

***CHARITABLE TRUST COMMITTEE***  
***Agenda***

Date Tuesday 17 March 2026

Time 6.00 pm

Venue J R Clynes Ground Floor Room 1 - The JR Clynes Building

- Notes
1. Declarations of Interest- If a Member requires advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Alex Bougatef or Constitutional Services at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
  2. Information relating to this meeting can be obtained from Constitutional Services, email - [constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:constitutional.services@oldham.gov.uk)
  3. Public Questions - Any Member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the contact officer by 12.00 noon on Thursday, 12 March 2026.
  4. Filming - The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Constitutional Services Officer who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.

Please note that anyone using recording equipment both audio and visual will not be permitted to leave the equipment in the room where a private meeting is held.

Membership of the CHARITABLE TRUST COMMITTEE  
Councillors: Rustidge (Chair), Ball, Bashforth, Charters, Marland and Sheldon

Item No

- 1 Apologies For Absence
- 2 Urgent Business  
Urgent business, if any, introduced by the Chair
- 3 Declarations of Interest  
To Receive Declarations of Interest in any Contract or matter to be discussed at the meeting.
- 4 Public Question Time  
To receive Questions from the Public, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 5 Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)  
To consider the minutes of the meetings of the Charitable Trust Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025 and on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.
- 6 Clayton Playing Fields (Pages 9 - 12)  
A report of the that provides assurances related to a number of matters raised at previous meetings of the Charitable Trust Committee, regarding Clatyon Playing Fields.
- 7 Saddleworth Playing Fields (Pages 13 - 24)  
A report, updating, the Committee, on proposals regarding Saddleworth Paying Fields.

**CHARITABLE TRUST COMMITTEE**  
**21/10/2025 at 6.00 pm**



**Oldham**  
Council

**Present:** Councillor Rustidge (Chair)  
Councillors Marland, Ball, Charters (Vice-Chair) and Sheldon

Also in Attendance:

Emma Barton	Deputy Chief Executive
Alex Bougatef	Borough Solicitor
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

2           **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4           **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A question was received from Mr McGibbon  
“When will the committee be issuing a formal response to the  
email I sent to Cllr Rustidge on 25 August 2025?”

The Chair gave the following response to the question:  
The minutes of the last meeting of this committee from 23<sup>rd</sup> June  
include the report and discussion on the tree-planting concerns  
raised by Mr McGibbon in his email of 28<sup>th</sup> August.

While I apologise that I have not replied directly to Mr  
McGibbon’s email – the Deputy Chief Executive of the Council  
did provide an email response on 3<sup>rd</sup> September confirming a  
site visit to discuss the agreed resolutions from the committee  
meeting and the concerns he had raised.

Mr McGibbon replied to this email on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September at  
15:23 cancelling the site visit meeting stating he was awaiting a  
resolution to his emails to me.

I’m hoping following the minutes of the June meeting being  
agreed tonight, that I would like to ask the Deputy Chief  
Executive to once again write to Mr McGibbon on the  
Committee’s behalf to re-arrange the site visit and implement  
the recommendations agreed.”

The Chair invited the member of the public to speak who set out  
the nature of his concern and insisted upon a response from the  
committee. It was noted that he had met with the Chief  
Executive and the Borough Solicitor and that no response had  
been provided until after his message to Councillor Rustidge.

It was noted that the resolution of the member of the public was  
to remove all the trees, but that some of the trees may have

been beneficial, and that it was in the remit of the committee to decide this.



**Oldham**  
Council

Members queried whether the deed expressly forbid trees being planted and it was advised that it doesn't, but notes the use of the land for playing fields. The deed also does not preclude trees from being planted on the periphery or for buildings to be built on the periphery either.

The member of the public was asked what he wanted from the meeting and it was advised he wanted some public confidence and for the public to be informed. It was also noted he wanted independent legal advice on whether any tree planting was permitted as part of the deed and whether they were beneficial to the playing fields if they were permitted. It was advised that the deed would be forwarded on to members for their information.

Councillor Sheldon put forward the following proposals to resolve the issue

- That communication between the Charitable trust and Clayton field users be improved, if and when any further works are proposed for the fields.
- That all trees are removed from the fields other than those around the perimeter of the fields.
- That regular tree inspection is made of all the trees on the fields, in line with the borough tree inspection policy.

Councillor Sheldon proposed and Councillor Ball seconded the proposals.

Members requested a recorded vote.

4 members voted in favour of the proposals – Councillors Ball, Charters, Rustidge and Sheldon

1 member voted against the proposals – Councillor Marland

**RESOLVED:** That the proposals be carried.

Members queried whether public questions could be provided to the committee in advance of the meeting in future.

5

## **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6

## **CLAYTON PLAYING FIELDS UPDATE**

It was noted that much of the update had been discussed during Item 4.

7

## **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it contains exempt information under paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the reports.

8

**SADDLEWORTH FOOTBALL CLUB PROPOSAL TO  
UPGRADE FOOTBALL PITCHES AT BISHOP PARK,  
DENSHAW**

Members noted that the report hadn't been shared with ward members and that it was not in the usual template of the council.

RESOLVED: That the report be deferred until the next meeting to allow for officer comments.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm



This page is intentionally left blank

**CHARITABLE TRUST COMMITTEE**  
**23/02/2026 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor Rustidge (Chair)  
Councillors Marland, Sheldon and Harrison (Substitute)

Also in Attendance:

Rebecca Boyle	Group Solicitor
Matthew Bulmer	Project Director SportsTown and Northern Roots
Jack Grennan	Constitutional Services
Christopher Lewis	Place Directorate

1           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ball and Councillor Charters (Councillor Harrison substituting)

2           **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4           **NORTHERN ROOTS: PLOT 8 (PHASE 2 URBAN FARM)**

Matt Bulmer introduced the item, noting that permissions were needed from the Trust to use the land as part of the project. The usages for the land were explained and the recommendations and legal comments were highlighted.

Members discussed the item, asking questions of the officers, and viewed the deed and covenant for the land. Clarity was also given on issues raised. Members were informed that the surveyors report would be brought back to the committee before a decision was made.

RESOLVED: That Option 1 be supported and the recommendations in the report be agreed.

5           **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAY AREA**

Chris Lewis introduced the item, noting that officers were seeking consent from the Committee regarding a play area being installed.

Members discussed the scheme, asking questions of officers, and viewed the Covenant and the Deed of Trust.

RESOLVED: That Option 1 be supported and the recommendations be agreed, delegating to Council the process of approving works for the installation of the previously agreed Play Area on Plot 8 as part of the Northern Roots Project.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.50 pm

This page is intentionally left blank



## Report to Charitable Trust Committee

### Clayton Playing Fields

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Elaine Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

**Officer Contact:** Emma Barton, Executive Director of Place (Deputy Chief Executive)

**Report Author:** Matthew Bulmer, Project Director Sportstown and Northern Roots

**Email:** [matthew.bulmer@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.bulmer@oldham.gov.uk)

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

---

#### Reason for Decision

The paper provides assurance related to a number of matters raised at previous meetings of the Charitable Trust Committee.

#### Recommendations

That the Committee is satisfied that:

1. Clayton Playing Fields are being managed in accordance with the Deed of Gift and charitable purposes.
2. There has been no breach of Town and Village Green protections.
3. No restrictive covenants have been breached.
4. The Council and the Charitable Trustee Committee have acted lawfully and appropriately.

**1 Background**

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on a number of matters, in response to previous matters raised at the Charitable Trust Committee.

**2. Status of the land and the charitable trust**

- 2.1 Clayton Playing Fields are held by the Council pursuant to a Deed of Gift dated 6 April 1962. The charitable purpose of the trust is “to preserve and manage the property at all times hereafter as playing fields for the benefit and enjoyment of the inhabitants of Oldham, Chadderton and Royton.” The Council continues to manage the land strictly in accordance with these objects.
- 2.2 The charitable trust status of the land is legally distinct from its registration as a Town and Village Green. Both designations have been fully considered in the Council’s decision-making.
- 2.3 The Council confirms that the land is not being sold, disposed of, or repurposed. It continues to be preserved, maintained, and used as playing fields for public benefit.

**3. Planning matters and alleged conflicts of interest**

- 3.1 The Council has not granted any planning permission for development or change of use on Clayton Playing Fields.
- 3.2 In law, when determining planning applications, the Council acts as Local Planning Authority. Planning decisions must be taken on planning grounds only and cannot take into account land ownership issues or the existence of restrictive covenants, as these are not material planning considerations. Accordingly, the planning authority’s role is legally separate from the Council’s role as charitable trustee.
- 3.3 In response to a query from a resident, title number GM171562 has been closed by HM Land Registry and does not relate to any current disposal or development of Clayton Playing Fields.

**4. Restrictive covenants**

- 4.1 Restrictive covenants are private law matters. They are not enforced by the Council or by HM Land Registry, but by parties who can demonstrate the benefit of the covenant and its enforceability.
- 4.2 The Council’s legal advice is that none of the covenants referred to in historic conveyances appear to have been breached. In addition, the extent of land benefiting from any such covenants is unclear and not readily ascertainable.

---

## **5. Use of pitches by Oldham Athletic**

- 5.1 The Charitable Trust has, for many years, permitted the hiring out of pitches as part of the proper management of the playing fields. This practice pre-dates the current arrangements and applies to a range of users.
- 5.2 The current agreement is with Oldham Athletic and relates to the weekday daytime use of two pitches only. Outside those hours, including evenings and weekends, the pitches remain available for use by others. In total, the site comprises five 11-a-side pitches and one 9-a-side pitch, ensuring continued availability for community use.
- 5.3 The Council has carefully considered Town and Village Green law. The legal requirement is that any arrangements must not unduly interfere with or significantly reduce the public's use and enjoyment of the land for lawful recreation. The Council is satisfied that the current arrangements do not do so.
- 5.4 The pitches remain available to the public, and the arrangements do not grant exclusive possession or prevent customary recreational use of the land as a whole.

## **6. Financial and management considerations**

- 6.1 The charitable trust has no independent income. The cost of maintaining Clayton Playing Fields exceeds the income generated from pitch hire, and the shortfall is met by the Council from its general funds. Income from pitch hire reduces the burden on the public purse and supports the ongoing preservation of the playing fields, which is consistent with the trust's charitable purpose.
- 6.2 In June 2025, the Charitable Trustee Committee confirmed arrangements for Oldham Athletic, as pitch hirer, to undertake day-to-day maintenance responsibilities associated with its use of the pitches, in accordance with the specification set by the Council's Parks Service. Strategic oversight and decision-making responsibility remain with the Council as sole charitable trustee.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 Having carefully reviewed all relevant matters, the Council is satisfied that:
  5. Clayton Playing Fields are being managed in accordance with the Deed of Gift and charitable purposes;
  6. There has been no breach of Town and Village Green protections;
  7. No restrictive covenants have been breached; and
  8. The Council and the Charitable Trustee Committee have acted lawfully and appropriately.

## **8 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Please refer to section 5 of the report.

---

9      **Legal Implications**

9.1     Please refer to sections 1 to 5 of the report.

10.    **Procurement Implications**

10.1   None.

11     **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

11.1   No.

12     **Key Decision**

12.1   No.

13     **Key Decision Reference**

13.1   N/A

14     **Background Papers**

14.1   None.

15     **Appendices**

15.1   None.



## Report for Charitable Trust Committee

<b>Decision maker:</b>	Charitable Trustee Committee
<b>Decision date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Football Pitch at Bishops Park, Grains Bar, Oldham
<b>Report author:</b>	Alison Evans, Corporate Estates Manager
<b>Ward (s):</b>	St James

### Reason for decision

The Charitable Trust Committee (CTC) have previously taken receipt of a request from Saddleworth Football Club seeking to bring a disused football pitch back in to use, which is on Charity Trust land.

On behalf of the CTC, Officers of the Council have investigated this request and are seeking to endorse the request from the Saddleworth Football Club for a 30 years lease (a term which would allow the Club to apply and draw down Football Association funding to invest in the facilities).

### Recommendations for CTC:

Committee members on behalf of the Charity Trust, are asked to note the content of this report which acts as due diligence on the proposals submitted by Saddleworth Football Club, and are recommended to:

- approve the proposed lease of the football pitch to Saddleworth FC for a term of 30 years,
- approve the lease being used as part of a funding bid application to secure investment into the facilities to bring the pitch back into use and playable standards for use by themselves and other community football clubs; and
- note the works to be undertaken by the Club in bringing the pitches back into use, specifically a 'waist high rail'
- endorse Officer views that in supporting the proposals by the Club, no buildings or storage facilities are permitted on the land, no fencing is permitted and full community access should be maintained at all times.

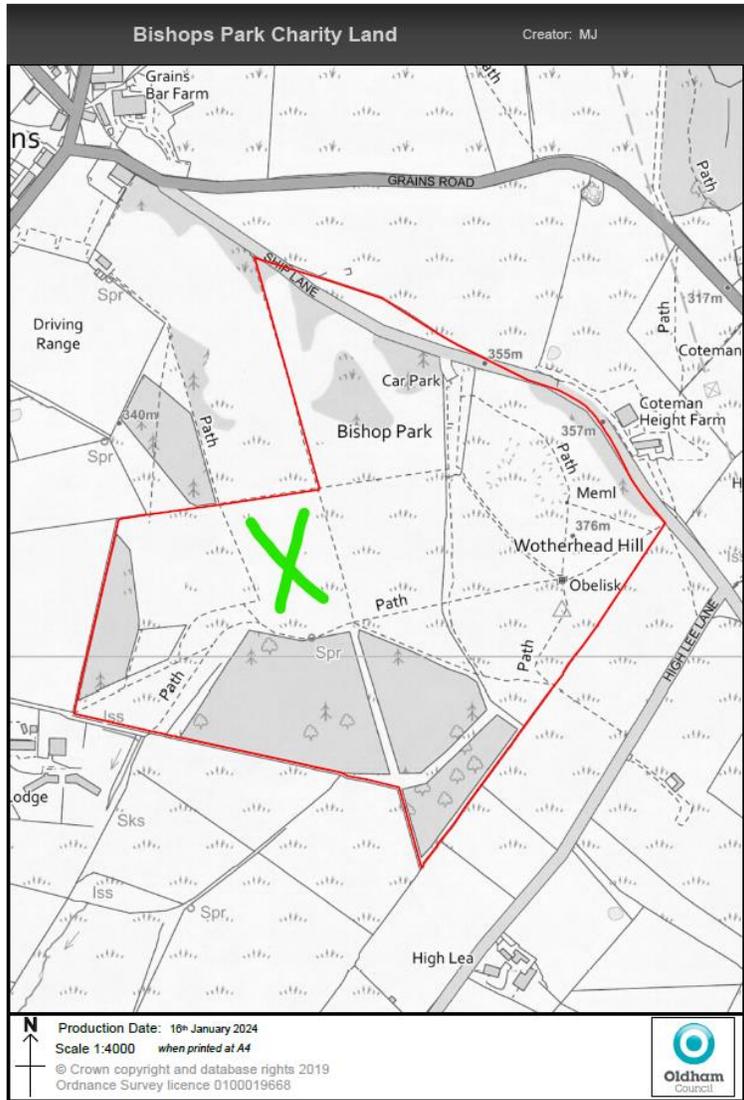
## **Bishop's Park Charitable Objectives**

The land to be used as an open space or park for the free use and benefit of the inhabitants of the county borough of Oldham and district.

## **Background**

Bishops Park is a large area of naturalised land which is a charitable asset and is freely available for the public to use. The extent of the charitable land is shown in red on the plan below.

Historically there were two football pitches on the land which were utilised by local clubs under the Council's pitch booking system. Saddleworth Football Club, a charity and mixed, multi-age football club, would like to bring the dis-used pitch at Bishops Park, highlighted in green on the plan, back into use and enter into a 30 year lease to enable them to access Football Association funding.



During the Covid pandemic the pitch fell into dis-use and has not been maintained or played on, since then. Saddleworth FC are a local team who are looking for a home base and would like to bring this pitch back into regular use, for both themselves and for the ability to hire out the pitch to other local clubs.

The land has been allowed to become naturalised and is not maintained by the Council. The land is part of the public open space land which forms the wider open moorland at Bishop’s Park.

The club is an important community asset and supports a number of teams with aspirations to expand in the future.

The Club will only be given rights to invest in and utilise the pitch area, and that this lease arrangement will not enable any permissions for the erection of any buildings or storage facilities on the land. A ‘waist high’ rail is included in the plans around the edge of the pitch to de-mark the perimeter of the pitch; officers agree with this requirement, subject to CTC approvals in this report,

but Officers recommend that no other fencing will be erected, and the pitch must remain open to the general public, when there is no match being played.

### Proposed New Lease Terms

Tenant	Saddleworth Football Club
Term	30 years (minimum required by Football Association)
Rent	£0 (peppercorn) - to be reviewed at year 3, to a market value
Breaks	No landlord or tenant breaks
Alienation	Lease to be assignable with CTC consent to another football club or charitable company
Use	Football pitch, not limited to use by Saddleworth FC
Costs	Tenant will be responsible for all running costs & maintenance of the pitch

The asset is public open space and is used mainly by dog walkers. The land is not suitable in its current condition to be used as a playing pitch.

A full proposal for the future use of the pitch has been received from Saddleworth FC and this is included in Appendix 1: they have been supported by Environmental Services team in formalising this proposal and in the requirements for future maintenance of the pitch.

### Options Considered:

- **Option 1: Approve a lease to Saddleworth FC and allow the land to be brought back into use as a football pitch.**  
To grant Saddleworth FC access to the land under the terms of a full repairing and insuring lease of the dis-used pitch at Bishop's Park, to allow the pitch to be brought back into use by the football club for use by themselves and other clubs. The land would remain open to the public and this agreement would allow a significant investment in the Sports facility and provides an enhanced community facility.
- **Option 2: Refuse the proposal and allow the land to become fully naturalised.**  
The land is not currently maintained by the Council, so future maintenance of the land would be a pressure on Council budgets and if the land were allowed to become fully naturalised it would increasingly become difficult for the public to use the land effectively as self-seeded vegetation flourished.

This option would **disbenefit** the local community in having usable playing pitches, which would be funded from external grant support from the Football Association.

**Consultation** – This application is supported by the local Ward Cllr's.

Environmental Services are supporting the Club with the proposed specification for the pitch and future maintenance.

## Implications

<p>Financial</p>	<p>Dependent on the terms of the lease, any rental income from the lease to Saddleworth FC will be income to the charitable trust and will need to be spent in line with the charitable objectives of the trust.</p> <p>Saddleworth FC will be fully responsible for the maintenance costs of the pitch.</p> <p>The Council will be required to account for any income and expenditure in relation to the trust to the Charitable Trust Committee and Charity Commission.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(James Postle, Finance Manager)</p>
<p>Legal</p>	<p>The land in question is, as has been stated, subject to charitable trusts (“the Charity”) and is held by the Council as charity trustee the responsibilities for which are delegated to the Charitable Trust Committee (“CTC”).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The CTC must first approve the proposal in principle that it will be in the best interests of the Charity and the promotion of its objects.</li> <li>2. As the lease is a disposal of charity land ( by a lease of more than 7 years) the appropriate Charities Act report must be obtained from a suitably qualified adviser who must approve the proposed lease terms. Please note that the report’s author may suggest certain changes to the terms. The CTC must authorise Oldham Estates to arrange for such report to be obtained.</li> </ol> <p>A designated adviser must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a fellow or professional associate of the <a href="#">Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors</a> or</li> <li>• a fellow of the <a href="#">Central Association for Agricultural Valuers (CAAV)</a> or</li> <li>• a fellow of the <a href="#">NAEA Propertymark (National Association of Estate Agents)</a></li> </ul> <p>The CTC must also be satisfied that the adviser has the ability in and experience of valuing similar land within the same area.</p> <p>It is recommended that a designated adviser in this instance should be someone unconnected with the Council.</p>

	<p>3. Owing to:</p> <p>3.1 the land being designated land (it must be used for a specific purpose);</p> <p>3.2 the fact that at least to a certain extent, the proposed lease will impact on the purpose for which the land is required to be used or how the charity furthers its purpose (by restricting its use to use as a playing field rather than for general recreation);</p> <p>3.3 the fact that the governing document does not contain the necessary express powers for the CTC to dispose of the land (including the granting of leases), and</p> <p>3.4 The fact (if this is the case) that despite the proposed tenant being itself a charity, its objects are not as wide as the objects of the Charity even though its objects may not conflict with the objects of the Charity.</p> <p>the CTC then need to authorise Legal Services to apply to the Charity Commission for the appropriate authority for the Charity granting the lease on the terms proposed to Saddleworth FC. If the Charity Commission require certain other steps to be taken as a condition of that authority then such requirements must be adhered to.</p> <p>4. A notice must also be published pursuant to the Charities Act requirements. The notice must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide details of the land in question</li> <li>• explain how the CTC wishes to dispose of the land</li> <li>• invite people to contact the CTC with any objections or comments, and</li> <li>• give people a minimum of one month to contact the CTC following publication.</li> </ul> <p>The Notice should try to reach as many of the charity's beneficiaries as is reasonably possible (basically residents of Oldham Borough).</p> <p>The CTC need to know whether or not Saddleworth FC is a "connected person" for the purposes of the Charities Act as this would need to be disclosed to the Charity Commission when applying for authority.</p>
--	--

	<p>A 'connected person' is defined in section 118 of the Charities Act. It is certain people or organisations closely connected to or associated with the Saddleworth FC and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the trustees and their close relatives</li><li>• a donor of any land to the charity and their close relatives</li><li>• employees, agents or officers of the charity</li><li>• the spouse or civil partner of either a trustee, donor of land, employee, or close relative of a trustee or donor</li><li>• organisations in which any of the above have a controlling or substantial interest. This includes a wholly owned subsidiary of your charity</li></ul> <p>The CTC should check the list in section 118 of the Charities Act or get professional advice if it is unsure whether someone is a connected person. If in doubt it is suggested that a full disclosure is made to the Charity Commission when applying for authority for the disposal.</p> <p>(Zoe Theofilopoulos - Solicitor)</p>
--	---

**Appendix 1 – Proposal from Saddleworth**

# Saddleworth Football Club Proposal to upgrade football pitches at Bishop Park, Denshaw Version 1.0, 6 October 2025



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The proposal

Saddleworth Football Club (SFC) proposes an agreement with Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) for SFC to carry out upgrading and ongoing maintenance of the two existing grass football pitches at Bishop Park, Ripponden Rd, Grains Bar, Oldham OL4 2JZ. SFC would be committed to a multi-year agreement, subject to approval.

The grass football pitches fall within charitable land. See the area marked X in section 1.2 Plan of Bishop Park. Therefore SFC is seeking approval from the OMBC Charitable Trust Committee to achieve this upgrade, which will provide significant benefit to the Saddleworth community.

The agreement would not be a lease, but purely an agreement stating the landowner (OMBC) would be happy for the land user (Club) to maintain the grass pitches at site. This would be funded by the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, which is in use for other pitches in the borough.

SFC, a junior and open age football club, which for the last decade has enabled hundreds of players of all abilities to enjoy playing the sport they love in a no-pressure, inclusive environment, is committed to a vision where significantly more sport is played in the Saddleworth area than the current situation.

Restoring the pitches at Bishop Park, which were in use prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, into high-quality, well-maintained grass surfaces aligns with SFC's vision. SFC is working with several other sporting partners in the area (Diggle Juniors FC, Greenfield Giants FC (an all-girls club), and Saddleworth Rangers Rugby Club), to explore long-term options in this regard, for both playing and training facilities. SFC would maintain the pitches, however their use could be extended to other teams/clubs outside of SFC.

## 1.2 Plan of Bishop Park



## 2. Project objectives and benefits

### 2.1 Overall objectives and additional context

There are six junior football clubs in the Saddleworth area: Diggle FC, Greenfield Giants, SFC, Saddleworth 3Ds FC, Springhead AFC and Uppermill FC. Between these clubs, there are over 70 junior teams. Some of these clubs also have "open age" (adult) teams. The number of teams requiring a "home" full size football pitch will continue to increase with the ever-growing popularity of the sport.

SFC's overall objective is to:

- (a) develop a "home" venue for SFC teams, which can also be used by other clubs, from under 13s upwards. This would be for u13s (9 v 9) and u14s upwards (11 v 11).
- (b) greatly improve the likelihood that its future junior teams will be able to regularly train and play in the Saddleworth area.

More details about the club's ethos can be found on [www.saddleworthfc.org](http://www.saddleworthfc.org)

## 2.2 Benefits of realising the vision

There are several benefits, including:

- The community benefits by being able to play/watch their children's teams play in the local area
- This has an environmental impact of less travel to longer distances
- Less match postponements (which are currently frequent) means the season finishes early, which is advantageous to u16s teams studying for their GCSEs.
- Additional community benefits, as exposing this site to children and young families will encourage them to utilise and respect it, as well as enjoy the other leisure services nearby (e.g. the "pitch and putt" golf course and the various pubs in the area.)

## 3. SFC's proposed plan to upgrade the grass pitches

### 3.1 Steps required to upgrade

SFC has consulted local companies who have decades of experience in updating and maintaining grass football pitches. Those companies have stated that upgrading the pitches at Bishop Park is feasible with the correct timing, planning and procedure. Representatives from these companies attended the site on 8 May 2025 with Alison Evans, Corporate Estates Manager, OMBC.

At a high level, the steps taken to upgrade the pitches would be:

- 1) Assess/install land drains
- 2) Implement weed control
- 3) Full renovation including levelling and seeding

See Appendix 1 for a quotation from G&J Collins.

Prior to the upgrade, SFC propose to undertake a full risk assessment, including evaluating and considering mitigation of the following risks (and any other identified risks by OMBC or the Charitable Committee):

- 1) The impact for local residents and businesses, and how SFC can work with them
- 2) The impact in terms of increased traffic in the area and use of the Ship Lane Car Park
- 3) The impact on the wider Bishop Park area
- 4) The current situation in terms of litter and dog fouling
- 5) Ensuring that the drainage of the pitches is fit for purpose
- 6) Ensuring that the pitches are not used during the upgrade

### 3.2 Funding

If SFC and OMBC reach a mutually-suitable maintenance agreement ("the agreement") for both pitches, SFC would seek funding through the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (FFGPMF). See <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/grant/grass-pitch-maintenance-fund>

The first step in applying for funding is securing the agreement. See Appendix 2 for a pro-forma of the agreement, supplied by Manchester Football Association.

The second step is to obtain a Pitch Power Assessment Report, which should validate SFC's own evidence of the site's feasibility and subsequently mean that FFGPMF will approve and grant tapered multi-year funding.

The Pitch Power Assessment Report includes:

- A performance quality standard for each pitch, indicating its current condition.
- Specific recommendations on how to improve and maintain the pitch quality.
- Bespoke advice tailored to the specific needs of the pitch.

The report is crucial for:

- Applying for grants for grass pitch maintenance and improvement, as the report demonstrates the need for funding.
- Identifying areas for improvement and implementing targeted maintenance strategies.
- Understanding the current condition of the pitch and setting goals for future maintenance.

Beyond that funding, SFC is committed to maintaining the site in any event.

SFC has discussed this proposal with Manchester Football Association, who have given SFC confidence that the funding should be granted. However, SFC would explore other/additional avenues for funding if necessary.

## 4. SFC stakeholders

### 4.1 List of SFC stakeholders initially involved in this proposal

Further stakeholders, including those nominated by OMBC, will be added to later drafts of this document and/or subsequent documentation as appropriate. SFC also propose the creation of a community forum allowing impacted stakeholders (eg local businesses, Denshaw residents) to be consulted and informed on an ongoing basis, if the project moves forward.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role in project</b>	<b>Experience</b>
<b>Mike Leyland</b> Club Chairperson, Academy Lead and Coach at Saddleworth FC	<b>Project Sponsor</b>  (1) Provides overall vision and acts as the main advocate for the project. (2) Liaises with third parties including Manchester FA. (3) Communicates regularly with nominated representatives of the school to jointly set direction.	Professional Experience: Mike is a Business Analyst with a Software Consultancy, and has operated in complex, multi-year technology programmes for almost two decades.  Personal Experience: Mike has coached junior teams for several years, runs the club's Football Academy, and commentates for Oldham Athletic FC.
<b>Tom Matley</b> Coach at Saddleworth FC	<b>Club Liaison Officer</b>	Professional Experience: Tom has worked in accounting and

and Welfare Officer and Coach at Diggle Juniors FC	(1) Engages with the wider club and other local clubs on progress and gathers feedback. (2) Fields questions about the project and provides feedback/suggestions to the wider project team.	sales ledger teams for several years, including within a professional football club environment.  Personal Experience: Tom coaches teams at both SFC and Diggle Juniors FC, and is a co-founder of the junior section at Diggle.
<b>Andy Gartside</b> Legal Director <a href="#">Centrefield LLP</a>	<b>Legal Advisor</b>  (1) Advises on legal aspects of the project. (2) Advises on funding (3) Liaises with local professional football clubs	Professional Experience: Andy brings a breadth of both legal and football administration know-how and is the former Chief Executive of Bolton Wanderers FC.
<b>Graham Asplin</b> Club Secretary at Saddleworth FC	<b>Council Liaison Officer</b>  (1) Engages with the local authority on the necessary steps for applying for approval of this project. (2) Provides guidance and feedback on the planning application process to the wider project team.	Professional Experience: Graham is the Manager of a Children's Care Home and brings several years' experience of working with local authorities.  Personal Experience: Graham has been a coach and secretary at multiple football clubs and has extensive knowledge of the football landscape in the borough.
<b>Scott Buckle</b> Landscape gardener and ground maintenance provider J Buckle & Sons	<b>Pitch Adviser</b>  Provides advice and guidance to SFC on pitch upgrading and maintenance.	Professional Experience: Scott has decades' worth of experience upgrading and maintaining football pitches for many clients within his family business.

## 5. Summary

### 5.1 Summary of this proposal

Demand for junior sports in Saddleworth and the wider Oldham area continues to rise, and the physical/mental health-related benefits of enabling these sports are clear. SFC is taking action to solve a major problem that exists today and will only increase tomorrow, with no quick fix. With this proposed partnership, OMBC and SFC can re-plant the seeds for a football landscape in a unique setting for both organisations to be proud of, which will make a huge difference to many generations to come.

Bringing the Bishop Park pitches "back to life" would represent a significant step in SFC's mission of providing the people of Saddleworth, and the wider area, the playing opportunities they deserve.