

Aylsham Recreation Ground Committee

MINUTES OF AGENDA ITEM 4 OF THE RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2023, 7PM

4) TO DISCUSS THE FINDINGS OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT

It was decided to divide discussions into 3 areas:

- a) issues with how the risk assessment had been carried out
- b) is an all-sports risk assessment necessary?
- c) discussion of the Labosport risk assessment

a) There are different types of risk assessment – the Labosport assessment came about because of concern from members of the public about being hit by cricket balls. The other risk assessment by Kevin Shepherd included all sports and was not specific – it essentially indicated that all clubs should write their own assessment. Whilst there is good information in the Labosport report, it was felt that, in carrying it out, they did not consult with the Cricket Club about where measurements should be taken from. Also, it does not include factors to assess the safety of players.

b) Why spend money on an external company when clubs already have their own risk assessment? It was felt that the committee needs to see the risk assessments by each club using the Recreation Ground and that this should be done annually. **This was proposed by Jason and seconded by Barry and then agreed.** It was also felt that we should look at the number of accidents/incidents which have occurred at the same time.

We will look at the risk assessments in August 2023 and then subsequently, in September 2024. For August 2023, the Cricket Club will submit a revised assessment and other clubs will submit their current assessment. **Action from all clubs – to send their risk assessment to the Rec Manager in time to be circulated before the August meeting.**

- c) It was felt that we need to take swift action about the information in the report as the ball statistics indicate that there could be serious injury caused to a member of the public.

The statistics in the report are taken from the second nearest strip to the pavilion whereas the rest of the season the Cricket Club will play from Strips 4-10.

Equally, there is nothing written about probability – *is the information in the report typical of the kind of cricket played here?*

On average, there are two sixes per match in any direction.

There have been 500 plus matches in 35 years, and, in that time, 1 passer-by was injured by a flying ball.

Can we mitigate the risks by re-orienting the Cricket square?

This would be expensive, and it was felt by the Cricket Club that it wouldn't address the risk from the balls.

The Cricket Club is looking for a second pitch as the Recreation Ground doesn't meet capacity.

Do we just need to demonstrate that we have taken this matter seriously? Does the public also have a duty of responsibility? The danger is from a straight line hit – the tennis courts are also a danger in this respect. So many Cricket Grounds have the same set up, there are 5 pitches in Regent's Park, London, you are just as likely to be hit there. We need to put the risk in proportion.

It was proposed to put signs at both ends of the ground as part of the consideration of mitigation. There is a relatively high risk of injury if a ball hits someone on the head but, the likelihood of this happening is low.

There is a risk to the Children's playpark when Cricket is played on the 4th strip – the distance is 60m.

The suggestion of mitigating risks by erecting a fence was discussed briefly, it was felt that planning permission would be difficult to obtain and that the cost would be significant.

The Cricket Club has passed this report to the Director of the Norfolk Cricket Board (NCB) to get their feedback. Another Club was recommended to have 18m netting at a cost of £80,000. There is existing Case Law in Bolton v. Stone about this:

“To provide context, if it is inexpensive and easy for an occupier to significantly reduce or eliminate a risk, then they would be expected to take those steps. If it is expensive and has little effect on the overall level of risk, then it would be considered reasonable for an occupier not to take those steps.”

So, can we re-orientate the square?

This would cost around £20,000. If it's moved the Cricket Club felt that there will be more straight hits.

The storage unit is 38m from the nearest usable strip, and the Smile Park is about 60m from Strip 4.

Could the Cricket Club agree to using Strips 2/3 at the start of the season and then use strips 4-10 for the main season? Could you add this to your risk-assessment? What about adding extra strips to the end? The cost of adding extra strips will be very expensive, and what about the gym equipment? It was felt that this could be moved. The Cricket Club will submit a **revised** risk assessment to reflect the initial discussions from the Labosport report indicating that they will play from strips 4-10 for the main season.

Do we need to contact the Insurance Company?

It was felt unnecessary to send the Labosport report. Discussion concluded with a conversation stating that the Insurance Company knows that cricket is played on the Recreation Ground, so it was most likely not necessary.

It was felt that the Café-wagon was still at risk – mitigations around this will be discussed in agenda item 8b)

Is there a procedure for reporting incidents? There is but it was felt that we need to look at it and make sure everyone is aware of it. **Action by Rec Manager to add this to the agenda for the next meeting.**

It is noted in the minutes that Barry and Jill are still very unhappy with the conclusion of the discussion around the Labosport report and highlighted risks.

It was mentioned that we are still to look at the risk assessments from clubs at the August meeting.

It was also noted that the Cricket Club are in the process of consulting with the England Cricket Board (ECB), who have considerable expertise in these matters. It is still ongoing.