

North Hinksey Parish Council Leisure Working Group

Interim report to Recreation & Amenities Committee, 17th September 2015

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Background

The Leisure Working Group was established by full Council at the NHPC meeting on 21st May 2015, as a sub-committee of the Recreation & Amenities Committee. Its initial task is to formulate a response to the NHPC Leisure Facilities Survey, conducted in Spring 2015.

(link to survey report available on NHPC website: http://www.northhinksey-pc.gov.uk/Core/North-Hinksey-PC/Pages/R_and_A_ReportsSurveys_2.aspx)

Its membership consists of nine members of the R&A Committee: Councillors Caroline Potter (chair of Leisure Working Group), Voirrey Carr (vice-chair), Lorna Berrett, Judi Bolder, Julia Hammett, David Kay, Ag MacKeith, Ruth Mayne, and Andrew Pritchard. Clerk Alan Stone also takes part in this Working Group in an observational / advisory capacity.

The Leisure working group has met three times since its formation: on 4th June 2015, 29th June 2015, and 4th August 2015. Following a longer break at the end of the summer, meetings will resume following the R&A Committee meeting on 17th September (to which this interim report is directed).

Aims, Remit and Reporting Deadlines for the Leisure Working Group

The overarching *Aim* is to identify and investigate local leisure needs and wants, and to address them in as far as the Parish Council can.

Within this framework the *Remit* is to include:

- 1) Examining and acting on the NHPC Leisure Facilities Survey (Spring 2015)
- 2) Liaising and sharing information with other relevant parties, to include:
 - North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan steering and working groups, who are exploring what leisure facilities should be available in the area for the future
 - Seacourt Hall Management Committee, who are part of discussions on a new community hall
 - Oxford Brookes University, who provide local sports and leisure facilities
 - Stakeholders in the West Way development regarding provision of new public space and a new community hall
- 3) Collating and taking account of other evidence on leisure needs and resources for North Hinksey parishioners, to include:
 - NHPC consultation on preferred uses of Louie Memorial Fields (2010)
 - Skatepark petition and associated reports (2012/13)
 - Vale of White Horse Leisure and Sports Facilities Study (2014)
- 4) Evaluating current leisure provision for North Hinksey parishioners and identifying areas for potential improvement. Provision to be examined in the wider context of leisure facilities available in Oxford city and elsewhere in the Vale of White Horse, but with particular attention to Parish-based facilities, e.g. the Louie Memorial Fields and Pavilion.
- 5) Working directly with parishioners to get a clearer picture of specific leisure needs than was able to be gleaned from the Survey.

The remit of this Working Group does not include direct negotiations with developers (e.g. Persimmon Homes regarding the securing of amenity land at Tilbury Lane), which is the purview of the R&A Committee and full Council.

Reporting deadlines: keep the Parish Council informed of progress at Council meetings, with formal reporting to the Recreation & Amenities Committee.

Progress to date on five Remit areas

1. Examining and acting on the NHPC Leisure Facilities Survey

The NHPC Leisure facilities survey has been considered at each of the first three Leisure Working Group meetings on 4th June, 29th June, and 4th August.

Initial observations made on 4th June were:

- Response is disappointing (84 respondents reporting on a total of 207 household members) and may signal a number of factors: lack of concern

among parishioners about leisure issues, availability of leisure facilities other than those provided by the Parish Council, difficulty/burden of respondents having to report for all members of the household, confusion over specific questions (e.g. Q6), requirement for respondents to provide personal contact details.

- Q7 is key in terms of need. It indicates that facilities for 12- to 18-year-
- as a priority area for investigating future needs.
- Comments suggest a need for improved indoor leisure facilities (e.g. those that might be provided in the West Way development) as well as outdoor facilities.

From these initial observations two priority areas for further investigation emerged:

- **Improved facilities at a new Seacourt Hall** (i.e., improved indoor facilities in central Botley). This is a time-sensitive issue that we should engage in throughout the West Way development process.
- **Better provision of facilities for older children/teenagers, both indoor and outdoor.** Indoor facilities could be addressed through an improved community centre (priority area 1 above) and/or improvements to the Pavilion. Outdoor facilities could include a replacement Skatebowl / Skatepark, if current evidence of demand and feasibility (in comparison to other potential options) emerges through this Working Group's explorations.

A second consideration of the Leisure Facilities Survey was on the agenda for the Working Group meeting of 29th June. No further discussion points were raised at this time.

A third consideration of the Leisure Facilities Survey was on the agenda for the Working Group meeting of 4th August, with particular focus on the free-text comments. Cllr Potter undertook analysis of the comments based on word frequency, compiling all references made by parishioners to each of these key terms: 'centre', 'children', 'community', 'elderly', 'facilities', 'green', 'hall', 'Louie Memorial Fields', 'need', 'pavilion', 'play', 'skate'. Cllr Carr noted further references to the specific needs of elderly and/or house-bound parishioners. The compiled references (by theme) were distributed to Working Group members and raised for initial discussion, with plans to return to a more in-depth, final discussion of the survey comments at the next Working Group meeting.

2. Liaising and sharing information with other relevant parties

The Working Group has received two updates through Cllr Kay on the work of the Social Infrastructure group for the **North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan**, which is compiling data including information on leisure needs and leisure provision. Some of the most relevant information, such as the Vale of White Horse Leisure and Sports Facilities Study 2013-2031 (updated November 2014), has already been identified by both Neighbourhood Plan volunteers and this Working Group.

The Working Group has also been advised of ongoing negotiations between **Seacourt Hall Management Committee** and Mace regarding a replacement community hall within a future West Way centre development. All NHPC

Councillors were invited to a meeting held by SHMC on 18th August 2015 to discuss aspirations for a new community hall; four members of the Working Group (Cllrs Berrett, Bolder, Kay, and Potter) took part in these discussions.

Cllr Carr has liaised with Stuart McCarroll, manager at **Brookes Sport Botley**, regarding its current provision and levels of usage by North Hinksey parishioners. BSB provided a parish update as of 1st July 2015, which Cllr Carr distributed ahead of the Working Group meeting on 4th August. Key information noted from this report is that the majority of BSB users are community / local residents (rather than Brookes students). Also noted was the emphasis on youth activities, for example summer sports sessions being run for 10- to 20-year-olds.

3. Collating evidence on leisure needs and resources for North Hinksey parishioners

Of particular relevance is the Vale of White Horse Leisure and Sports Facilities Study 2013-2031 (updated November 2014), which noted that

- Botley (including North Hinksey) has the 'least good access to sports halls' along with Wantage and Grove, although the amount of unmet demand is relatively small
- Brookes Sport Botley provides the only local swimming pool, which currently has the capacity to meet projected demand from housing growth through 2031. The nearest other swimming facilities available are in Oxford City and in Abingdon.
- Market segment profiling indicates that the dominant types of sports/leisure users for North Hinksey are 'Tim' (settling down males) and 'Ralph & Phyllis' (comfortable retired couples). The sports that most appeal for these types are canoeing, cricket, cycling, squash, skiing, golf, and football for 'Tim'; and bowls, golf, tennis, table tennis, snooker, walking, fishing, and swimming for 'Ralph & Phyllis'.

VOWH also provides maps showing the distribution of sports facilities across the Vale, including open space and play areas in North Hinksey (see section 4 below).

The Working Group has also compiled NHPC surveys and reports from the recent past in relation to leisure facilities, in particular

- Consultation survey from February 2010, for which 367 students at Matthew Arnold School (age range 11 to 16 years old) gave their opinions on potential provision of a Trim Trail, MUGA, and skatepark in the Upper Louie Memorial Field. Also in February 2010, NHPC ran a public consultation on proposed works to the Louie Memorial copse and fen.
- 2011 household survey of North Hinksey parishioners regarding further development of the Upper Louie Memorial Field
- 2013 NHPC report from the Skatepark Working Group, and associated documents (petition, response by local skatepark campaign group)

Analysis of these surveys and reports is ongoing and will inform the Working Group's further exploration of leisure needs and potential leisure provision.

4. Evaluating current leisure provision for North Hinksey parishioners and identifying areas for potential improvement.

Several sources have been identified by the Working Group for cataloguing current leisure provision within the parish.

The **Botley and North Hinksey Community website** maintains a page on clubs, activities, and leisure facilities within the neighbourhood:

<http://botleyhinksey.org.uk/clubs-leisure-activities/>

Activities are organised by age groups (baby & toddler, 5- to 11-year-olds, 11- to 18-year olds, adult / all ages).

The page contains further links to 'Playground, parks & open spaces' (including three in North Hinksey parish: Raleigh Park, North Hinksey Nature Reserve, Louie Memorial Fields) and to 'Sports facilities, playgrounds & recreation grounds' (including Brookes Sport Botley at Westminster College, rugby and lawn tennis clubs at North Hinksey Village).

The map below (produced by Vale of White Horse District Council) shows the locations of open spaces, allotments, children's play areas, youth and other facilities within North Hinksey Parish.

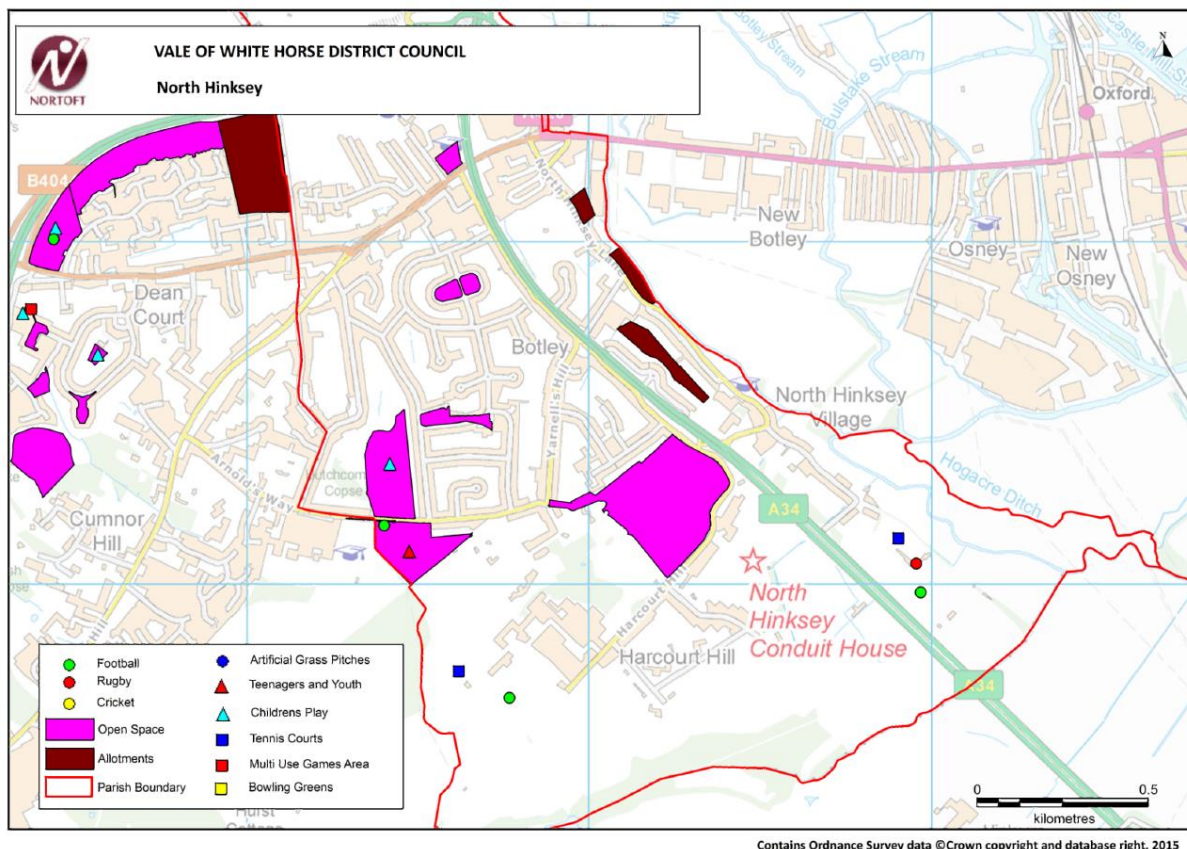


Figure 1. Location of leisure spaces within North Hinksey parish

Additionally Vale of White Horse have provided maps of its sports halls and swimming pools through previous reports, which indicate the wider distribution of these facilities outside of North Hinksey parish.

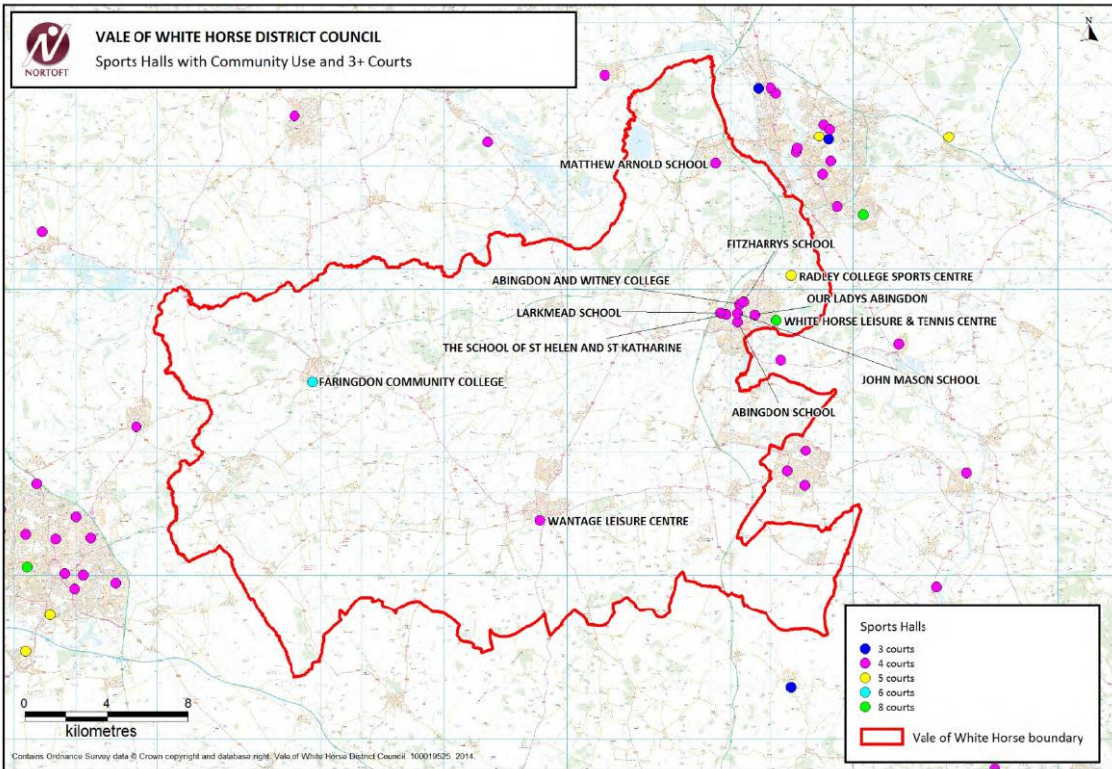


Figure 2. Location of sports halls with community use and 3+ courts across VOWH

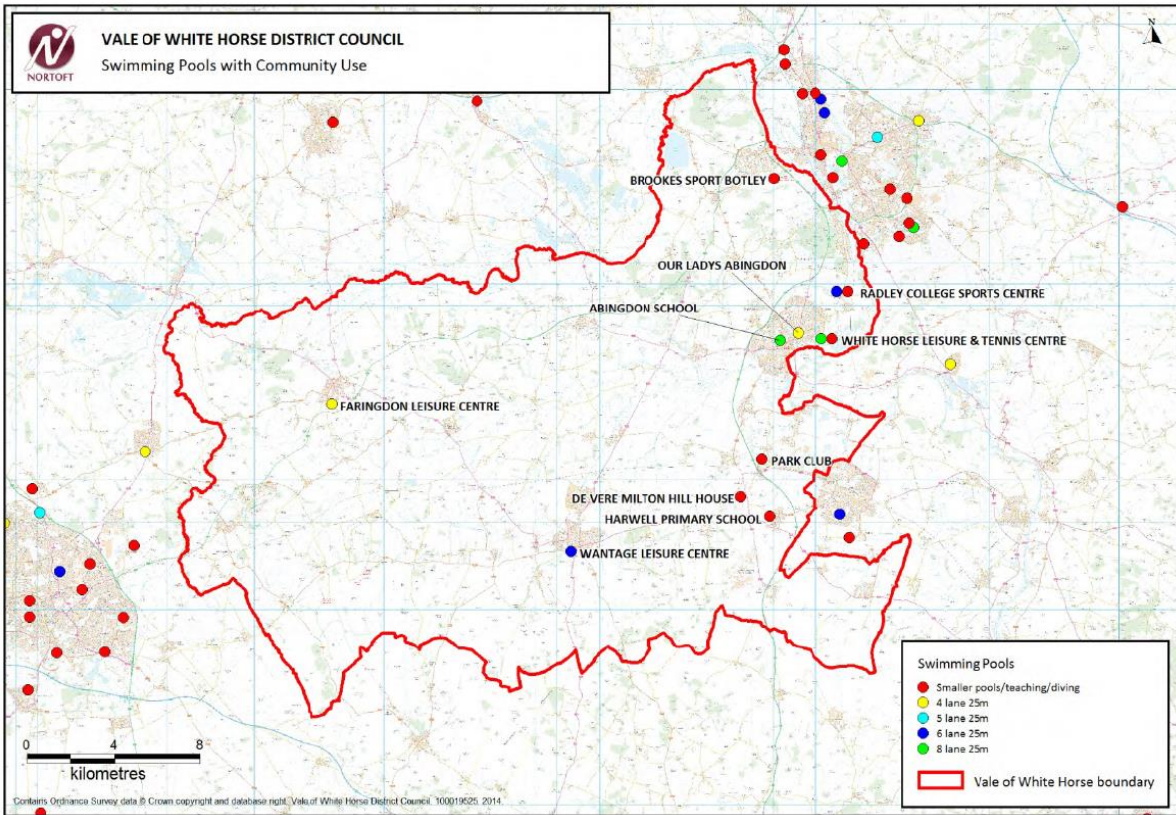


Figure 3. Locations of swimming pools with community use across VOWH

Areas for potential improvement are beginning to be identified, for example the Louie Memorial Pavilion which may need further significant investment within 5-10 years.

5. Working directly with parishioners to get a clearer picture of specific leisure needs

Aside from initial meetings with key stakeholders, direct consultation with parishioners has as yet been limited.

Cllr Potter met with Martin Dowie, caretaker of Louie Memorial Fields, on 3rd August 2015 to discuss current usage levels and potential issues (e.g. management of anti-social behaviour) around the fields and pavilion. This was a productive conversation that clarified the positive direction that pavilion usage has taken under its current management trust, while also highlighting challenges to be addressed (e.g. changing and social spaces at the pavilion are generally poor in comparison to other similar facilities, which may be limiting usage).

Cllr Bolder, in her joint capacity as a Youth Club leader, has spoken with young people and youth workers over the summer regarding options for new youth club provision, particularly for teenagers aged 15 years and older.

Cllr Carr has expressed concern that the needs of elderly and mobility impaired parishioners still need to be addressed.

Conclusions and next steps

Based on its review of the 2015 NHPC Leisure Facilities Survey and subsequent discussions, the Leisure Working Group has identified two priority areas for improved leisure provision within North Hinksey parish:

- 1) Improved multi-use indoor facilities for all ages, chiefly to be pursued via the Council's negotiations (in concert with Seacourt Hall Management Committee) on provision of a replacement community hall within the West Way development.
- 2) Increased / improved facilities for older youth and teenagers within the parish. This is the age group for which leisure provision was identified as poorest within the Leisure Facilities Survey, a conclusion that is supported by wider evidence (e.g. VOWH 2008 provision standards for youth facilities, 2012 skatepark petition).

As priority area 2 is under more direct control of NHPC, this Working Group considers it appropriate to further explore specific options for potential leisure provision aimed at youth / teenagers. The next phase of Working Group activity will be focused on defining, evaluating, and consulting with parishioners about these options. From discussions thus far, options agreed for consideration are an adventure playground, a skatepark, and a youth club aimed at older teenagers.

Cllr Mayne, drawing on previous community consultation that she has conducted, suggested that an evaluation framework should be developed for assessing each

potential option. At the Working Group meeting on 4th August an initial framework was developed, which was supplemented by subsequent email correspondence regarding the inclusion of an additional criterion. This framework (see Appendix) is as yet provisional, to be discussed and agreed at the next Working Group meeting. Assuming that it is agreed, we aim to have undertaken discussions with parishioners using this framework ahead of the next R&A Committee meeting in January 2016.

In addition to work focused on youth / teenage provision, this Working Group also intends to further investigate leisure provision for elderly residents within the parish, particularly those who have limited mobility.

Cllr Caroline Potter

Chair, NHPC Leisure Working Group

17th September 2015

Appendix: Criteria for evaluating options for leisure provision (draft)

Assessment of need

1. Evidence of demand / projected use

Assessment of impacts

2. Impact on other users / residents
3. Environmental impact

Assessment of potential sites

4. Land provision / space needed
5. Access (walking distances, transport links, age and disability considerations)

Assessment of financial requirements

6. Capital costs
7. Potential funding available
8. Maintenance costs

Assessment of management issues

9. Security
10. Risk management