

Charlton Playing Field

Business Plan



Prepared for Newbottle Parish Council
February 2022

CONTENTS

Business Plan

Section	Page number
Executive Summary	2
Outcomes and Objectives	4
History and background of the Playing Field	5
Current Users, Target Market and Accessibility	9
Operational Costs	11
Funding Routes	12
Organisation and Management	14
Marketing Plan	15

Appendices

Playing field Plan	A
Summary of budget and accounts	B
Photographs of the Playing Field (Current day)	C
Photographs of the Playing Field (Historical)	D
Trust Tenancy Agreement	E
Landscaping & Biodiversity Plan	F
Overview of projects, activities and costs	G
Pavilion Specification	H
User Testimonials	I

Executive Summary

Charlton is a small rural village situated in South Northamptonshire. Our village is home to 550 residents, with 120 homes, with a vibrant community, boasting a pub, shop, village hall and of course the playing field. We are also very lucky to have both our primary school, Newbottle and Charlton CEVA and Charlton Preschool which have excellent reputations. Children attend not only from Charlton but from surrounding villages. The village also has a thriving Memorial Hall which as well as hosting the preschool on weekdays, is in use most evenings and home to a variety of groups and clubs from dog training to choir, and Charlton WI to Brownie, Guide and Rainbow groups. It also hosts the biennial village pantomime, which is a much-loved event. Limited outdoor space at the hall and school means that both school and preschool use the playing field for sports and play. In short, the playing field provides the major green space for the village.

The playing field is a large open area (2.8ha), edged by farmland on 2 sides, housing on the third and Farthinghoe Road on the fourth, it currently has 3 pedestrian entrances and a gated vehicular access. There is a parking area at the entrance and a public footpath to the rear of the field connecting the village to the Airfield and Steane.

The playing field has been in existence since 1972 (more information about its history can be found in this document) and has been an essential part of village life until fairly recently.

A number of factors has led to a decline in the use of the facilities and the playing field has become somewhat unloved in recent years.

A major cause has been the dilapidation of the pavilion which is now considered unsafe to use. A few years ago, a group of volunteers starting to raise money for rebuilding the pavilion but through consultation with the community it became clear that the lack of a pavilion was only part of the reason for the decline in the use of the playing field. Of concern was the lack of alternative recreation facilities. The playing field has been largely focused on being a football and cricket pitch but to engage with the wider community and get a range of people using the facility, we need somewhere people can come and walk, have a picnic, do other sports, train and play. To make it appealing we need to improve the environment making it an open and attractive place full of nature, and somewhere to bring the whole family. It became obvious that a holistic approach was needed, and that a project to regenerate the whole facility was needed to encourage village and wider community groups to fall back in love with the playing field.

The working party has taken all the ideas and feedback from the local community and sports group, as well as from an open day where all villagers were invited to have their say, and have created three main projects to reinvigorate the field. These projects are split into three areas:

- The Pavilion Project
- The Landscape Project
- The Facilities Project

These projects contain different activities and we are planning to phase these activities over the coming years. In total we're looking to raise a total of £231,460 to enable us to deliver our whole plan.

The project is enthusiastically supported by the Trustees of the trust that own the field and by Newbottle Parish Council who are the tenants.

Outcome and Objectives

Our outcome is to:

'Regenerate the playing fields as a green space for the recreation and sporting benefit as well as general enjoyment of the people of Charlton'.

Why do we want to do this;

Through the investment and commitment to the playing field we will open up the opportunities within our green space. With the adoption of this vital village facility by the community, we will make the area more accessible with a range of facilities that make it attractive for all.

We need to secure the long-term future of this valuable amenity, with a key objective of ensuring that the playing field maintains its financial stability and is able to cover its annual costs. The playing field will be a safe space, which encourages a sense of wellbeing and mindfulness. It will have an educational purpose and complement our existing village facilities. All investment decisions will be made sustainably with the focus on long term objectives.

Objectives

1. Make the field a destination and focal point for all aspects of village recreation
2. Open up the space making it more accessible to the village community
3. Provide attractive and sustainable facilities which can be enjoyed by a wide range of groups
4. Ensure its long term financial viability – the playing field must cover its annual costs as a minimum
5. Provide a strategic plan for the future development of the playing field
6. Put in place an operating structure that maintains the playing field
7. Engage the wider community to create a sense of ownership and enjoyment

History and Background of the Playing Field

Up until the late 1960s cricket was played on some undulating rough pastureland west of Charlton known as the 'Stone Pits' from earlier excavations for building and walling stones. Cattle or sheep had to be cleared off the playing area before matches could begin! It did however have a proper laid and seeded square, and an old railway carriage served as a pavilion.

Football was played on land south of the village about half a mile away.

The children played on recreational land behind the village hall. Some of this area is now tarmacked for a car park.

In early 1970, a local farmer Fred Beere sold some of his land for a housing development, known as Cartwright Road. It was built as half a crescent, with Mr Beere having hopes that the crescent would be completed on land he owned adjacent to the development.

It was at this point that Lady Birkenhead, who lived at The Cottage in the village, bought the adjacent field from Mr Beere to prevent further development. She formed a Charitable Trust which owns the field to this day. The trustees have delegated the day-to-day interests of the trust to the Newbottle Estate manager. Two keen sportspeople from the village, Fred Loggin and George Hunt, met Lady Birkenhead to ask if she would consent to the land being used as a playing field for the village. With her enthusiastic consent the trust's objective was to use the land for sporting and recreation activities for the benefit of the people of Charlton.

In a whole village effort, the land was harrowed and all the stones picked off by parties of villagers. Much of this stone was used to form the car park. Grass was sown and the cricket square from the Stone Pits was dug up and re-laid in its present position.

The first cricket match took place on the first Saturday of July 1972.

The villagers managed to move the old cricket pavilion to the new field on skids, and teas were taken in the village hall.

The first football match was played in the autumn of 1972.

In 1976 Lady Birkenhead donated a former pheasant rearing shed to be used as a pavilion. It was constructed of cedar boards for cladding and cedar shingles for the roof and was located at the nearby Gamekeeper's cottage. Once again, the local community rallied together to move it to the new ground where it was cited on a low brick wall and in time toilets and kitchen facilities were added.

At this point in its history, it was the envy of many other villages. The cricket square was so well thought of that Northamptonshire County cricket club visited on several occasions to play charity games and benefit matches for their retiring players.

In the early 1990's the cricket team extended the pavilion in order to have larger changing rooms, showers and an officials' changing room.

From its earliest days very successful fund-raising fetes were held at the playing field with many enjoyable and imaginative activities– from clay pigeon shooting to bowling for the pig to tug-of-war and many things in between!

The field has long been used for school sports, parties and even archery.

The fortunes of the village sports teams have waxed and waned over the recent years, although at times there have been vibrant senior teams, sometimes a first and second team of each code (cricket and football) and well-represented junior teams.

Current Arrangements

The Parish Council are the tenants of the charitable Trust and are subject to a 25-year lease which runs from 1 January 2018. The Trustees do not take an active role in managing the playing field but do have a responsibility to ensure that the field is made available to be used for the agreed charitable purposes. This means that all proposed uses must be able to be justified as being to the benefit of the community and not a narrow commercial or personal interest.

The playing field has historically been a well-used and loved facility for groups of all ages and abilities. Up until a few years ago, it was home to Charlton Cricket Club (senior and junior sides) and Charlton & District Football Club (senior and junior sides) and used by Charlton Guides, Brownies and Rainbows (5 years – 14 years) and Newbottle and Charlton Primary School and Pre School (4 years – 11 years).

Over the last 5 years the number of groups using the field has reduced, this is down to a number of factors but it has not been helped by the deterioration of the pavilion. The pavilion has now been condemned. It is unsafe due to the condition of the roof and windows, and most seriously the electrics are a dangerous threat to life. Therefore, in its current state it can not be used.

Despite that, this year an enthusiastic junior football team, the Brackley Athletic Football Club, are making good use of the well drained and grassed football pitches while paying a useful rent to the playing field committee.

Whilst the playing field has retained 2 active village sports clubs, others would use the facility if a pavilion was in place. Currently there are no water or toilet facilities available for users. The car park is also not fit for purpose, with cars forced to park on the road, which causes congestion at peak times.

Three years ago, a fund raising effort was instigated by a committed group of volunteers representing a number of village stakeholders. This team focused on raising sufficient funds to build a new pavilion and raised nearly £5k with high engagement with the village and local community groups.

Our intention now is to focus on the entire playing field and open this up to the village. A major part of the project is to invest in a new pavilion to provide the facilities so urgently needed to allow groups to use the field, but we also feel there are smaller, less expensive initiatives elements which will support our aim to create a space that anyone could find a reason for using.

A Playing Field Working Party has been formed to initially lead the project. This group includes members of the Parish Council plus enthusiastic villagers. The project is supported by the trustees and the Newbottle Estate who are keen for the village to gain more benefits from the playing field.

With the correct investment, there is clearly plenty of scope for this wonderful facility to be used by the local community for many leisure and sporting activities well into the foreseeable future.

Overview of the project

The 'Playing Field Working Party' was formed to identify and create an overall plan to regenerate the space. The group has consulted residents and village groups and have identified an initial list of projects. The group looked at other successful initiatives in neighbouring villages and tried to identify what made them successful and what would be useful to replicate.

The village has already raised around £5k that will be used to kick off some of the activities outlined below. Local fundraising will continue to enable further activities to be completed, and also to raise awareness of plans for the playing field.

Project	Landscaping	Pavilion	Facilities
Activities	Plant 60 trees and installation of protective fencing as part of the Green Canopy Scheme to commemorate the Queens Jubilee in 2022. This will be completed by Newbottle and Charlton CEVA Primary School as part of their forest club.	Design the new pavilion – demolish and rebuild, or refurbish existing building using recycled materials.	Clear car park back to the fence on the right to create 12 more spaces..
	Make the field more accessible by removing part of the hedge adjacent to Farthinghoe Road.	Agree specification for the building.	Install an all-weather path around the field to increase usage by all villagers.
	Install 2 x picnic benches and 2 x seating benches at 2 locations in the field.	Build/install new pavilion.	Put up a noticeboard at the front of the field to raise awareness of activities.
	Plant wild flower area.		Re-purpose the basketball court to a multi-activity facility to increase usage

	Re-lay the hedge on Farthinghoe Road.		Install a new play area specifically aimed at older children (ages 9 +).
Total	£4460	Up to £75k	£152k

Total cost for entire project = £231,250

Appendix G provides a full breakdown of project, activities and associated costs.

The secondary source of fundraising will be grants and charitable contributions. These are listed in the funding section on.

Current Playing Field Users, Target Market & Accessibility

As the playing field working party, we have been very mindful of existing facilities and services. The village is not a blank canvas and so we do not want to invest in ideas that encroach or detract from any other existing facilities that we already have within the village, like the Memorial Hall, pub or playground. The group felt that, as well as sports and recreation, the playing field could offer more to villagers focusing on health and wellbeing. We wish to attract the sports clubs back to the village and enhance what some of the existing clubs are able to do. We would also like to work in partnership with existing village facilities like the Memorial Hall to offer an alternative space for both existing groups, and new groups, when the hall is occupied. The playing field offers an alternative type of space: a large green outdoor space, which is lacking at the Memorial Hall.

As a community we are always looking to host more local events and the poor state of the existing facilities in the pavilion at the playing field mean that it is often not a feasible venue. Through our consultation and engagement sessions with villagers we have seen requests for activity days, after-school clubs, forest schools and sports festivals. We have also seen ideas for opportunities to secure the revenue for the upkeep of the field like working with mobile events like Gifford's Circus, or using it as a campsite during the local Grand Prix tapping into the existing park and ride that operates at Hinton airfield.

The additional facilities that we're hoping to install would provide villagers with a safe place to walk, and a place for older children to meet, exercise and socialise. We really hope that it will be viewed as a community space to spend time, somewhere you would take the kids on a weekend, rather than just as a sports facility, as it's been seen historically.

We believe that the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new purpose-built pavilion would enable us to overcome the health and safety concerns and to meet DDA requirements. This will enable full participation in health and wellbeing activities for all parties.

We already have commitment from the local school and Girl Guiding groups as their current facilities have limited outdoor space in their playground. A renewed playing field would support school events both inside and outside of term, as well as enable the Girl Guiding groups to engage in activities outdoors in the summer term, which they currently are unable to do.

We also plan to offer other sporting and wellbeing activities through the repurposing of the existing basketball court, by installing a multi-sport games court which would encourage new people of all ages to use the facilities, for example for basketball, tennis, cricket and badminton outside the more formal pitches used by clubs.

An idea of a hard surface path circumnavigating the playing field was particularly well-received. It could be used for walking, running, scooters or learning to ride a bike and would be wheel chair accessible. Benches and picnic tables along the route would increase the usage of the facilities when they are not being used by sports clubs and attract villagers of all ages. This is a very popular and well-used feature of the playing field at Aynho (a neighbouring village), and something many villagers here were keen to see. The school also bought the track up as something they would use, and we think it is a key element to getting all sorts of users back to the playing field.

Accessibility

As we have said, it is important that we are able to offer facilities that are not only for sporting groups but also for those who may have different interests. We hope that the playing field facilities will be utilised by other villagers and the wider county for key sporting and recreational activities. As a committee we plan to monitor usage and actively market the facilities to ensure that we offer variety and encouragement to a range of ability levels. We aim to ensure that we are not restrictive in what we offer to ensure that the facilities are accessible to as many of the local villagers as possible, in addition to promoting a sense of wellbeing. Everyone should have a reason to go to the playing field for pleasure, recreation and sporting activities. The project is for the benefit of all the people of Charlton.

Operational Costs

Current situation

Income

The playing field is currently in use and has income from two clubs:

- Brackley Athletic Football Club.
- "The Jaffas" – Juniors, and Charlton Senior Football Club.

Expenditure

Annual expenditure includes:

- Grass Mowing,
- Utilities,
- Rates,
- Insurance
- Ongoing repairs (due to the condition of the pavilion the repair bill per annum currently is negligible)

This year

Income	Expenditure	Profit
£7800	£3200	£4600

Future Scope

The playing field needs to ensure that it continues to balance the annual expenditure costs with the income, which it's currently able to do. It's hoped that the development of the facilities will only increase the revenue streams. Whilst our objective is to ensure that the playing field covers its costs each year, it's also important that reserves are built up so that there is money available for contingencies and ongoing investment.

- Income - the primary source of future income will be from sporting clubs that hire the facilities on a regular or ad hoc basis. Further opportunities could come from those that might hire the field for an organised or social event. The Association may also choose to set a small fundraising target each year.
- Expenditure - the playing field has annual expenditure on utilities, insurance and rates. It's assumed that repairs will need to be budgeted for, in line with the increased usage.

Projected income and expenditure are detailed further in **Appendix B**

Funding Routes

The project will be financed and funded through a combination of loans, donations, rental income, fundraising and grants. As of 1 March 2022 there was £3,000 in surplus funds plus £4,484 from previous fundraising efforts = £7,484. The target to be raised is £231,250.

Loans:

TBD

Donations:

Local Companies have supported through donations:

- Howdens
- AgriVert
- Aviva
- Waitrose Community Scheme

Rental Income:

Currently £7,800 per annum.

Fundraising:

For 2022 the Jubilee events in the village will direct funding raised to the Memorial Hall, target £500.

As a community we have been overwhelmed by the engagement within the village especially from those groups which have previously used the facilities.

Fundraising initiatives have included:

- Table Top Sales
- Charity Football and Cricket Matches
- Charity Auction and Curry Night – hosted and supported at our local pub
- Litter Pick Monetary Award
- M&S Bag pack – completed by junior football, cricket and Girl Guiding
- Charlton Big Dinner Party
- Newbottle Open Farm Sunday
- Brownies' Coin Trail & Games Night
- Round Table Santa Float

Grants:

As a community, we appreciate that we will need to look at other funding streams to enable us to achieve our priorities and aspirations. Having reviewed what's available to our community, we feel that the following grants and funding bodies could be contacted to support our plans. This is not an exhaustive list, just a starting point to focus our efforts:

Name	Type of Funding	Funding Amount	Timeframe
Waitrose	Community Fund	Up to £1500	Ongoing
Tesco	Community Grant	Up to £1000	Ongoing
London Marathon Charitable Trust	Small & Major Grants	Small Grants – up to £50k Major Grants – up to £250k	Application process currently on hold
HS2	Community Environment Fund Local	up to £75k £75k - £250k	8 weeks Independently assessed (8 months)
Aviva	Community Fund	Up to £50k	Submit by 20 th April
National Lottery	Community Fund	Up to £10k	Ongoing
Viridor	Credits Jubilee Legacy Award	Major Grant – up to £50k Large - £50k to £100k Up to £300k	S2 - 30 th April – review 30 th June 18 th March
West Northants	Community Funding & Grants	£200	
Sport England	Return to Play Community Asset Fund	£300 - £10,000	Ongoing

Organisation and Management

Currently the Parish Council, in their role as Tenants, manage the day to day running of and take overall responsibility for the playing field. An appointed lead for the playing field has been appointed within the Parish Council, who leads the Working Group.

The Parish Council have formed the 'Playing Field Working Group' to focus and manage the regeneration of the playing field through engagement and consultation with the village. Once the overall business plan has been delivered, the intent is that a 'Playing Field Association' will be formed to manage the facilities on an ongoing basis, reporting back to the Parish Council who will remain tenants.

The Playing Field Association will consist of the following roles:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Representative for Sporting Activities
- Booking Clerk
- Plus 1 other member

A basic constitution has been drawn up this includes:

- Minimum of 4 meetings per year (members must attend a minimum of 3)
- Agenda and minutes to be produced for every meeting
- Minimum number of team members to attend for a meeting to go ahead
- Team to produce an annual report detailing finances and overview of activity for the Village AGM in April
- Treasurer to report financial status to the Parish Council on an 'as required' basis

They will work with the village to hold at least 1 event a year that will bring the local community together and support the playing field.

There are a few village-centric events each year which are strongly supported. We would look to see what the village would like to support (e.g. BBQ, fundraising, village sports day, food festival) as an annual event in aid of the upkeep of the facilities together with supporting local causes. The event would be organised and facilitated by The Playing Field Association.

Marketing Plan

The field needs to be economically viable and therefore attractive to users. The marketing strategy will be split into the following areas:

- Village advertising
- Direct marketing
- Social media
- Wider marketing opportunities

Village Advertising

Village Website

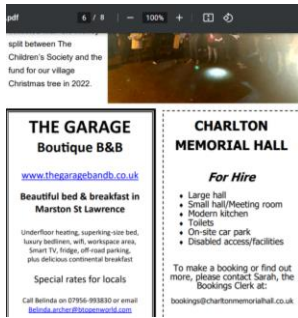
There is a dedicated village website www.Charltonandnewbottle.com

Currently the playing field has no presence, but space will be created for this to be included on the amenities page on this screenshot below:



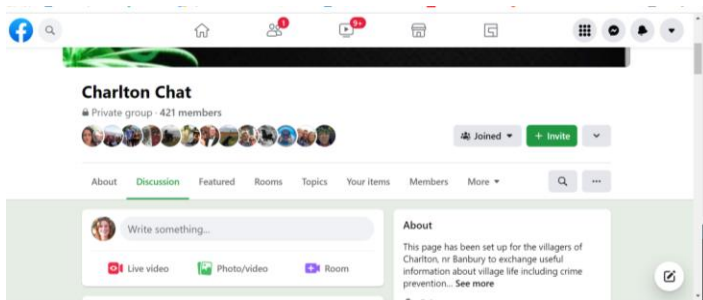
Charlton Link

Every month a magazine is distributed to all 120 households in the Village. The playing field can advertise in here for free as a village amenity.



Charlton Chat

This is our village Facebook site which has 421 members, it is a private group and those wanting to join must be approved by the admin team. Those who are on the site are villagers plus those interested in the village either through a social, historical or sporting connection. It is used widely for informing users about what is going on and also has an events page.



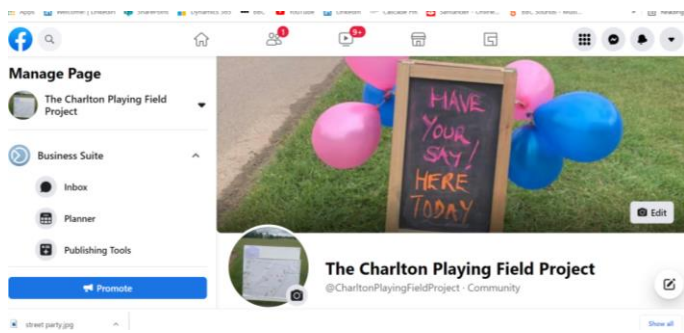
Direct Marketing

One of the successes in terms of revenue opportunities is the use of the playing field by Brackley Jaffas. This was due to their pitch being permanently waterlogged. We will approach local sporting groups to see if our facilities are attractive. This may be dependent on an accessible pavilion so could be a secondary activity.

We will also approach locally-based personal trainers, health and wellbeing practitioners and leisure users e.g. circus, car boot sales and camp outs.

Social Media

We have created our own playing field site on Facebook, and we will compliment this with an Instagram page. One of the operating team will be allocated responsibility to post regularly on activity at the playing field. This will be a minimum of 2 posts per month.



Wider Marketing Opportunities

We will be actively exploring partnerships with local businesses and organisations to increase and promote the overall usage.

Marketing Activity

- Creation of stories – use of the field and case studies
- Explore booking system and ease of booking
- Branded collateral to have consistency in messaging across all platforms
- Explore whether an individual website is required
- Define potential uses including any legislative or social requirements e.g. would the field be able to be used for a rave?