

Tonbridge Sports Association**Report 2016/2018**

The work of the Sports Association has continued throughout the period under review. This work is to represent the sports clubs, in Tonbridge and surrounding areas, and to work in partnership with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council in the provision of facilities and sports development. This is to provide the environment for the clubs' current enjoyment of their sport and to plan for their future enjoyment, which, during this period has seen increased activity.

With such a range of sports men, woman, boys and girls, and their sports, continued review and planning has become essential. Ages range from six to those many years into retirement. In our area over fifty clubs participate in twenty different sports with clubs ranging from a single team to numerous teams and squads in clubs requiring a management committee and sub committees. The combined membership of these clubs would total over 5,000.

The vast majority of the facilities are provided by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council with the remainder being evening and weekend use of local school facilities. The sports activity each week is placing an increasing demand, not only of availability, but also the standard expected of the facilities. This is particularly noticeable in respect of sports where the clubs are beginning to achieve success, or have already achieved success and are building upon this. An element of these successes has been the facilities that have been created over many years.

An important element of the continuance of our member clubs is they have a volunteer force that gives valuable time and effort to organising their clubs activities and the development of those activities. In many instances the administrative burden is with those members who are still active in the sport. However it is also the case that the management sits with those who have undertaken the sport in the past and because of their interest in the clubs continue to give their time. It is therefore important that the enthusiasm that is required from these volunteers is not hampered by any impact upon the organising process or the facilities being provided.

Being in Tonbridge our agenda still contains the subject of flooding. Although still a number of years away the proposed enhancement of the Leigh Barrier storage is a welcome relief. This problem has not only affected the clubs that use our water facilities, such as the Sailing Club, Canoe Club and the Angling Club, but also all clubs that use the Racecourse Sportsground. This also includes our local Swimming club, who use Tonbridge Pool, and indeed the continued level of the water table, which we are sure has increased, has an impact on all of the Sportsgrounds.

A considerable number of hours have been spent in discussions on the continual flooding of the Deaconsfield area and the impact this has had on the Rugby Club. No single remedy was thought possible with several actions being progressed. The final remedy is to install a pumping system in the area close to the Rugby Clubhouse. This has now received approval and hopefully will be installed this year. We also need further restoration work on the Bowls Club facilities at the Racecourse where flooding may have contributed. It is a pity that whilst improving facilities we have to deal with an increase in anti-social behaviour.

The beginning of our period saw the introduction of parking charges on a Saturday afternoon for the Lower Castle Fields car park. This is the only car park attached to a Sportsground where charges apply. We have worked to redress the financial impact on the Clubs concerned and financial compensation has been processed. For the moment we have no users for Woodland Walk Sportsground. Being without changing and toilet facilities the use is limited and the building is soon to be removed for health and safety reasons.

During this period the effective six weekly meetings of the Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council officers and the TSA has seen the main issues being how to assist the Clubs that need more from the facilities. Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Football Club had gained promotion to National League Two South. This is a great achievement for our local Club. This brought us into discussions as to the facilities that are required for that league. However, like all our Sportsgrounds, we had to consider the use by winter and summer sports.

This led us into discussions with the Baseball Club who themselves have enjoyed playing success and a buoyant membership. We had already planned a new back net which has now been combined with a move to a new location on Deaconsfield, which will be ready for the start of their season in May. This will result in a change to the configuration of mini and junior rugby pitches and has been achieved with the goodwill of the Rugby Club and the Baseball Club resulting in better facilities being available to both. The Rugby Club is already enjoying their evening training at the new Judd School All Weather facility.

Another member Club that has progressed in this last year has been Tonbridge Swimming Club who use Tonbridge Swimming Pool. The Club is now achieving success in competitions and their training programme places an increased demand on pool time. It is difficult to resolve how a very popular public swimming pool can cater for a successful club. It is pleasing to note that Cowdrey Cricket Club have begun discussions on a considerable improvement to their practice nets at Swanmead. Junior sections of clubs, and younger members, are essential in developing sport for the future.

We are now in the final stages of discussions on the continued use of the Tonbridge School athletic track by Tonbridge Athletic Club. This is the subject of a Community Use Agreement between the Council and the School and so far the discussions have taken six years. Once again the success of the Club requires good facilities but in a way that ensures stability for the Club in the future to continue their current success in National events. The success of the Tonbridge Parkrun has now been continued with the success of the Junior Parkrun at Tonbridge Farm.

This report highlights certain sports that have achieved success that places the clubs amongst the best in the South of England. A number of other member clubs are winners at local level all illustrating that the Tonbridge area hosts good clubs organised by good volunteers using good facilities.

It is always pleasing that the Liaison meetings, between the Council and the TSA, have an increasing element of sports development and improvement of facilities. It is also pleasing to have upbeat meetings with Clubs and it can be seen that the facilities will be in use for many years to come.

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