

Finance September 2025

Item 6 – GRASS CUTTING AT THE TANYARD

WPC pays for cuts at the Tanyard as part of its grass cutting schedule. The Tanyard is owned by Groombridge Sports Ground Association.

6.1 Receive update from Groombridge Sports Ground Association

The March 2025 Finance Committee considered the grass cutting situation following a meeting between WPC and GSGA. The minutes are as follows:

“It was noted that WPC currently arranges and pays for up to 21 cuts every year at the Tanyard. In 2024/25 GSGA had been asked to make a 30% contribution and this was due to be reviewed for 2025/26. Whilst the parish has few publicly accessible open spaces, it was also noted that WPC does not own the land and public use had declined since WPC started doing the cuts.

Members of the Committee raised concerns about lack of use of the land and the public benefit of WPC contributing over £1,000 each year. Members of the Committee were disappointed that more hadn't been done to build user groups following previous meetings where WPC had been given assurances that this would happen. It was however noted that GSGA wishes to find more users and that there is a new team looking at ways of doing so; members who had attended the recent meeting with the GSGA representative had been impressed with his approach.

A useful result of the recent meeting was an agreement that, with current usage, 21 cuts are not needed. The Clerk would contact the contractors to request a reduction to 14 cuts if the contract can be amended.

The Committee AGREED that GSGA should demonstrate to WPC what they have done to increase usage, and provide evidence of increased usage, to the Autumn Finance Committee meeting.

In the meantime, as WPC's next 3 year grass cutting contract is due for renewal, the Clerk would seek quotes using the 14 cuts model but WPC would not continue arranging or contributing to the cost of cuts if usage does not increase and there is not more evidence of public benefit for WPC's expenditure.

Cllr Anderson would attend the AGM for WPC.

002902 RESOLVED to continue the 30% contribution from GSGA for 2025/26, to be reviewed for 2026/27 in the Autumn 2025 based on evidence provided by GSGA.”

In preparation for the September Finance Committee meeting, the RFO requested a report detailing what GSGA had done to increase usage of the Tanyard, and provide evidence of increased usage. The following was received:

“We have been working to improve the utilisation of the Tanyard.

As you're aware we have an agreement with Langton Green Association for the use of the football pitches on weekends from September to April, and we have been stretching the contribution from this organisation. The school continues to use the Tanyard for sports day and occasional activities, although the contribution has significantly dropped.

In terms of new engagement, firstly we have an arrangement with Wild Groombridge. This is a long-term arrangement for the re-wilding of periphery areas of the Tanyard. Obviously, this does not involve any donations flowing in either direction.

You may also be aware that this weekend, just gone, we held two charity events. The first was undertaken by a local child, a 12 year old boy, who undertook a sponsored backwards walk as a fundraising activity for the Tanyard. This was done on the Tanyard at the same time as the second activity, a Walking Football event, which brought together more than 80 people from the community in a social event to raise money. This worked very well and will likely become an annual activity. There has been advert for this in The Junction and The Crown. We have also been running adverts in the Church & Village Magazine for several months to raise interest, although very little has been received. We have also established a Facebook page.

Together these activities will raise close to a significant £2,000 for the Tanyard. Our financial year runs to the end of November and I am currently forecasting a negative cash position of just under £3,000, and therefore the contribution towards grass cutting is still very much needed and appreciated.

With regards mSporti, we'd be happy to re-engage, but this has proved difficult in the past."

Finance Committee is asked to note this update

6.2 Consider future grass cutting contributions (to recommend to Council)

Based on the above (6.1) Finance Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to continue arranging and funding grass cuts at The Tanyard in the financial year 2026-27, and if so what contribution rate this should be at. This will be for recommendation to Council.