

02/5/2016

New 3rd Generation All Weather Pitch at the Poplars Sports Ground
Further Information

Dear Resident/Poplars User

As a Burton Joyce resident or user at the Poplars Sports Ground we thought it would be a good idea to let you know about improvements and changes at the Poplars. We have been asked some questions in the last month, so we thought we might share the answers. Hopefully this letter and its accompanying Questions and Answer page will give you sufficient detail to either be satisfied and informed with the progress or seek clarification with us on matters of concern.



Questions and Answers May 2016

Q: What are the changes that have happened recently at The Poplars?

A: Regular users will notice the new floodlit 3G Artificial Pitch is operational and very busy since December. We have added a new Petanque (Boules) Pitch in March which is doing well too. The Car Parks have been improved and resurfaced and additional space is now available opposite the Poplars to prevent road congestion. Most of the administration has been transferred to the Poplars to help with speed of booking and operations. A new fence line has been added to the Station Road with gates opened at selected times for community events or spectating of sports.

Q: Is more sports being played?

A: Yes and that a good thing. The BJPC is targeting all sorts of groups to try and encourage more sport, better played with more diversity. Winter visitors will notice the ground in use every evening by nearly 100 new people and also the Pavilion room for other gentler events such as Yoga or Slimming World. Our strategies are beginning to take effect - we have more girls playing football, more over 40s playing sports and over 50s and 60s of any gender. Our Football, Archery, Bowls and Cricket clubs are increasing members and quality of venue equipment.

Q: If the Poplars has traditionally lost money, won't this plan mean even more subsidy?

A: Quite the opposite, FA data shows 3G Pitches are a strong source of positive income and our business plan indicates the ground should be self financing in the first year, meaning less drain on the public purse and less rises in BJPC precept in future years.

Q: Why is there a fence up now, I thought it was a public park?

A: No it's a common misconception. It's a club based venue/leisure centre. Our public parks are the Roberts Rec next to the Lord Nelson and the Grove behind the Primary School. The Poplars was set up by BJPC, BJ Cricket and Football Clubs to provide a grass venue for local club teams to play on as none existed. Both the original "Facilities" funding from Sport England and the recent one from the Football

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Foundation are aimed at club's grass root level to encourage better training and coaching facilities and to improve the national game. There have been insufficient funds to fence or police the venue over the years, although signage has always stated that.

Q: Presumably I am paying for it as a Burton Joyce Precept taxpayer, I didn't mind if I used it occasionally so I feel I had something and now I've lost it?

A: This is the trickiest one to answer, very understandable and it come in three parts:

i/ We all also pay council tax to Gedling Borough Council and Notts County Council and yet we do not get free access to Carlton Forum, Richard Herrod Leisure Centre or Holme Pierrepont- why is the Poplars different?

ii/ Part of the overall 3G plan was to remove the subsidy (by increased 3G income) to BJ precept payers because many did not use the facility (despite our best efforts) and so more income would come from the club use to support the costs. So technically you don't now as the 3G has covered the deficit already.

iii/ Surprisingly you haven't lost it, but we've changed how you do it and its called "Freeplay"– (incidentally Summer Friday Nights at the Poplars are still open to all). We think this is a first in the UK. If you pay the Burton Joyce Precept there is an extra mechanism where any members of your household can play free of charge on the 3G pitch at selected times to encourage ad hoc play. e.g. Lads v Dads, Mums v Girls and any other combination. All you need to do is apply for a free "Freeplay" card. In the summer there are currently 3 sessions per week totaling 8 hours with more coming in the holidays.

Q: Why can't I just play on the grass pitches?

A: As part of the funding requirements for the 3G which transforms the whole Poplars funding model we needed to increase and improve the number of teams playing on grass at the Poplars. We were already close to saturation and the numbers have nearly doubled in the last 10 years. The extra strain on pitches over the next 4 years could not be accommodated and have random unauthorized access to the pitches – the history of which also caused damage, crime and unsociable activity in this remote venue.

Q: If I am not now paying for the Poplars, surely my BJ Precept tax should have gone down?

A: Yes it was calculated to drop by around £5 per annum as last year's £7k deficit was removed. Unfortunately, we had a perfect storm in the unexpected availability of the Old School Building in the village centre, which we have been looking at as a community asset for some time.

Q: So the increase in precept for Burton Joyce is not related to the Poplars?

A: No its to cover the cost of the first year's rental until residents can be consulted over their wishes for its use and the improvement of the village centre around the this building.

Q: I Have heard this term "Freeplay" but I don't understand what it is or if I qualify?

A: One of the many zone and slots available on the 3G is some dedicated to any BJ Residents to play probably football but not necessarily on the 3G instead of grass. This isn't just confined to boys or girls but can be parents with children, grandparent etc. It cannot be organized games and is usually a kick around at set times – In the summer these are currently Monday and Thursday 4-5pm and Friday 5-10pm. More may follow. This is a separate initiative to BJFC Sunday 2-6pm free session for club members, but a BJFC member and resident can do both.

Q: I am a BJ resident; how do I get a card?

A: Email in to poplars@burtonjoyceparishcouncil.org.uk for application forms or check out our website www.burtonjoyceparishcouncil.org.uk for latest details and timetable. It is only for your use and not transferrable.

Q: I am not a BJ resident – I feel I am being excluded?

A: Absolutely not. Many of our clubs have over 50% non-residents and are essential to keeping great clubs together. If you play sport, we want to hear from you. You can join any of our clubs, book 3G pitches from as little as £3 per player per hour. We have some 3G freedom school holiday tariffs at a £1 a day so mates from all round can play together.