

Report from Boxford Playing Fields Management Committee for the year 2023

The activities of our charity during 2023 continued in the long established pattern and both the cricket and football clubs completed their programme of fixtures and training sessions. Similarly the tennis courts, children's play area, sports pavilion and allotments were used fully and the playing fields remained available for walkers and more casual recreational activity throughout the year.

We carried out maintenance work to the estate during 2023 including cutting back the hedging around the fields in the autumn. In September we started a project to refurbish the changing, shower and toilet arrangements for use by the home team, visitors and match officials in order to comply with the requirements of the Essex and Suffolk Border League of the FA. This work was completed in February 2024 and the facilities are now open for use by teams from all disciplines.

This year we plan to install floodlights to enable football practice to continue into the autumn and winter evenings. They were originally intended to be completed in 2023 but were delayed by the requirement for planning consent and the higher priority of the changing and shower facility upgrades. We will also carry out a programme of maintenance and repair to the playground and replace the existing Aerial Slide with a new one.

The sad news has come that the Boxford and Edwardstone Cricket Club has had to cease trading due to a shortage of players. We are very sorry to see them go not least because of the loss of the excellent cricket wicket which has been developed and maintained for over 30 years by our stalwart volunteer grounds man Ray Gibbons. Without appropriate maintenance it will soon deteriorate but I now see that it has been fenced off once again so there may be hope for the future. However sadly it seems that there are simply insufficient cricketers to be able to field a full team on a consistent basis. Soccer on the other hand goes from strength to strength and we now host both Boxford Rovers FC adults and the far more numerous the junior section every weekend.

Thank you very much for your generous annual grants both last year and this to assist us in our work. We will continue to put the money to good use!