
Briefing Note

Playing fields at East Road

2 min read (Briefing Note)

1.0 Background

1.1 At their public meeting on 21 November 2024, councillors voted to remove the existing ('adult') goal posts on the East Road playing field and replace them with smaller ('junior') sized posts. This note sets out the actions that followed, including a summary of the consultation that was made and the choices available.

1.2 Since 1999, the parish council has taken responsibility for installation and maintenance of the goalposts and has frequently been lobbied by active residents to make special provision for junior football teams by providing appropriate facilities and supporting coaching schemes.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Care and maintenance of the playing fields at East Road has been an important part of the council's responsibilities since 1968 when the National Playing Fields Association transferred ownership to the parish council. The grassed area of the fields is maintained by an external contractor throughout the growing season. In a survey carried out in 2019, residents were asked how satisfied they were with the council's provision for the fields, and 95% stated that they were very (or fairly) satisfied with the council's work. This was the highest rating for any of the facilities that are provided by the parish council. Knowing the importance that the fields have for residents, councillors agreed to a consultation with residents and stakeholders before endorsing their earlier decision.

2.2 On 26 November 2024, a notice was posted on the council's Facebook, X and NextDoor social media pages explaining the proposal to remove the current posts and replace them. Paper (laminated) copies were displayed on both goal posts, at the bus shelter in Menheniot and on each of the six parish noticeboards. By the close of the consultation on 31 December 2024, nine responses had been received. These are reprinted in Appendix 1.

3.0 The issues

3.1 The current goal posts are in need of repair or replacement due to their age and concerns about the possible corrosion of the posts underground.

3.2 The Menheniot Sports Association has itself consulted with the Cornwall Football Association about the potential use of the current field for adult games. The concerns of the CFA are that: the pitch is too small (measured against FA guidelines); the orientation of the pitch (it slopes down and back up again) is not acceptable; a large tree overhangs the pitch on the west side; the edge of the pitch adjacent to Bowling Green is too close to houses. Their view is that the ground would be better purposed to provide a pitch suitable in size and layout for junior football games.

4.0 Options to consider

4.1 Remove both current goalposts and leave the playing field clear for informal use

4.2 Remove both current goalposts and replace with junior sized goals – exact location and management to be agreed between the parish council and Menheniot Sports Association.

Appendix 1

Responses to consultation on moving goalposts

Item	Comment	Response
1	As it is mainly the children playing on the field I wonder if the parish council would visit Menheniot Primary School to get feedback directly from them? I'm sure they will have a lot to say but won't be able to access social media or email to give their feedback.	We have been in touch with the primary school as part of the consultation. Their response is included below in Note 7.
2	James Bateman Such a shame that the football pitch doesn't get used. Is there a chance future generations may want to start a team? Once it's gone it's gone I guess 😞	It does get used but has the potential for more – councillors would like to see all its facilities used to their full extent, but we are limited at the moment by the layout of the pitch.
3	James Bateman we all know the pitch isn't suitable for mens football, (think it was King Donierts who were trying to get a team playing there last season but were told it wasn't suitable due to the 3m run off requirements on the width of the pitch) but it would be great to see it being used for youth football, could accommodate two youth pitches. Surely there must be some willing parents out there who would love to start up a boys or girls team. The Sports Association could help with any start up fees or coaching costs. James Bateman I couldn't commit the time to running it but would happily help out on a Sunday morning if anyone wants to start one 👍	Your comments are run off are very pertinent, but we also know that the pitch slopes – probably the biggest bar to increasing its use by more players. If there are – please contact us!
4	Will Powell There used to be a team years ago so whats so different now?	The feedback we've had from teams using the pitch are that it's not suitable for serious game-playing (James Bateman's comments above)
5	Michelle Green I think this will be a real shame, my son plays football here all the time and know a lot of the local kids do particularly in the summer months.	The parish council is looking at ways to improve all its open space facilities – and one proposal would be to create a junior pitch that

		meets the proper standards needed for competitions.
6	<p>Andy Martin Paul Sturrock tried a few years ago to start a team with him as manager, he has a bit of experience in that role, but could not get anyone to come. I thought they would have loved to be trained by someone of Pauls' stature !</p>	Mr Sturrock met with some residents who were supportive of his ideas, but the poor quality pitch (see Note 3 above) seems to have stopped his plans developing.
7	Mrs A Raynham-Dobb Menheniot Primary School	I don't have any objections. Some of the children probably play football there with their parents but this would not stop them continuing to do so. I have checked with our PE Leader too and he also has no objections.
8	<p>Resident 1</p> <p>Can I please raise a couple of points in regards to the notices about the removal of the goalposts from the field.</p> <p>These are frequently used by families and children alike and have been in situ since I arrived in the village as a resident back in 2003.</p> <p>The notice refers to 'safety concerns'. Can the council please elaborate on what these are. They should publish this along with any recorded incidents directly relating to them.</p> <p>I am all for making activities as safe as they can but am acutely aware that these goalposts are well used. The notice also refers to consulting with residents about the amenities and how to get the most out of the field. Again could this be done prior to the removal so that it coincides. I just see the goals being removed and then nothing being done.</p> <p>There used to be goals on the extra patch of land by the cricket pitch, these have disappeared. The trees by the tennis courts will no doubt make way in the not to distant future to make way for another tennis court.</p>	<p>The main issue is concerns about rusting of the posts below ground level. This is a natural consequence due to the age of the posts – and is potentially a safety issue when they are used for exercise and not as goal posts.</p> <p>The proposal that councillors will consider at their meeting on 16 January 2025 will be to replace the posts with new ones. A wider and more far reaching consultation on improvements and additions to the current facilities on the field is expected to start by the end of this month. There will be plenty of publicity about this – your views are welcomed.</p>

	<p>Is this area going to be free for residents to use or is it going to be a membership much like the other courts.</p> <p>A skate park was also rejected a few years ago. The play park itself has not been transformed since I arrived, other than a lick of paint and a new swing seat. So it seems we are falling behind in making Menheniot an enjoyable recreational area for families etc to enjoy. I am aware it will all come down to finances but other villages have expanded their facilities and I'm sure funds could be sort in order for people to enjoy outside space. I thank the council for taking the time to read my email and I wish you all a Happy New Year</p> <p>Regards</p>	<p>The playing fields were gifted to the parish council in 1968 by the National Playing Fields Association with the proviso that they were only to be used for 'community benefit'. It's important that any changes that are made to the fields get proper scrutiny by residents and their representatives. The review of the facilities on the fields will include the play area and outdoor gym.</p>
9	<p>Resident 2</p> <p>Dear Councillors We wish to object to the removal of the Goalposts on the playing field or changing them to junior size. The existing goalposts have been seen to be used at both ends by members of the public for years.</p> <p>In the council meeting of the 24/11/2024 it was resolved to remove the current goalposts because of their deteriorating condition, with a suggestion to replace them with 'junior' sized posts.</p> <p>Reading the 'Briefing Note East Road Playing Field' in the documents for November's Parish Council meeting this seems to be more about the Tennis Club than the deteriorating condition of the goalposts as stated in the notice which could simply be replaced to rectify.</p> <p>The suggestion to remove the goalposts may not solve the issue of footballs entering the MUGA as it makes a backstop behind a goal for playing football and jumpers or anything handy can replace the goalposts further up the slope where the MUGA fencing is lower. With goal posts in place this helps direct where play takes place rather than what could be "goals" in front of the entrance road/parking area for example.</p>	<p>Please see Notes 3, 6 & 8 above.</p> <p>The final location of any replacement posts will be made in consultation with the Menheniot Sports Association.</p>

<p>A former councillor reported to the parish council years ago that they had been hit by a tennis ball while walking on the public footpath, tennis balls have been seen around the public footpath and in the main field near the MUGA for years. On one occasion while walking in the field around 21:30 in the evening a tennis player was seen collecting several tennis balls from the main field. Balls going astray is not one way and could result in injury to users of the field and the public footpath. We would ask the parish council to perhaps consult with neighbouring properties in Foregates and Bowling Green.</p> <p>Mention is made of people entering a gap in the MUGA fence could the parish council not fix the fence as they are responsible for the entire field?</p> <p>Regarding the alleged acts of trespass, we would remind the council and the Menheniot Sports Association the MUGA was built blocking a public footpath as the council is aware. This situation has not been resolved since the building of the MUGA. The public footpath is still shown on Cornwall Councils definitive map as going through the MUGA and was commented on by the Countryside Access Team in the latest planning application.</p>	<p>The council invited comments from residents from 26 November 2025 by posting notices on Facebook, X and NextDoor social media pages. Paper (laminated) copies were displayed on both goal posts, at the bus shelter in Menheniot and on each of the six parish noticeboards.</p>
--	---