

Tenterden Recreation Ground

Landscape Masterplan - Alternative Sports Arrangement



Tenterden Recreation Ground Project

Tenterden Town Council (TTC) Response to Tenterden and District Residents Association (TDRA) Concerns:

Our Landscape Architects will exhibit the latest draft plans on Saturday 20th October between 10am and noon. In addition to the latest plan they will include an option to retain the existing Pavilion which will result in significant savings on the cost of buildings on the recreation ground. I would urge residents to attend and view the latest designs.

There are currently three residents' focus groups looking at projects including the Town Hall, a Cinema and the Recreation ground. The Town Council has £3.5m to assist towards funding these projects.

The recreation ground focus group is made up of 28 residents with a diversity of interests and a wide age-range. It is the most representative of our focus groups and has been open to the most public scrutiny. The heavy involvement of the public has been paramount throughout the consultation and the council has deliberately taken a back seat. The group includes regular recreation ground users and those who would use it, but for whom no facilities currently exist (such as the skatepark and netball). TDRA has representation on this group and would have been well placed to influence the design now under criticism. It would be a very late stage to unravel the work done by this group, which we believe has very broad support.

TDRA has made no secret of its strong support for significant public funding to be used towards the commercial cinema project. This would necessarily reduce the funding available to other projects. With a proper funding model, tight budgetary control and consideration for the needs of other groups, all 3 projects should go ahead. It should not be necessary to rob Peter to pay Paul.

The recreation ground was the top-ranked project in the public consultation and for this reason a half-hearted compromise solution would be a missed opportunity. In the long term the cheapest solution is rarely the best.

Points in TDRA letter

Accessibility of Costings

The purpose of the focus group is to establish the outline design and required facilities for the recreation ground, not to determine the budget available. The council then needs to take an overview in the light of overall funding of all projects, making cost savings and/or delivering the project in phases as the budget dictates.

The *budget* costs (produced by a specialised Quantity Surveyor) have been discussed in open public session since the Council's Internal meeting of the 3rd April this year. These are *budget* costings and of course were subject to change based on later design changes, many of which have taken place. I accept that they could have been fully publicised on our web site earlier, but it is rather putting the cart before the horse. These and the costings of other projects will, of course, be subject to independent verification before proceeding. The *current* figure for improvements to the recreation ground is under 2.2m and that figure has been published and not withheld.

Cost Savings

The landscape architects have been asked to review the buildings in the design which will result in a considerable cost saving. They have assured the council that the project (minus buildings) can be brought in on a £1.5m budget.

Additional Contingency applied by TDRA

Allocation of an additional 15% contingency across the board on top of that contingency allowed by the Quantity Surveyor is unlikely to apply as many of the items are fixed price. However, all costs will be independently verified. I must stress that these are not final costings.

Bowls Club

During the tender process for selection of a landscape architect, all the architects interviewed suggested a move for the Bowls club because its existing position would compromise the open design of the recreation ground. The Town Council has obligations to the Bowls Club which we must fulfil.

Low-cost alternative

This would necessitate a complete redesign and the unravelling of all the work put in by the focus group. Some cost savings can be made within the constraints of the master plan.

Other queries

Will there be toilets? Yes – in the kiosk building

Café in the Town – A popular request from the focus group. Particularly important to have a facility within sight of children.

Pavilion – we have asked for this to be revisited and it will be in the Saturday Exhibition.

The Mound – a feature of the plan which is still to be finalised

Play equipment – currently very good for young children, not so for older kids.

Loss of green space – all-weather surfaces are not possible without this