

**TONBRIDGE RACECOURSE SPORTSGROUND
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2009-2013**

CONSULTATION DRAFT

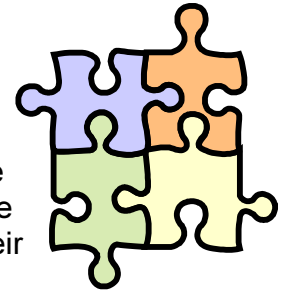


GUIDANCE NOTES

The following notes have been prepared to help guide you through and understand the Management Plan. Section headings are highlighted below along with descriptions of their relevance within the overall plan.

Part 1 – Where are we now?

The first section of the plan describes the current situation at the time it was written. It is an introduction to Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground (TRS) and advises on the current facilities and their management.



Part 2 – Where do we want to get to?

This section of the plan describes our vision for TRS and sets out our management aims and objectives.



Part 3 – How will we get there?

This section sets out how we are going to achieve our aims and objectives. A Five Year Work Programme sets out long-term targets and annual Action Plans focusing on each year will flow from this.



Part 4 – How will we know when we have arrived?

The final section looks at how we will track progress and how the Plan might be updated.

Contents

	Page No.
Part 1 – <i>Where are we now?</i>	
1.0 Introduction/Background to Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground	8
The Role of the Management Plan Policy Context	
2.0 A Welcoming Place	10
Location Entrances Land Use Accessibility Formal Recreation Informal Recreation Catering & Equipment Hire Toilets Seating	
3.0 Healthy, Safe and Secure	14
Health and Safety Site Staffing Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Water Safety Policy Children's Play Area Police Community Support Officers (PCSO)	
4.0 Clean and Well Maintained	15
Grounds Maintenance Building Maintenance Equipment Maintenance Arboriculture and Woodland Management	
5.0 Sustainability	16
Corporate Policy Pesticide Use Peat Use Energy Efficiency Waste Minimisation	

6.0	Conservation and Heritage	18
	Site History	
	Habitat and Landscape Structure	
	Topography Features and Soils	
7.0	Community Involvement	19
	Customer Surveys	
	Medway Valley Countryside Partnership	
	Tonbridge Sports Association	
	Mini Soccer Alliance	
	Local Educational Establishments	
	Consultation on the Management Plan	
8.0	Marketing	21
	Publications	
	Events	
9.0	Management	22
	Management Structure	
	Stakeholders	
	Sportsground Budget	
	Compartments 1-4	
10.0	Limiting Factors and SWOT Analysis	24
	Flood Plain	
	Water Abstraction Area	
	Site Designations	
	Sports Use	
	Access Rights	
	Easement Privileges	
	Restrictive Covenants	
	Existing Leasehold/Agreements	
	Public Right of Way	
	Condition of Sports Facilities	
	Budget	
	Site Security and Warden Patrolling	
	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats	

Part 2 – *Where do we want to get to?* **27**

11.0 Management Plan Aim & Objectives

Part 3 – *How will we get there?* **29**

12.0 Five Year Work Programme

13.0 Annual Action Plan - Year 1

Part 4 – *How will know when we have arrived?* **34**

Green Flag Award

Monitoring Progress

Annual Management Plan Review

End of Plan Review

Appendices

Appendix 1	-	Location Plan
Appendix 2	-	Master Plan
Appendix 3	-	Access Audit
Appendix 4	-	Map of Legal Aspects
Appendix 5	-	Chemicals used at TRS
Appendix 6	-	Sportsground Budget TRS

Tables

Table 1	-	List of Policy Guidance
Table 2	-	List of User Clubs
Table 3	-	Pitch Provision and Extent of the Playing Season
Table 4	-	Grounds Maintenance
Table 5	-	Key Habitat Types Present within TRS
Table 6	-	Timetable for Consultation
Table 7	-	Typical Annual Events held at held at TRS
Table 8	-	Stakeholders
Table 9	-	SWOT Analysis
Table 10	-	Five Year Work Programme
Table 11	-	Annual Action Plan - Year One (2009)

Acknowledgements

Robert Styles, Chief Leisure Officer	}	TMBC
Darren Lanes, Leisure Services Manager (Outdoor)		
John Dicker, Senior Parks Officer		
Chris Fox, Leisure Services Officer (Outdoor)		

Alan Nicholl, Chairman, Tonbridge Sports Association
Pat Mortlock, Tonbridge Historical Society
And all others consulted on the plan.

Photographic credits:

TMBC	Sport England
David Hodgkinson	Sustrains

For further information please contact:

Leisure Services, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Council Offices,
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4LZ
Tel. 01732 844522

Email: leisure.services@tmbc.gov.uk Web Site: www.tmbc.gov.uk

Copyright © TMBC 2008

Acronyms and abbreviations used in this Plan

EA	Environment Agency
GFA	Green Flag Award
PRoW	Public Right of Way
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
MVCP	Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
TDAFPS	Tonbridge & District Angling & Fish Preservation Society
TMBC	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
TRS	Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground
TSA	Tonbridge Sports Association

Other documents referred to in this plan.

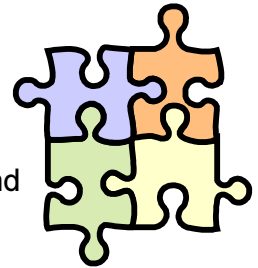
Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground Market Survey 2003

Water Safety Strategy - Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground

Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground - Management Plan 2009-2014

Part 1 – Where are we now?

The first section of the plan describes the current situation at the time it was written. It is an introduction to Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground (TRS) and advises on the current facilities and their management



1.0– Introduction/Background to Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground



TRS covers an area of approximately 28 Hectares (52 Acres) and is located in the heart of Tonbridge. The Sportsground provides a range of outdoor sports pitches/facilities and is well used by the local community for formal seasonal sports such as football, rugby, cricket, baseball and bowls, and for informal uses including; children's play, tennis, crazy golf, dog walking, picnics, and family days out.

The use of TRS for field sports (football, rugby) is primarily over the winter period, with the Sportsground providing a popular casual visitor attraction particularly during the summer months. The Tonbridge to Penshurst Cycle Route also runs through TRS, linking it to Haysden Country Park and Penshurst Place beyond.

A number of events take place at the site including the Tonbridge Garden Festival, a Football Fiesta, and Kite Festival.

Its close proximity to other attractions such as Tonbridge Swimming Pool, Tonbridge Castle and the rowing boat hire available from the nearby Big Bridge, means that people often spend the day visiting this area.

The Role of the Management Plan

This Plan has been developed to give guidance and direction to the future management of TRS and to meet the criteria set out for the Green Flag Award (GFA). It is intended that this document is used as a management tool and will provide the basis for the maintenance and development of the site. It will be used to guide current site management and play an integral role in the development of future projects and decisions relating to the Sportsground.

Policy Context

The Plan has also been developed to take into account the policy/ guidance listed in Table 1 and contributes to the following TMBC Key Priorities: (i) 'promoting and encouraging opportunities for healthy living'; (ii) 'achieving a cleaner, smarter and better...open space environment'; (iii) 'give priority to involving and meeting the needs of young people'; (iv) 'reducing environmental crime, criminal damage, and anti social behaviour'; (v) 'enhance the vitality of Tonbridge Town Centre' and (vi) 'make a positive local contribution to tackling the causes and effects of climate change'.

Table 1: List of Policy Guidance

TMBC Policy or Guidance Documentation
Developing 'Tonbridge & Malling Borough Local Development Framework'
Local Cultural Strategy
'Key Issues' within the Borough Leisure Strategy
Key Priorities
Playing Pitch Strategy
Nature Conservation Strategy
Outdoor Leisure Best Value Performance Review
Standards of the Green Flag Award Scheme.
Open Space Strategy

The Council also aspires to achieve a GFA at TRS. This is national award scheme administered by the Civic Trust, which recognises high standards of maintenance and management of green-spaces. Therefore, the Plan has also been written taking account of the following GFA Criteria.

A welcoming place
 Healthy safe and secure
 Clean and well maintained
 Sustainable

Conservation and heritage
 Community involvement
 Marketing
 Management



4.0 – A Welcoming Place

Location – TRS is located in the heart of Tonbridge, Kent.
(See Appendix 1)

Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TQ584464
Grid Reference Easting 558376 Northing 146807
Nearest Postcode TN9 1DS

Entrances – All vehicular and pedestrian access points have been highlighted on the Master Plan (see Appendix 2).

Land Use – The present internal land uses can be found within the compartment descriptions (see section 9.0) or alternatively, on the Master Plan (see Appendix 2). Externally the site is surrounded predominantly by residential properties, with retail premises to the south (Tonbridge High Street) and educational land located to the north (Tonbridge School). The Tonbridge to Redhill railway line runs along the far western boundary and the Sportsground itself is within the flood plain of the River Medway and is subject to significant periodic flooding.

Disabled Access – A Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Audit was carried out at the Sportsground by a sub group of the TMBC ‘Disability Working Party’ on 12 December 2005. The resulting Improvement Action Plan (Appendix 3) is currently being implemented with many actions already completed including alterations to the main gate, path repairs, and improved access to toilets facilities.



Access By Bus – Bus stops located in Tonbridge High Street are within a short walking distance of TRS.

Access By Rail – Less than ½ a mile from Tonbridge Station that offers direct connections to London Charing Cross, London Cannon Street, Ashford and Hastings.

Access By Road – There are several car parks located within walking distance of the Sportsground (see Master Plan - Appendix 2 or detailed locations).

Access By Foot – The Definitive Public Right of Way footpath MU24 runs along the northern boundary of the Sportsground and the promoted routes, The Eden Valley Walk and The Weald Way, utilise this path. For further details on Public Rights of Way see and other footpaths see Appendix 4. Pedestrian routes to the Sportsground are signposted from Tonbridge High Street, Tonbridge Castle and New Wharf Road and all pedestrian entrances into the Sportsground have been identified on the Master Plan (see Appendix 2)



Access By Bicycle – Cycle routes provide access to the Sportsground via the Avebury Avenue entrance (end of route), Riverside Walk (end of route) and New Wharf Road to Tonbridge Swimming Pool (end of route). Regional Cycle Route 12 runs through the Sportsground, providing access from Tonbridge Castle, Haysden Country Park and Penshurst Place. The cycle route runs along the northern boundary of the sportsground following the River Medway. This route was the subject of an Order under the Cycle Tracks Act, however, cycling is prohibited in all other areas of the Sportsground.

Formal Recreation – The site is used for a number of sports including Football, Rugby, Flat Rink Bowling, Canoeing, Cricket, and Baseball.

For sports such as football, rugby, baseball and cricket, pitch tenancy agreements are agreed on an annual basis in liaison with the Tonbridge Sports Association (TSA). The tenancy agreements are between TMBC and the individual clubs who participate in local league competitions. This aspect is managed by the TMBC Leisure Service Business Unit (LSBU) at the Angel Leisure Centre, Tonbridge. These agreements enable clubs to use their allocated pitches according to fixtures agreed by the respective Leagues.



Just outside the boundary to TRS, Tonbridge Canoe Club operates from a centre on the bank of the River Medway and rowing boats are also available for public hires adjacent to the Big Bridge on Tonbridge High Street.

Thirteen different sports clubs currently (2007/08 season) use the Sportsground on a regular basis, see Table 2.

Table 2: List of User Clubs

Club
Gardeners Arms Football Club
Riverside Bowls Club
Roselands Football Club
Roselands Junior Football Club
Tonbridge Bobcats (baseball)
Tonbridge & District Angling & Fish Preservation Society
Tonbridge Invicta Junior Football Club
Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Football Club
Tonbridge Canoe Club
Tonbridge Junior Football Club
Tonbridge Mini Soccer Alliance
Tonbridge YMCA cricket Club
Touch Rugby Club

The Flat Rink bowling green is operated under a separate agreement with the Riverside Bowls Club, which operate this facility both for its own members and the general public, with maintenance provided by TMBC.



The formal playing pitch provision (2007/08 season) has been summarised in Table 3, and also highlights the normal extent of the playing season. The number of football and rugby pitches can vary from year to year, depending on demand.

Table 3: Pitch Provision and Extent of Playing Season

Sports	Number	Season Starts	Season Ends
Baseball	1 Pitch	May	August
Cricket	1 Pitch	June	September
Flat rink bowls	1 Green	May	September
Football	23 Pitches	September	April
Rugby	12 Pitches	September	April
Touch Rugby	3 Pitches	May	September

Informal Recreation – The following facilities are also provided at the TRS for casual public use:

- A large equipped children’s play area provides for a wide range of ages from toddlers to teens
- A bouncy castle is provided during the summer months
- An 18-hole crazy golf course is sited within the fenced children’s play area.
- Four hard-surfaced tennis courts are available for casual hire
- An orienteering course (permanently marked ‘fixed course’)
- Tonbridge Model Engineering Society has a permanently sited miniature railway track and offer train rides for children during the summer months.



Catering & Equipment Hire - The LSBU operate the Games Kiosk within the Sportsground from which, putting equipment for the crazy golf, the inflatable ‘bouncy castle’ and the tennis courts can all be hired. Leaflets for the orienteering course, ice creams, confectionery and drinks are also available for sale from the Kiosk.

Toilets - Separate male, female, and disabled public toilets are located by the main entrance to the sportsground. The Bowls Club and Sports Pavilion also contain dedicated toilet facilities.

Seating - The Sportsground contains a large number of seats and picnic benches. Members of public are able to sponsor a seat and many have already been donated.

NB: For the location of facilities and services highlighted above please see Appendix 2.

3.0 – Healthy, Safe & Secure

Health and Safety -The Council has an overall health and safety policy statement and policies are also sought from all major contractors working at the Sportsground. The Council also has a suite of generic Risk Assessments (RAs) and again specific RAs are sought from individual contractors. RAs are also required for all events that take place on site.

Site Staffing – A Park Ranger patrols the site on a part time basis to enforce aspects such as dog and litter control, liaise with the public and assist with events. The Council's Grounds Maintenance Contractor has both a depot and maintenance team based within the Sportsground. These staff are uniformed so that they can easily be identified by the public. The Council's Senior Parks Officer monitors site maintenance and controls its management.

Close Circuit Television (CCTV) – CCTV is present at the sportsground and linked into the Town Centre system. The control centre is staffed 24 hours a day and operators have links with the Park Rangers, Officers at the Council and the Police.

Water Safety Policy – The Council has an overarching Water Safety Policy to address the issue of public safety around inland water bodies at/adjacent to its outdoor leisure sites. Flowing from this there is also a site specific Water Safety Strategy for TRS. Both the overall Policy and Strategy have been written in liaison with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents RoSPA.

Children's Play Area – Weekly health and safety inspections of all play equipment are carried out and recorded in writing by the grounds maintenance contractor. All inspection sheets are monitored by the Senior Parks Officer and repairs carried out as appropriate. In addition an annual inspection is carried out by an independent external inspector

Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) – The Park Ranger has developed links with the Police and PCSOs in order that they can offer assistance on demand and carry out independent patrols of the site.

4.0 – Clean and Well Maintained

Grounds maintenance – Maintenance tasks at the Sportsground are, with only a few exceptions, specified within the Council’s Ground Maintenance Contract (GMC). The contract details all tasks that are to be carried out highlighting both frequency and quality requirements. Due to the scale of the GMC it would be inappropriate to incorporate this into this plan in any great detail, however, some of the key tasks have been summarised in Table 4. Weekly meetings are held between the Senior Parks Officer and the contractor’s foreman, to review progress and plan for the week ahead.

Table 4: Grounds Maintenance

Maintenance Area	Description of Operations
Litter Control	All litter bins are checked and emptied and the site cleared of litter daily. Litter bins are washed monthly. Litter is also monitored through BVPI 199. Fines for littering can be issued by various officers.
Public Toilets	The toilets are cleaned twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. The building is locked at night.
Dog Fouling	Dog bins are emptied once a week. Fines for fouling can be issued by various officers under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.
Playground	The playground equipment is inspected weekly by the grounds staff and an annual independent inspection is also carried out. Routine repairs are instructed as required. A programme for the renewal of all play equipment is also in place.
Sports Pitches	All sports pitches are marked out and mown once a week during the season. The football pitches are harrowed and slit once a month, with sand applied weekly to goal mouths and centres during wet periods. During the cricket season, the square and outfield is cut once a week, and wickets three times a week; wickets are prepared the day before each match. Fertiliser and pesticides are applied as required.
Bowling Green	The green is mown on average 3 times a week, and switched daily. Fertiliser and pesticides are applied as required. Slitting and scarification are carried out periodically.
Tennis Courts	Courts are prepared for use and swept daily.
Crazy Golf	The course is prepared for use daily; the surrounding grass is maintained to an amenity standard.
Park furniture	All park benches and bins are checked and washed monthly and re-painted annually if required.

Building maintenance – The Council has a planned maintenance programme for building work that is implemented by the Council’s Property Services department. This includes aspects like internal and external decoration, routine maintenance and urgent repairs. The only exceptions to this are the leased buildings on the site,

namely the Bowls Club buildings and Mini Soccer Pavilion which are the responsibility of the respective leaseholders.



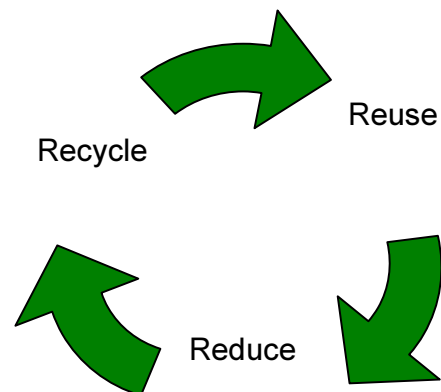
Equipment maintenance – All machinery is owned and maintained by the grounds maintenance contractor.

Arboriculture and Woodland Management – Trees are surveyed and assessed on a regular basis, by independent and qualified arborists. Reports are prioritised for risk and action is taken in accordingly.

5.0 – Sustainability

Corporate Policy – The Plan has been written in accordance with the Council’s Climate Change Strategy and Corporate Purchasing Policy and also takes into consideration the Council’s bio-diversity duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Pesticide Use – Chemical use is vetted and, where possible, is kept to a minimum. Alternative methods of control are always considered and remain under annual review. A limited number of chemicals are used at the sportsground to control turf pests and diseases and weeds and disinfectants for graffiti removal. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and Risk assessments are carried out and kept on file as necessary. All chemicals are stored in a locked and purpose built store, with all usage logged in a chemical application book. A summary of the chemicals currently used in the sportsground are listed in Appendix 5.



Peat Use – No peat is used on site and purchases of nursery stock are normally as bare root plants. All planting compost used on site is recycled green waste.

Energy Efficiency – The public are encouraged to visit the Sportsground by sustainable means either cycling (Tonbridge to Penshurst Cycle Route) or on foot. These alternatives are offered when promoting the Site.

Within the toilets water use is kept to a minimum with taps that automatically switch off and any leaks are reported and repaired as soon as possible. Where possible, water saving devices have been installed to all toilet cisterns. Warm air blowers are used for hand drying. Meter readings for all electricity and water usage are taken manually on a regular basis and monitored with any higher than normal usage investigated. All staff are aware of the importance of reducing energy consumption and are regularly reminded of the need to ensure that energy usage is kept to a minimum and to turn off lights and taps.

Waste Minimisation – Public recycling points are present in the car park adjoining the Sportsground.

The other waste generated by visitors is usually placed in the litter bins. This waste is very mixed and as a result is disposed of via the municipal waste stream and incinerated to create energy off site.



Safety tiles used within the play area are made from re-cycled tyres.

6.0 – Conservation and Heritage

Site History – TRS was so named due to its original use for horse racing. This former ‘meadowland’ was grazed by sheep under a lease from The Tonbridge Water Works Company Ltd and others, to a private landowner until 1923. The area was however always popular for playing sports and in 1920 the TSA was specifically formed to manage sports activities at TRS, for the benefit of the sports clubs in Tonbridge. In 1923 the ‘Racecourse Meadows’ were purchased by the then Tonbridge Urban District Council (TUDC) along with Tinkers Island which was acquired from another private landowner. In 1923 the TSA was also granted a representative on the Parks Committee of the TUDC (the predecessor of TMBC) and the site was officially opened in June of that year. The land at Brightfriars Meadow and Deacons Field were acquired more recently and all this land now makes up TRS.



TMBC has since this time worked in partnership with the TSA to enhance the Sportsground for the benefit of sports clubs and the wider public but always having sports use as a primary purpose of the site.

Over the years the town has grown-up around the Sportsground, but being within a flood plain and containing sports pitches, was never built upon. Today this green space still starts close to the town centre and leads out into the open countryside beyond.

Habitat and Landscape Structure - The site consists mainly of grassland, with hedgerows, woodland and running water. These habitats are at present managed in harmony with recreation and visitor management. A limited number of species of note have been recorded on the site reflecting both the limited diversity of habitats present and the lack of surveys to date. The key habitats have been noted in Table 5. TRS forms part of a wider wildlife corridor along the River Medway from the town of Tonbridge out into the countryside.



Table 5: Key Habitat Types Present within TRS

Habitat type	Importance			
	International / European	National	Regional / Local	Approx. area of TRS
Hedgerows			*	<1%
Unimproved grassland				<1%
Amenity Grassland				93%
Rivers, ditches and streams			*	4%
Woodland/ scrub (broadleaf)			*	2%

(Based on the habitat types in the 'Kent Biodiversity Action Plan' (1997))
 Level of significance – High *** Medium ** Low *

The protection and enhancement of these habitats have been incorporated within the objectives set out later in this plan. Some ecological information can also be found on the Master Plan (see Appendix 2) and within the Management Objectives.

Topography Features and Soils – TRS lies at a height of 25 metres above Ordnance Datum. The land is essentially flat and comprises part of the valley floor of the River Medway. The underlying geology of the site is alluvium, (due to river deposition) and gravel and comprises mainly of silt and clay soils.

7.0 - Community Involvement

Customer Surveys – These are regularly carried out within the Sportsground and used to profile visitors and provide data on customer satisfaction, facilities and suggested improvements. The results of the last user survey carried out in 2003 have been incorporated into this plan.



Key results from the previous survey:

346 face-to-face interviews were completed with users of the Sportsground between 30 June and 13 July 2003. The survey included those participating in formal sports.

- 76% of users are satisfied overall with the TRS
- 42% of users were young family groups
- 98% of users are repeat visits
- 95% of users felt safe using TRS in the daytime

96% would recommend others to visit
 57% of users visited by walking or on a bicycle
 60% of users travelled only 2 miles or less

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (volunteer litter wardens) – At present the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership organise volunteers from the local community to carry out regular litter patrols along the River Medway and organise ‘River Round-up’ events, where the public assist with litter picking.

Tonbridge Sports Association – The Association are actively involved in the management and development of sports clubs using the sportsground and meet with the Council every 6 weeks to discuss issues.

Mini Soccer Alliance – Raised funds for the provision of a new pavilion

Local Educational Establishments – At present the TRS has limited formal use by educational establishments.

Consultation on the Management Plan – Involvement of external parties in the production of this document was essential, and a programme for consultation was developed and is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Timetable for Consultation

Action	Timescale
Consultation with the TSA, LSBU and Tonbridge Historical Society	Spring 2008
TMBC – Leisure & Arts Advisory Board to approve Consultation Draft	March 2008
Public Consultation – including all key stakeholders	April- May 2008
Plan amended to reflect consultation comments	May 2008 onwards
TMBC – Leisure & Arts Advisory Board to adopt final Management Plan	October 2008
Publication of final Management Plan	November 2008

Copies of the Management Plan Consultation Draft were sent to:

- Stakeholders (see Table 8)
- All other interested persons

The Management Plan will be made available to view at the Council's offices at Kings Hill and Tonbridge Castle and in Tonbridge Town Library (Reference section). The Plan will also be available on the TMBC website at www.tmbc.gov.uk. All comments about this Consultation Draft Plan will be considered and amendments made as required. Amendments will be fed back to the consultees who made comments.

8.0 – Marketing

Publications – The Council markets the Sportsground as a local facility with the principle means of marketing being through; the Leisure Guide; via the Council's web site; through press releases; in the Council's Here & Now residents magazine; through onsite notice boards; and event publications.



Plate: Marketing leaflets and information

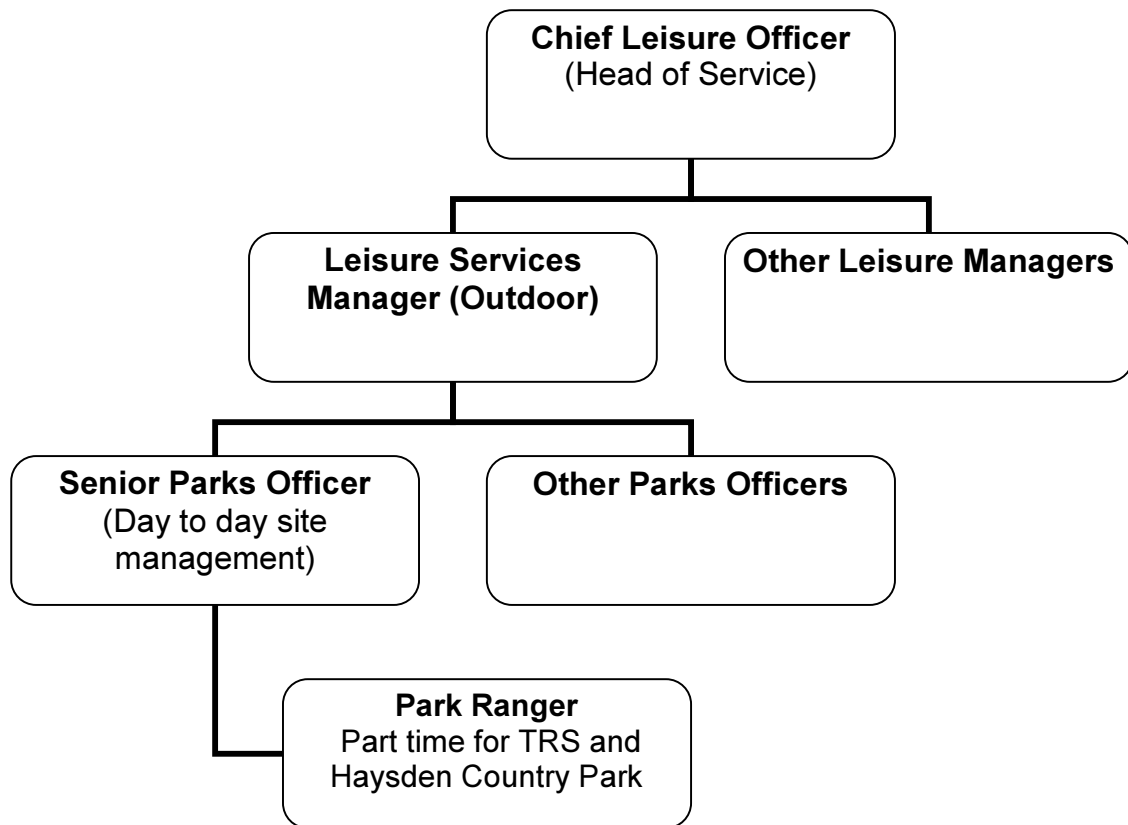
Events – A number of events are run at the Sportsground each year most of these are run by local community volunteers, typical events are listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Typical Annual Events held at TRS:

Event
Football Fiesta – Tonbridge Junior Football Club
Jamboree Days - Tonbridge Junior Football Club
Mini Rugby Festival – Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Football Club
Open Days – Tonbridge Junior Football Club
River Round-up (litter pick) - Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
Skills Day - Tonbridge Junior Football Club
Summer Soccer School - Tonbridge Junior Football Club
Summer Soccer Skills - Tonbridge Junior Football Club
Tonbridge Garden Show
Tonbridge Kite Festival
Touch Rugby Tournament – Touch Rugby Club

9.0 – Management

Management Structure – Major policy issues will be determined by the Council through recommendation by the Leisure & Arts Advisory Board to the Councils Cabinet. Implementation will be undertaken by Leisure Services. The TMBC officer management structure is shown below:



Management of TRS is carried out by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) in liaison with a number of partners. The existing partners are as follows:

- Tonbridge Sports Association – sports club liaison and pitch layout
- Leisure Services Business Unit – pitch bookings, running of the Games Hut/ kiosk for catering, hire of bouncy castle, tennis courts and crazy golf
- KCC Landscape Services - Grounds Maintenance Contractor
- Cleanaway Limited – Dog Bin Maintenance Contractor
- Medway Valley Countryside Partnership –Volunteer Litter Warden Scheme
- Kent County Council (West Kent Area Office) – Public Rights of Way
- Tonbridge & District Angling & Fish Preservation Society – Fishing Rights
- Tonbridge Model Engineering Society – model train track
- Sevenoaks District Council – Public conveniences contract

Stakeholders – Stakeholders for TRS have been listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Stakeholders

Name of Organisation
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Emergency Services
Environment Agency (EA)
Kent County Council – Landscape Services
Kent County Council – Public Rights of Way – West Kent Area Office
Kent Wildlife Trust
Leisure Service Business Unit TMBC
Local Schools
Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
South East Water
Tonbridge Access Group
Tonbridge Civic Society
Tonbridge Model Engineering Society
Tonbridge Sports Association for the Resident Sports Clubs
Tonbridge Waterways
Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board

Sportsground Budget – Maintenance of TRS is currently met through the Council’s Revenue Budget. The budget provides for ground maintenance, running costs, repairs, administration and essential services. A breakdown of this budget can be found in Appendix 6.

The budget is reviewed annually and will take account of any price increases in the contracts. As for all council services, TRS competes for resources alongside other services provided by the Council. It is noted that additional funding maybe available through developer contributions, grants or additional income generation.

Compartments – For the purpose of this Plan, the site has been divided into four compartments to reflect their different management needs and uses. The compartment descriptions outline the current condition and features.

Compartment 1 – Informal Recreation: This compartment comprises of land containing the main amenities for the site and a section of Riverside Walk. This is the most visited and popular area for frequent users and includes the toilet block, large children’s play area, games hut/ refreshment kiosk, crazy golf, bowling green and four hard surfaced tennis courts. The area also contains the events field and maintenance building. The area is amenity grassland, with some trees and shrubs. The wildlife value of this area is limited and reflective of the high volume of users and a high level of maintenance.

Compartment 2 – Main field: The area is used for football, mini football, and cricket. The area is mown grassland with few intrusions to open views. There is a path along the west boundary with a hedge-line that divides the field in two. The mini soccer pavilion is located at the centre of this compartment. As above this compartment has limited wildlife value that is reflective of the high volume of users and a high level of maintenance.

Compartment 3 – Sports fields known as ‘Brightfriars Meadow’ and ‘Deacons Field’: Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Football Club pavilion, the Model Railway and two public car parks are located in the east of this compartment. Regional Cycle Route 12 and Public Right of Way MU24 run along the northern boundary. The compartment is bordered by rivers and drainage ditches on three sides and the Railway forms the final boundary. The land is mainly mown amenity grassland with one part used for baseball in the summer months and the remainder as rugby pitches during the winter months. A wild area behind the hedgerow is present along the northern boundary with a further hedgerow along the east boundary. The land has potentially higher wildlife value than the southern end of the site.

Compartment 4 – Tinkers Island: Mixed deciduous woodland and former coppice. The island is separated from the main site by water courses and open drainage ditches but is accessible from the main site via two sleeper bridges. The land has potentially higher wildlife value, than the southern end of the site.

10.0 – Limiting Factors and SWOT Analysis

Flood Plain – Being part of the River Medway flood plain, the sportsground is subject to significant periodic flooding.

Water Abstraction Area – The use of pesticides to control sports turf pests and diseases is limited and controlled by TMBC as water quality is critical. Water quality is closely monitored by the Environment Agency and South East Water (the latter operate the adjacent water pumping station and water abstraction wells within the site).

Site Designations – TRS is designated within the Local Plan as an Area of Local Landscape Importance’ (Policy 3/7e) and as Greenbelt. The Sportsground is also designated as Public Open Space.

Sports Use – The majority of the site is set out and used on a seasonal basis for various sports for example football rugby and cricket. This means that in simple terms there needs to be large open ‘fields’ of closely mown grass, with limited scope for a more varied landscape, apart from around the margins to the fields for example hedgerows and longer grass along field margins.

Access Rights – Large vehicular access is difficult, as access rights, weight limits and widths of bridges give limited scope to enter the site. For example the Council

has rights of access across the roadway near the Waterworks but is not the owner of the land.

Easement Privileges – Access rights for purposes of water abstraction and construction rights in relation to Deacons Field.

Restrictive Covenants – A restrictive covenant was made in 1907 registering rights on Deaconsfield over water and another in 1917 for the laying of electric cables. Several other restricted covenants also exist on the land for abstraction of water on part of TRS and in 1923 and for water abstraction from the whole of the site in 1988. In 1988 a restrictive covenant was also made that Deaconsfield shall be ‘kept solely as playing fields’.

Existing Leasehold/Agreements – The following clubs are long term/ established users for parts of the site:

- Mini Soccer Alliance – football pavilion and surrounds
- Riverside (Tonbridge) Bowls Club – bowls green buildings and surround
- Tonbridge & District Angling and Fish Preservation Society – fishing along the River Medway
- Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Football club – Rugby club and some surrounds
- Tonbridge Model Engineering Society – Model railway area

Public Right of Way – Legal obligations regarding the Public Right of Way (PRoW) MU24 must always be adhered to. Promoted Routes, the Eden Valley Walk and Weald Way, also utilise this route. For the location of the PRoW see Appendix 4.





Condition of Sports Facilities – The sports pitches, greens, and courts are maintained to a local/ regional quality standard.

Budget – The Sportsground has its own revenue budget that covers the basic maintenance of the site (see Appendix 6). Management, maintenance and development carried out within the Sportsground is therefore limited in relation to available funding. At present the income generated from the sports use of the site offers only limited income recovery. The infrastructure elements of the Sportsground require expenditure such as replacing dog bins, resurfacing paths, and replacing play equipment. With the exception of the play equipment, there is limited additional funding available for this.

Site Security and Warden Patrolling – Limited budget is available for patrolling staff and this resource is shared with Haysden Country Park.

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats – Table 9 identifies the main strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats at TRS.

Table 9: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats

Strengths 	Weakness 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSA partnership • Well organised and successful clubs • High use of sports pitches by young people • Variety of sports played • Year round use • Good level of usage • Regional Cycle Route 12 • Accessible car parking • Easy access from town centre • Large equipped play area • Close to other leisure facilities • Little pesticide use • Customer surveys carried out • High levels of customer satisfaction • Playing Pitch Strategy • Water Safety Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-standing bylaws need reviewing • Demand for more junior football pitches • Limited marketing • No surveys of flora and fauna • Improvements to tennis courts required • Seasonal flooding • Limited shade from sun in play area • Play equipment for older children • No road signage to the sportsground • Condition of existing bridges
Opportunities 	Threats 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve the Green Flag Award • Establish a User Panel • Town centre regeneration • Establish a Volunteer Group • Enhanced Ranger presence • Provision of a ball court/teen shelter • DDA audit and improvement plan • Developer contributions • Marketing: web page and leaflet • Refurbish tennis courts • Improve shade from sun in play area • Improved drainage for playing pitches • Survey of wildlife • Increase biodiversity • Review bylaws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding • River bank erosion • Anti social behaviour • Financial constraints

Conclusion – The above table identifies and number of possible areas for improvement and where possible these have been taken forward in the sections that follow within the ‘Aims’ for the site.

Part 2 – Where do we want to get to?

This section of the plan describes our vision for TRS and sets out our management aims and objectives.

As highlighted in section 1.0 the Council is aspiring to achieve a GFA for the Sportsground and as such our aims and objectives are reflective of the GFA criteria



11.0 Management Plan Aim & Objectives

Management Plan Overall Aim – To provide a sportsground facility for the health and enjoyment of the local community. This is to be achieved through management focused on the following key elements:

- A well managed sportsground
- A welcoming sportsground
- A healthy, safe and secure sportsground
- A clean and well maintained sportsground
- A sustainable sportsground
- A sportsground that addresses conservation and heritage
- A sportsground that encourages community involvement
- A well marketed and promoted

Our 'Aim' is broken-down into component parts, called objectives, making it easier for us to achieve. Objectives underpin the aims, and describe more specifically how the people responsible for the site intend to achieve the aim. It is likely that each aim will give rise to several objectives, the objectives will focus on the specific issues identified at the sportsground and are highlighted below:

1. A well managed sportsground - Objectives:
1a. To retain and enhance the existing budget for the site (including external funding opportunities)
1b. To adopt new Bylaws for the site
1c. To achieve and maintain the Green Flag Award for the sportsground
1d. To investigate any opportunities for site enlargement
1e. To keep sports pitch usage under review when compared to demand
1f. To prepare an Annual Action Plan each year

2. A welcoming sportsground - Objectives:
2a. To provide sports opportunities for young people
2b. To retain an area of land specifically for approved events
2c. To provide equal access for all users
2d. To provide refreshments and hire services for users

3. A healthy, safe and secure sportsground - Objectives:
3a. To provide on site patrol staff
3b. To carry out regular health and safety inspections
3c. To keep paths in good order
3d. To provide and maintain a wide range of play equipment and park furniture to meet customer needs
3e. To meet all legal obligations and adopt good health and safety practices

4. A clean and well maintained sportsground - Objectives:
4a. To maintain high levels of site cleanliness
4b. To reduce anti social and criminal damage
4c. To ensure that the field drainage system is working
4d. To keep buildings in good order
4e. To keep sports and playground surfaces in good condition

5. A sustainable sportsground - Objectives:
5a. To reduce, reuse, or recycle waste
5b. To reduce pesticide use where practical

6. A sportsground that addresses conservation and heritage - Objectives:
6a. To not plant ornamental non native plants at the northern end of the site
6b. To protect field and water course margins for wildlife where practical
6c. To maintain the hedgerow boundaries
6d. To restore the landscape character of the woodland
6e. To retain and enhance flora and fauna by habitat management, and planting

7. A sportsground that encourages community involvement - Objectives:
7a. To provide opportunities for healthy living
7b. To engage the community in the management and development of the sportsground
7c. To allow a limited number of appropriate community events at the sportsground

8. A well marketed and promoted sportsground - Objectives:
8a. To improve marketing and promotion of the sportsground to local people
8b. To research our customers needs
8c. To seek marketing and promotional opportunities that may arise through the town centre improvements

Part 3 – How will we get there?

This section sets out how we are going to achieve our aims and objectives. A Five Year Work Programme sets out long-term targets and annual Action Plans focusing on each year will flow from this.

12.0 Five Year Work Programme

Each objective, identified earlier at 11.0, will require a range of Projects to achieve them and these are highlighted within the Five Year Work Programme at Table 10. Projects are specific areas of work that may require investigation, costing, identification of funding and in some cases several tasks to complete them. The plan also indicates the compartment in which specific projects will be applied and the year they will be implemented. The compartments are shown on the Master Plan (Appendix 2 and each Project has been linked to its corresponding objective.

As highlighted at 4.0 – Grounds Maintenance, regular maintenance tasks are specified within the Council's GMC and due to the scale of the GMC it would be inappropriate to include this within this Plan. It is, therefore, recognised that as part of the management of the Sportsground the GMC will need to be implemented and monitored alongside this Plan.

13.0 Annual Action Plan – Year 1

A more detailed one year Action Plan will be drawn up on an annual basis and will be produced in accordance with the Five Year Work Programme. The Annual Action Plan contains details of what exactly is to be done, when and by whom.

Please note that the Annual Action has not been included in this consultation draft and will be drawn up following the consultation period when the Five Year Work Programme has been confirmed.

Table 10: Five Year Work Programme

Objectives	Action	Compartment	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011	Year 4 2012	Year 5 2013
	Project						
1c	1. Green Flag Award – Submit an application and achieve the award for the site	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7a, 7b	2. Healthy Walks Programme – Maintain and develop the walks programme at the Sportsground encouraging the involvement of volunteer walk leaders.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8b	3. Customer Survey – Carry out an onsite customer survey to seek the views of visitors. To be carried out prior to/and feed into the next five year plan.	All				✓	
3e	4. Site Specific Water Safety Strategy - Implement actions arising from the site specific strategy.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7b, 2c	5. User Panel/Volunteer Group – Investigate and establish a User Panel and/or Volunteer Group for the Sportsground.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1a	6. Budget Control/Review – Manage expenditure in line with the agreed site budget. Prepare annual budget estimates.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3e, 6b	7. River Bank Stability – Investigate erosion control methods.	1				✓	
3e	8. Site Specific Risk Assessments – Develop a suite of site specific risk assessments.	All	✓				

Objectives	Action	Compartment	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011	Year 4 2012	Year 5 2013
1b, 3e	9. Bylaws – Investigate, develop and adopt new bylaws to cover the Sportsground.	All			✓		
2b, 3e, 7c	10. Events – Encourage and support applications for appropriate events from recognised organisations and clubs. <i>Note: ensure that the Premise Licensing and Personnel Licence is in place before appropriate events.</i>	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8b	11. Feedback From Clubs – Investigate opportunities to seek feedback from user sports clubs.	All	✓				
3b, 3e	12. Tree surveys – Carry out an annual tree survey and implement actions arising, as appropriate.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6a, 6g	13. Planting – Review and re-design planting alongside the tennis courts and assess the need for protective fencing.	1	✓				
6d, 6e	14. Restore Tinkers Island Woodland – Review the management of the area with the potential for a restoration project.	4			✓		
3a, 4a, 4b	15. Park Ranger – Review the level of site based staff (Rangers).	All		✓			
6b, 6e	16. Habitat Management – Commission a baseline survey of wildlife and flora to identify key species present. Consider leaving uncut margins along some field boundaries, to increase biodiversity, and or planting wildflowers in these areas.	All	✓				

Objectives	Action	Compartment	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011	Year 4 2012	Year 5 2013
5b	17. Pest and Weed Control – Investigate alternative pest and weed control methods where appropriate and practical.	All		✓	✓	✓	✓
2c	18. Review Seating Provision – Review the current level of seating provision.	All		✓			
4a	19. Review Dog Bin Provision – Review the current level of dog bin provision.	All		✓			
3e, 3b, 3d, 4e	20. Play Equipment Replacement – Replace play equipment and associated surfacing as appropriate and in accordance with the Council's Capital Renewals Programme. <i>Note: consider DDA provision when replacing equipment and surfacing.</i>	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2a, 2c, 7a	21. Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) – Install a new MUGA and associated teen shelter.	1	✓				
3b, 3c, 3e	22. Bridge Refurbishment – Investigate and plan the renewal/repair of all bridges.	All	✓				
1a, 8a, 8c	23. Town Centre Regeneration – Investigate and pursue opportunities for investment in the site from developer contributions.	All	✓	✓			
2c	24. Access Audit – Implement actions arising from the site specific audit.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2a, 4e	25. Refurbish the Tennis Courts – Refurbish the tennis courts, subject to indentifying available funding.	1	✓				

Objectives	Action	Compartment	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011	Year 4 2012	Year 5 2013
7b	26. Bowls Green – Investigate options for self-management of the bowls green with the resident club and TSA.	1		✓			
2c, 4e	27. Review Orienteering Course – Review the fixed point orienteering course with the local club.	All				✓	
2c, 8a	28. New Leaflet – Design and produce a promotional site-leaflet	All		✓			
8a	29. Site Signage – Review the current site signage and replace/upgrade where appropriate (to include the provision of a new main entrance board).	All	✓				
3d	30. Shade for the Play Area – Consider options for providing shade in the play area.	1		✓			
3d, 2c	31. Refurbish the Crazy Golf Course – Refurbish in accordance with the Capital Renewals programme.	1			✓		
2c, 3b, 3c, 7a	32. Haysden to Penshurst Cycle Route – Establish maintenance responsibilities and implement as required.	3		✓			
2c	33. Pitch Bookings – Encourage and promote the booking of sports facilities in accordance with agreed policies and tenancy agreements.	2,3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1f	34. Annual Work Programming – Prepare Annual Action Plans prior to the commencement of each year.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1e, 2c, 1d	35. Tonbridge Sports Association – Attend regular TSA meetings, to seek views of users on how the site is managed and future improvements linked to demand.	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4e, 6c	36. Grounds Maintenance – Implement and monitor the Council's GMC	All	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Part 4 – How will we know when we have arrived?

The final section looks at how we will track progress and how the Plan might be updated.

It is important to realise that a management plan is only a snap shot in time and may need periodic updating to keep it relevant. This may include alterations to reflect policy changes, new innovation, changes in resources or feedback from users and others.

Green Flag Award – The Plan has been written to meet the criteria for the GFA and form part of a successful GFA application. Its appropriateness can be assessed against the outcome of the application and the feedback report received from the judges

Monitoring Progress – Progress will also be monitored against each Annual Action Plan, at programmed weekly contractor meetings and at progress meetings between the Leisure Services Manager (Outdoor) and the Senior Parks Officer.

Annual Management Plan Review – In order to keep the plan relevant, each year prior to the start of the year, an annual review will be carried out. Much of the site description, policy and aims are unlikely to change from year to year, but the final sections of the plan are more dynamic and the whole plan will need reviewing and updating where necessary. The most important part of the review will be to look at the Five Year Work Programme, and from this drawn-up the one year Annual Action Plan for the coming year..

End of Plan Review – Prior to the expiry of this Plan on 31 December 2013 a full review and rewrite will be carried out to develop a further five year plan

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Location Plan
- Appendix 2 - Master Plan
- Appendix 3 - Access Audit
- Appendix 4 - Map of legal aspects
- Appendix 5 - Chemicals used at TRS
- Appendix 6 - Sportsground Budget