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MEETING REPORT: Report on Pavilion

DATE: 8 December 25

WRITTEN BY: Cllr North

AGENDA ITEM: 18

Dear Councillors,

As you know, I've been leading the work on the Sports Club project for some time, and recently joined the Parish Council so that the project could be managed correctly through our governance processes and the formal decisions we are required to make. Over the past few months I have continued to review the project in depth, taken additional professional advice, and carried out extensive research.

I'm writing to share an updated proposal ahead of our meeting so we can discuss the way forward with clarity and a shared understanding of why I now believe a pivot is the right move for Owslebury.

1. Why I Am Proposing a Pivot

At our last meeting, the agreed approach was based on two uncovered padel courts and a large clubhouse, with padel income helping to fund the build. However, after further expert advice — particularly the suggestion that the courts would need to be covered to generate reliable revenue — the nature of the project shifted significantly.

This raised a number of concerns for me. A covered padel structure would be:

- Too commercial for the character of our village
- Visually prominent at the entrance to Owslebury
- Out of keeping with our rural setting
- Expensive and high-risk
- Difficult to secure planning for in the South Downs National Park

The more I looked into it, the more the project felt like it was drifting away from its original purpose and becoming something both unachievable and misaligned with village life.

I believe it is important we deliver something realistic, in keeping with Owslebury's identity, and genuinely beneficial to our residents — not a project that risks over-development or becoming financially burdensome.

2. Refocusing on Village Life and Community Sport

This pivot brings the emphasis back to the heart of the project: supporting village sport, creating a welcoming community space, and enhancing the facilities we already have.

The new direction prioritises:

Improving and supporting our cricket and football pitches

Helping us bring our village teams back home

Meeting the needs of the many younger families now joining the parish

Offering a modest but meaningful social space for residents

Creating a place that feels relaxed, rural, and part of our community fabric

This approach feels much more aligned with what Owslebury actually wants and needs.

3. What the Revised Proposal Includes

Following my meeting with Justin at Radley House today, he has kindly agreed to redraw the plans in line with the revised brief:

A. One Open-Air Padel Court

No covering or enclosure

Lower cost and far less visual impact

Still provides useful income to support the club

B. A Smaller, Traditional Pavilion

Focused purely on essential village sports use:

Two team changing rooms

One officials' changing room

Small lobby / club room

Basic WCs

Storage

Plant/utility space

All non-essential and commercial elements have been removed.

C. Use of the Field for Village Events

The space will still support:

Community events and gatherings

Outdoor celebrations

Youth activities

BBQs and simple social occasions

We can include a BBQ area, and for bigger events we can easily bring in food trucks or mobile catering, giving flexibility without creating additional permanent infrastructure.

D. MUGA Retained

Still valuable for multi-sport use, free play, and youth activities.

E. Biodiversity Net Gain Delivered On-Site

The reduced footprint means we should be able to meet all BNG requirements within the sports field boundary.

4. Simplified Funding Overview

The simplified project is far more fundable and avoids the need for commercial-scale revenue.

Estimated cost: approx £400k–£500k (final figures to be confirmed once revised plans are available)

Funding mix:

Grants – Sport England, SDNP, FCC, Hampshire, Lottery

Community fundraising – events, local sponsorship, donations

Parish contribution – modest support or CIL allocation

Padel income – including possible pre-sales and first-year usage

This creates a balanced and achievable funding model without undue risk.

5. Summary

This revised direction:

Better reflects the character and scale of Owslebury

Supports our growing, family-oriented community

Enhances cricket and football and encourages village teams

Retains flexibility for events, BBQs, and social gatherings

Is far more affordable and deliverable

Has a much better chance of securing planning approval

Keeps control and benefit within the parish

Ensures we can actually build something within a reasonable timeframe

I look forward to discussing this with you all on the 8th December.

Thank you for your time, support, and collaboration as we work toward delivering a facility that will serve Owslebury for many years to come.

MEETING REPORT: Communications to residents on tree works

DATE: 8 December 25

WRITTEN BY: Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 19

Background

The Parish Council will be scheduling essential tree works at the sports ground as part of the wider development and safety improvements planned for the site, including preparation for the construction of the new pavilion. A number of existing trees on the site are to be removed, and it is important that residents are clearly informed of the reasons and the environmental measures that will accompany this work.

Reasons for Tree Removal

The decision to fell specific trees has been based on several factors:

- 1. Safety and Liability Concerns**

Some trees currently present a risk to vehicles that are regularly parked near the boundary of the sports ground. Falling branches and declining tree health pose potential safety and insurance liabilities.

- 2. Location of the New Pavilion**

The siting of the new pavilion requires ground clearance in areas currently occupied by trees. Their removal is necessary to progress the project and ensure the building can be positioned safely and appropriately.

- 3. Tree Health and Disease**

A number of the existing trees are diseased or in poor condition. Leaving these trees in place could lead to further decline, instability, or spread of disease to healthier trees on the site.

Environmental Mitigation and Replanting Commitments

The Parish Council recognises the importance of preserving and enhancing local biodiversity. To offset the felling, the following measures will be undertaken:

- Replacement Planting (10:1 Ratio)**

For every tree removed, ten new trees will be planted. These will be native species to ensure ecological value, long-term resilience, and a positive contribution to local wildlife habitats.

- New Hedgerow Planting**

A new native hedgerow will be established along the perimeter of the site. This will provide natural screening, increase biodiversity, and contribute to the overall landscape character of the sports ground.

Communication to Residents

It is proposed that the following communication channels be used to keep residents fully informed:

- A public statement on the Parish Council website and social media pages**

- Information displayed on parish noticeboards
- A summary included in the next parish newsletter

All communications will clearly outline the reasons for the tree works, the replanting commitments, and the long-term benefits to the community and environment.

MEETING REPORT: Green Keeping of Sports Pitch

DATE: 8 December 25

WRITTEN BY: The Clerk

AGENDA ITEM: 21

Background

Earlier this year, the Parish Council agreed to use *Grass & Grounds* to undertake the following at the sports ground:

Cutting the grass at the football pitch area,
Marking out the football pitch, and
Installing the goalposts.

This decision was based on the understanding that Totton FC would be using the ground on a permanent basis.

Current Position

Totton FC have since withdrawn and are no longer planning to use the sports ground. Despite this, *Grass & Grounds* have continued to carry out grass-cutting and pitch-marking approximately every eight weeks at the cost of £250.00

The Parish Council already employs a greenkeeper who is responsible for general sports field maintenance. Continuing to engage *Grass & Grounds* for work that may now be unnecessary.

Considerations for the Council

1. Is ongoing pitch marking and additional grass cutting still required?

With no current users of the football pitch, the value of continuing the contract in its current form is questionable.

2. Future use of the football pitch

If there are upcoming plans, possible hirers, or community groups interested in the pitch, maintenance might still be needed at certain times of the year, which we can use Grass and Grounds on an ad hoc basis.