the agreement stipulates 40 matches a season at ONE match a week. This has not been adhered to by the parish clerk/parish council, teams have been allowed to play more than one match a week. This is especially so during the summer months to prevent overuse of the pitch in the winter. Since Jul 2024 WPFC have played, 4 matches in July (this was outside the dates of their agreement, however WPFC were allowed to play the matches without additional costs.) They also played 6 matches in Aug 2024. Looking at the fixture list the current team have played 14 league matches. They have also played cup matches. The team that folded I would suggest has played at least 8 league matches and the veterans played at least 2. That is a total of 34 matches, they also played on Saturday. Total 35.

During the period that WPFC have used the pavilion they have made many empty promises. They were going to arrange for heaters to be put in the changing rooms, paint the bar area, fix doors in the bar area. They did none of that. They were asked to paint the toilet block, but haven’t. The parish council paid an additional £1500 to facilitate changes for WPFC.

WPFC is required to put alcohol away from display. The alcohol is left in fridges which have in the past been left on continuously. This is not enforced by the parish clerk/parish council. What will happen to the alcohol as part of this agreement.

The business plan stipulated WPFC should pay for the TV licence. The parish clerk/parish council paid for it.

WPFC have also received £500 towards the cost of the heater in the bar area.

 **I think the current contract should continue until the end of the season and WPFC should continue to pay £300 a month, although they actually only pay £200 as they get a rebate.**

I also note WPFC are to be paid £100 this month. Is the parish council intending to change the rental agreement for them and also pay them.

On 17th Jul 2024 an appendix to the rental agreement was drawn up and agreed to by WPFC.

In this agreement it stipulates that ad hoc bookings require 2 weeks’ notice and the charge will be £75 per use of the pitch and pavilion. This has not been enforced by the parish clerk/parish council.

What is the time frame for making bookings?

**USE OF THE PLAYING FIELD BY OTHER TEAMS.**

I emphasise again I am not against hiring the facilities , BUT I am if it is to the detriment of use by members of the village. This has always been my stance. I have an email here I sent to Tim and the parish clerk on the very subject on 5th Aug 2021. It is a village playing field, not a community sports facility.

I note the new rate is £75. Inclusive of utilities. Given WPFC use the facility in the winter months their use of electricity will be more expensive (heating) than the cricket team.

Kings Cliffe currently charge £70 per match. This includes goal posts, lining and changing rooms. There is an additional cost of £15 an hour to use pavilion.

Length of time ?. WPFC currently use from 1130 ish – 17-1800hrs.

Area . WPFC currently use all the playing field. Who is going to paint the lines ? £20 GMC

NEED to consider increase costs for maintenance of car park and bridleway, £500 was spent this time last year on potholes in the bridleway by councillor woodman. Goal nets, stop nets. Machinery required. White line machine and liquid owned by WPFC. Extra upkeep of the field.

If the parish council decide to hire the field to Empingham additional goal posts will be required, and a new pitch.

**USE AT WEEKEND**.

As I have already mentioned the rental agreement was for ONE match a week. This was debated at length by the PFMC when the agreement was drawn up. This was to enable members of the village to have access to the football pitch and playing field at weekends. If there is any doubt about how certain members of the village feel about using the bridleway I suggest you look at EOTH Village chat on 6th Feb 2024 and the survey/questionnaire the parish council completed in Apr-Jun 2023. If it is used by two teams on one day there will not be sufficient room in the carpark or the changing rooms. Empingham juniors depending on the age group play on Saturdays and Sundays. There also tends to be more traffic with junior teams because the children are dropped off and collected later. Cars that park on the bridleway cause a hazard and a full car park deters people from staying who want to use the play area.

PRIORITY OF USE.

Cricket team already have priority to use from 14th April – 14th September.

ADDITIONAL PITCH.

This was discussed at length by the PFMC and was rejected and is in the minutes of PFMC 2nd Aug 2023. Where do you intend to put the pitch. I have measured the area in front of the pavilion using the FA dimensions and there is not room using the dimensions for under 11.

ACCESS. Going to give keys and allow them to come and go as they please? Who is going to ensure the building is clean and all in order. I have found taps have been left on. The heating has been left on. The water otter was left on last weekend. I checked it yesterday morning and a electric heater had been left on. There is no contract in place to empty the bin at the moment.

