

Statement of Need

Prepared by Snitterfield Cricket Club and Snitterfield Nursery

1. Summary

This application relates to the area of the pavilion on the Parish Council-owned playing field. The building is used primarily as a cricket pavilion and also supports other village uses such as the Fete. It is in a very poor state of repair and in need of replacement. The village nursery, currently using a building at the local primary school, has a similar need to find a replacement building.

The proposal is to replace the existing building on the Wolverton Road Playing Field with a new multi-purpose building, operating as a sports pavilion and capable of ancillary use as a nursery. The building would be sited over the footprint of the current building. The area behind the new building would be used for a secure outdoor area for nursery children and for storage. The existing car park would be improved and enlarged.

Benefits of the new building would include:

- securing the future of the cricket club and nursery
- providing a quality facility for use by other village groups such as the Fete
- improved stewardship of the building and field by having full-time use
- complementing and inspiring further development of play facilities on the field

2. The Playing Field and its facilities

This proposal relates to the Wolverton Road playing field and pavilion (CV37 0HB). The field is approximately 6 acres in size and is owned by the Parish Council. The pavilion is sited next to the small car park in the south east corner of the site, and there is also small play area for young children on the southern boundary next to Hales Close. The Monarch's Way footpath runs along the western edge of the field.

The pavilion consists of two changing rooms, toilets, showers, a small kitchen and storage. Adjacent to this there is a shed for storing ground maintenance equipment, together with three mobile cricket pitch covers, a practice net and two sight screens.

The field has a small cricket square including an artificial wicket, and the field can also accommodate football matches.

2.1 State of Pavilion

External issues

The pavilion/changing rooms are in very poor condition and rapidly reaching the end of their lives. The building is a pre-fabricated construction built in the early 1970s, with an estimated life of 30 years. The building has shallow foundations (approx. 6 inch depth) and consists of concrete pillars in-filled with wooden slats. At this moment some of the pillars are beginning to crumble exposing rusty

reinforcing wires. The wooden slatting is beginning to rot and has also warped in many places, allowing water to seep into the building. Some of the slatting has been replaced over the years but this is proving expensive and futile. Owing to vandalism the windows in the kitchen area have recently been replaced, but the windows in both changing rooms are leaking. Much of the problem with water leaking into the building is due to the state of the guttering, much of which needs replacing. The external look of the building is not appealing to anyone looking to join a sports club.

Internal issues

The internal state of the pavilion is in equally poor condition; the walls are in a constantly damp state with mould and mildew growing in many areas. There is little ventilation, which presented a particular problem during the Covid pandemic; the building was unsafe to occupy.

There is no heating in the building so this problem is getting progressively worse. All of the pipework around the tank needs repair work or lagging which we have been advised would be futile due to the lack of insulation in the building. The electricity supply to the building is in urgent need of being upgraded; only a couple of appliances are able to be operated without the fuse tripping. Whilst some of the lighting in the pavilion has been upgraded most of the strip lighting is old and is high energy consumption.

There are four showers which run off a pressurised 100 litre tank. The tank takes four hours to heat up and is sometimes only used by a handful of people and, if the tank is not turned off, it can be very expensive. These issues, together with numerous minor problems, make the building in its present state unsuitable for further investment.

3. Cricket and football

Snitterfield Cricket Club traces its origins back to the 1930s. It was disbanded in the 1970s but then re-formed in 2003, shortly followed by a junior football club. A new cricket square and two football pitches were created on the 6 acre Wolverton Road recreation field. The two clubs managed to refurbish the pavilion (formally the Youth Club) providing changing rooms and shower facilities.

Adult cricket matches (league and friendlies) take place throughout the Summer months. Each year the cricket club also runs weekly All Stars cricket sessions for around 40 children aged 4-11, which have proved very popular with local families. The long term aim is to reinstate a junior cricket team, so that All Stars participants can continue to enjoy the game once they reach secondary school age.

The cricket club also maintains the field on behalf of the parish council, with 1-2 cuts per week from Spring to Autumn, ensuring that it remains in a good condition for all users of the field.

3.1 Junior cricket

Three years ago the cricket club ran a junior cricket team plus regular coaching sessions throughout the summer months. As the facilities deteriorated it became increasingly more difficult to operate a junior cricket team. The team would play in the Warwickshire Youth League which meant the club had to maintain certain standards which became more difficult as time went on. The club's aspiration was to attain club mark status but considering the condition of the clubhouse we decided this would have to remain an aim for the future. The condition of the building and the facilities were found to be a big factor on parents not joining the cricket club

3.2 Junior football

Snitterfield used to have a thriving junior football club with six teams. The club has now ceased to operate. A key reason for this decline has been the perception of safety for the girls and boys and the current facilities not keeping up with other local teams, with more parents taking their kids to clubs away from Snitterfield. Parents found it hard to enjoy the club house with their families with the separation of the main pitches and play area from the existing Sports Club. To play on the main field the kids had to cross the Wolverton Road and remain out of sight of their parents. The proposed building is likely to encourage the resumption of junior football on the field.

4. Other community uses

For more than 10 years the playing field and pavilion have hosted the largest fund-raising event in the village, the summer fete. The event has a considerable number of stands and activities and around 500 people attending. The kitchen and toilet facilities are woefully inadequate for this purpose, such as the lack of an accessible toilet. A lack of hot water and limited electricity supply also restrict the extent to which the building can support such events.

5. Snitterfield Nursery School

Snitterfield Nursery School has been operating at its current site on the grounds of Snitterfield Primary School since 1994. Its importance to the local community was recognised in the Snitterfield Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031, which stated as a policy: "Sustaining and increasing the opportunity to access education is encouraged to be delivered through the protection and expansion of the existing primary school and private nursery." It operates as a charitable incorporated organisation (registered charity number 1180187) run by a voluntary board of trustees.

The nursery school aims to

"help children to become confident, proud, life-long learners by discovering and building on each child's unique gifts and talents in a happy, safe, rich and stimulating environment supported by experienced staff"

5.1 Nursery Operations

The nursery school takes children from their second birthday until they start school and is open term-time only during normal school hours. The majority of children attending use only their entitlement to free childcare, although some pay privately or fund additional sessions. The proportion of nursery income generated by privately paid fees is approximately 20-25%. The board aims to keep fees for privately paying children and any top-up charges for publicly funded children as modest as possible in an effort to make the nursery affordable to families from all parts of the community.

The nursery school is currently registered to take a maximum of 28 children, although we choose to limit child numbers to 26. At the end of the 2020/2021 academic year, there were 32 children on the role. The children mainly come from the Snitterfield and Bearley areas, with a consistent number also coming from Wilmcote and sometimes from local traveller site at Pathlow. Some attend from further afield. Due to close links with the Snitterfield Primary School, the nursery school has been the favoured option for children who plan to attend there.

The nursery school currently has seven permanent members of staff, including an administrative assistant. All are part-time, with a set minimum number of hours and all are very flexible, varying their hours depending on need. The nursery generally recruits locally and, unlike many larger nurseries, has excellent staff retention.

Governance

The objects of the nursery CIO are “to enhance the development and education of children primarily under statutory school age by: a) Engaging in appropriate activities or providing facilities or equipment; b) Encouraging parents and carers to become involved in the development of their children; and c) Promoting public interest in the recognition of the needs of children and their families.”

The nursery school has a committed board of trustees, which includes the registered person with OFSTED and is responsible for: managing finances; employing and managing staff; ensuring that the nursery has the correct policies in place to provide a high quality service working in partnership with parents. Each member of the board brings a specific specialism to the table, such as finance, safeguarding, legal experience and marketing. The trustees are also able to draw on the experience of former committee members for expertise in human resources and child psychology.

The nursery’s most recent OFSTED rating is “Good”, following an inspection in January 2017 when the nursery operated as a 'not-for-profit' limited company. No changes were made to the day-to-day running or management of the nursery on its transfer to the CIO, however this change did result in Snitterfield Nursery obtaining a new Ofsted registration.

5.2 Current Premises

The nursery school operates in a building leased from Warwickshire County Council and is responsible for its upkeep. It is understood that the building was erected in the late 1970s or early 1980s as a temporary structure and is well beyond its life expectancy. The Snitterfield Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031 acknowledged that the building is “ageing and in need of replacement or extensive refurbishment in the near future”, commenting that “Renewal would ensure continuous educational facilities from early years are maintained within the neighbourhood”.

The nursery faces high maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of the building. Recent maintenance works include: replacement of the windows and flooring due to their poor state of repair and poor insulation, a flood due to the age of the taps, which had to be replaced along with plumbing to the toilets; wind damage to the front porch of the property; a boiler break down, and repairs to the perimeter fencing due to its age. Further significant costs are anticipated if nursery continues to operate from the building, including installing a new kitchen and replacing parts of the guttering and perimeter fencing. The exterior cladding is also in need of replacement but this is unviable due to the complications with the building’s structure and the cost given the limited further life expectancy of the building.

In dealing with these issues, the nursery incurs not only the cost of the maintenance itself but also the lost income from privately paid fees while closed. There is also the concern that there may be reputational damage if the need to close the nursery at short notice becomes more frequent. Given a number of maintenance issues, the board of trustees has concluded that the ultimate strategy of the nursery is to obtain new premises.

6. Traffic and parking

The existing car park can safely accommodate around 5 vehicles. This is sufficient for general use but when sports matches are taking place, there can be a parking requirement for 10-15 vehicles. Other sites, such as the Sports Club car park opposite, have been used for “overflow” historically but an increase in parking capacity would help to support activities on the field and minimise the risk of dangerous or inconvenient parking elsewhere.

An additional benefit of relocating the nursery would be to alleviate traffic / parking issues outside the primary school, about which many residents have recently expressed significant concern. Sports matches and other events are held outside of nursery operating hours, so the proposed extension of the car park to 18 spaces should be adequate for our needs.

See “Transport Statement” for further details.