

Summary of Skatepark Discussion re. Location and Future Plan.

History

The existing site was chosen considering a number of factors: the existing users, environmental and residential impact. The general idea of the skate park and how it would be used was very different when it was first installed, and it was thought that hiding it behind trees and tucked away in the corner of the village was a the best thing for it. There was also a rule at the time that skateparks needed to be at least 100m from any residential boundary.

Location

We conducted a walk around the rec, and the skate park, to look at possible future locations. This was on Saturday 17th April, and one thing that was immediately apparent was almost every inch of the rec. was in use by the Football club, with various ages training and playing games. So any potential location on the rec would mean sacrificing some, or one of the football pitches.

The Cricket playing area would also be affected, as currently the boundaries run to almost the edges of the rec.

A location by the tennis courts was looked at, but club recently expressed concerned of activity in the eye line of players and this wouldn't be a welcome location for them.

We have met with a contractor to discuss locations, and the 100m. This rule has now changed to a min of 30m. However this would be subject to review of a planning officers and it's likely that it could be increased to 50m, or even kept at 100m. Even at 30m a potential location on the rec would mean placing a potential skatepark quite far in – further affecting the Football, Cricket and Tennis Clubs.

If we we're to somehow find a location on the rec, that suited all sports clubs, and users of the rec. one of the major other factors would be cost. Installing on the rec would mean having suitable, level, foundation base which is expensive, especially considering the existing site is already suitable.

The existing site is another cost factor, if we were to move the skatepark, we would then have to do something with the "old" site. Breaking up and removing the concrete would and be very expensive, and there would be the huge environmental impact of disposing of all the cement.

Planning permission would be required which is a lengthy process and not guaranteed it would be granted.

Conclusion

Given all of the above factors, we've taken the decision to improve the existing site, rather than move the skatepark. We feel our funds and resources are much spent this way.

It's also important to consider the environmental impact of building something new on the rec. We have been lucky enough to be gifted this beautiful land by Henry Badcock years ago, and we should be considerate of our impact on this space today, but also mindful that generations to come may have ideas or things that would improve or change in years to come.

Future plan

Now we have decided on location we can look to start moving the project forwards.

In order to make the space feel safer and more inviting we're looking to open up the area, trimming back the overgrown trees and bushes at the existing entrance, and then potentially creating a second entrance on River Lane. This would create a much more open and attractive set of entrances.

The existing space itself will contain a newly updated skatepark area, with new ramps to suit a wider range of ages, from youngsters on scooters, right up to seasoned skateboarders. We're hoping by providing ramps and equipment like this will encourage more families to come and use the areas.

The basketball court could be turned into a multi-play space, with a new painted surface, nets (potentially with football goals beneath) or to support other types of sport such as inline-hockey.

We'd also like to include a new seating area(s) and even possibly a new community space – benches, raised planters, etc. to hopefully attract more families and people to the area. With more people and families comes a form of self-policing to hopefully stamp out antisocial behaviour that has been experienced there before.

As part of the renovations we'd also look to improve visibility of Porkers Lane from the rec. by reducing the height of trees & bushes currently obstructing the view, and look at lighting options.

Conclusion

We're very early on in the process, but now that the location has been agreed things can start to move in the right direction.

If you have any ideas or would like to help contribute as to how the space could look please do get in touch.

We're hopeful that all the changes will create a beautiful space, that'll be an extension of our already beautiful village, for many generations to come.

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