Minutes of the Sports Committee meeting held on Monday 22 June 2026, in Suite 2, Taverham Village Hall, commencing at 8.15pm when there were present:

Mrs J Latchford was in the Chair

Mrs B Clarke	Mr K Kelly
Mr N Dack	Mrs S Parkinson
Mrs C Karimi-Ghovanlou	

Also present: Clerk, RFO and 3 members of the public

Apologies for absence: None

Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda: None

The Minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2025 were agreed and then signed by the Chairman.

Report items
BMX track: TRF had arranged insurance of the track and the site was ready to reopen.

The current budget picture was received.

To consider quotes to replace birdsmouth fencing at Hinks Meadow
The front perimeter fencing at Hinks Meadow was beyond repair and needed replacing. Councillors considered two options: wood or recycled plastic. As the existing recycled plastic fencing had lasted approximately 30 years, it was agreed that, although more expensive than wood, recycled plastic offered better value for money due to its durability and lower maintenance requirements. It was **AGREED** to place an order for £1,457.55 for 34m of top rail, 25 posts and 25 straps. The Council's Ranger would carry out the installation.

To consider the continuation of the Council's contribution towards the caretaking of the BMX track
The Council had budgeted £800 per year towards the running costs of the BMX track. Previously, the Council arranged the site insurance and risk assessments, deducted those costs, and paid the remaining balance to TRF to support litter picking, bin emptying and opening the site gates. As TRF now arranges its own insurance, Councillors reviewed the Council's contribution. Some concerns were raised about whether the contribution remained appropriate, given that TRF leases the site, is responsible for maintenance and pays a peppercorn rent. However, it was noted that the Council's support was appreciated by TRF and helped strengthen grant applications for replacing the astroturf at the adjacent hockey pitches. It was **AGREED** that the Council would continue contributing to TRF, with the £800 reduced by the cost of the risk assessments.

To consider and recommend to Council the appointment of a project manager for the tennis court reconstruction project
A draft Request for Quotation for a project manager and an evaluation matrix were circulated to Councillors. Due to the project's complexity, the documents supported recommending to Council that a project manager be appointed. The Committee **AGREED** to the proposal and would recommend it at the July Council meeting.

Football Club and Tennis Club representatives' forum
The Tennis Club representative confirmed that the previous agenda item had addressed all of his questions and that he had no further comments.

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The Football Club Chairman reported that the Hinks Meadow pitches were being rested ahead of the next season. The Club now considered itself to be at capacity, with 20 teams playing under its umbrella.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.

Signed…….. Dated……

DRAFT

TAVERHAM PARISH COUNCIL

SPORTS COMMITTEE – BUDGET PICTURE 26TH OCTOBER 2026

EXPENDITURE

Heading	Budget	Spent To Date	Expected Expenditure*	Budget Remaining
Tennis	£3,680.00	£2,950.00	£0.00	£730.00
	£3,680.00	£2,950.00	£0.00	£730.00
Hinks Meadow				
Services				
Rates	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Water	£1,000.00	£458.95	£0.00	£541.05
Electricity	£4,000.00	£988.49	£0.00	£3,011.51
	£5,000.00	£1,447.44	£0.00	£3,552.56
Running Costs				
Keyholder Contract	£3,620.00	£1,615.00	£1,615.00	£390.00
Refuse	£2,100.00	£997.35	£1,000.00	£102.65
Fido Bins	£830.00	£0.00	£830.00	£0.00
Fire /Electrical Safety	£1,000.00	£628.98	£0.00	£371.02
Licences	£500.00	£224.64	£0.00	£275.36
Sanitary Services	£370.00	£297.32	£0.00	£72.68
Caretaker/Admin	£600.00	£173.33	£0.00	£426.67
Repairs/Renewals	£2,500.00	£1,951.52	£0.00	£548.48
CCTV Service Package	£500.00	£95.00	£0.00	£405.00
Drain Cleaning – Carpark	£360.00	£350.00	£0.00	£10.00
	£12,380.00	£6,333.14	£3,445.00	£2,601.86
Grounds Maintenance				
Mole Contract	£3,410.00	£210.00	£600.00	£2,600.00
Horticultural Contract	£23,450.00	£11,563.38	£11,563.38	£323.24
Grit for Car Park	£180.00	£120.41	£0.00	£59.59
Tree Maintenance	£300.00	£0.00	£0.00	£300.00
	£27,340.00	£11,893.79	£12,163.38	£3,282.83
Contingency – General	£1,000.00	£827.98	£0.00	£172.02
BMX Site	£800.00	£0.00	£800.00	£0.00
COMMITTEE TOTALS	**£50,200.00**	**£23,452.35**	**£16,408.38**	**£10,339.27**

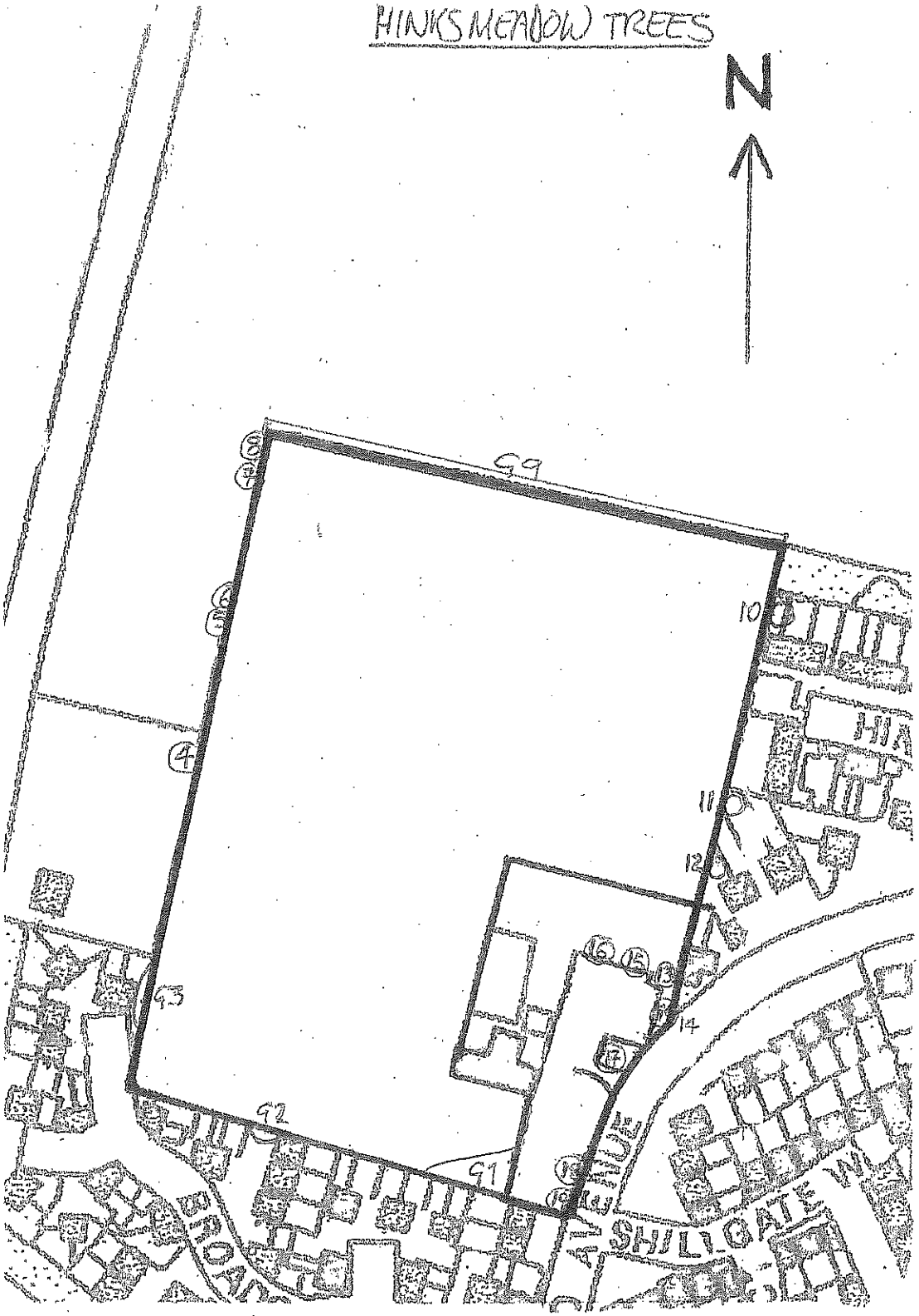
Expected Expenditure*

This column represents figures based on known/expected costs for the year, for example the Horticultural Contract where costs are agreed for the year.

Tree No.	Species	Age range	Condition & comments	Recommendations & priority ratings **Red = 2026 recommendations** **Green = long-term, aesthetic or monitoring reasons only**
G1	Mixed	Young	Triangular group of fairly recently planted mixed native shrubs & small-growing trees, at c2m spacing. Unmanaged but mostly surviving well.	No work necessary
G2	Mixed	SM-EM	Row of crack willow, goat willow, field maple & shrubs. Bases just outside boundary but overhanging field & therefore included in survey. Large branches have broken on the willow at E end of group and resting within site on adjacent shrubs & boundary fence.	**The partly propped willow branches should be brought fully down to ground and at least laid flat along the bottom of the fence.** I'd recommend informing the owner that they'd be wise to have the willow pollarded before further and possibly more serious failures occur.
G2 a	Salix sp.	SM	Multi-stemmed willow species. Was quite a nice small feature but somebody has butchered it, roughly cutting off most of the upper growth (possibly to reduce shading to adjacent property or to reduce overhang to the alley behind the fence?) Looks a mess, with the cut material scattered around the basal area.	No work necessary
G3	Norway maple	EM	2 Norway maple remaining. Tree of heaven has been removed & one Norway maple. Trees are outside site boundary and very little overhang now.	No work necessary
4	GONE			
4a	GONE			
5	Oak	M	Height c18m. Overhangs to c11m laterally & c4m vertically. Several dead branches over playing field	**Remove / reduce dead branches over playing field**
6	Ash	M	Height c18m (2 stems). Overhangs to c6m laterally & c4m vertically. Several dead branches over playing field	**Remove / reduce dead branches over playing field**
7	Oak	EM	Height c17m. Overhangs to c5m laterally & c3m vertically. Some dead wood over playing field	**Remove / reduce dead branches over playing field**

8	Ash	EM	Height c12m. Overhangs c6m laterally & c3m vertically. Several dead branches over playing field	**Remove / reduce dead branches over playing field**
G9	Scots pine	EM	Average height c16m. Long double-row of Scots pines immediately beyond field's northern boundary. Many o'hanging field to 4m laterally, as low as 2.5m above ground level. No significant dead wood overhanging fence visible.	No work necessary but owner should be asked to monitor condition of these trees routinely.
10	Silver birch	M	Height c20m. Outside boundary but overhangs to 4m laterally & 2.5m vertically. One low branch has grown through chainlink fence.	No work necessary.
11	GONE			
12	Cherry	EM	Height c8m. Large, spreading crown. Outside boundary. Owners have removed almost half the crown on their side, leaving the tree very unbalanced, but there is no immediate risk of failure.	No work necessary
13	Field maple	SM	Height c8m. Inside field boundary. Overhang to neighbouring property remains acceptable	No work necessary
14	Field maple	SM	Height c8m. Like tree 13, just inside field boundary but unlike tree 13, no overhang issue.	No work necessary
15	Field maple	SM	Height c9m. Gen. sound	No work necessary
16	Field maple	SM	Height c8m. Now looking very much better, following my formative pruning & dead wood removal	No work necessary
17	Scots pine	SM	Height c6m. Stem divides into 2 at 1.2m.	No work necessary
18	Silver birch	SM	Height c7m. 2 stems, dividing at 0.7m at possible weak fork.	No work necessary (but monitor poss weak fork)
19	Silver birch	EM	Height c17m. A good specimen. Pricing: To carry out the 'red' works in winter 2026/27, total price £300.00	No work necessary

HINKS MEADOW TREES



TREES/GROUPS OF TREES OUTSIDE BOUNDARY IN YELLOW

Taverham Parish Council Sports Committee

To consider applying for a Grass Pitch Improvement Grant

1) Summary

The Grass Pitch Improvement Programme is a national initiative designed to improve the quality, sustainability and performance of grassroots football pitches. Delivered through the Football Foundation and supported by specialist grounds management expertise, the programme provides assessment, technical guidance and grant funding to help organisations implement enhanced maintenance practices and long-term pitch improvement strategies.

Hinks Meadow currently accommodates 20 football teams playing across seven pitches of various sizes. This level of usage places significant demands on the playing surfaces throughout the season and highlights the importance of maintaining resilient, high-quality pitches that can support both current and future participation.

For sites assessed as being of "Basic" or "Poor" quality, funding is available to support improvement works such as top dressing, aeration, scarification, overseeding, drainage enhancements and the purchase of specialist equipment. The overarching aim is to increase the number of quality grass pitches available for grassroots football and ensure facilities remain sustainable for future generations

2) Background

Grass pitches remain the most widely used playing surface within grassroots football. However, many sites experience challenges relating to drainage, wear, compaction and limited maintenance budgets. To address these issues, The FA introduced a national pitch improvement initiative, working alongside the Grounds Management Association and the Football Foundation to provide clubs and facility operators with practical support and funding opportunities.

The programme combines professional pitch assessments with targeted grant funding, enabling organisations to undertake improvements based on expert recommendations and measurable pitch performance standards.

3) Site Usage and Demand

Hinks Meadow is an important community football facility supporting 20 football teams playing across seven pitches of varying sizes.

Heavy footfall, repeated match play and training activity accelerate wear, compaction, surface deterioration and grass loss, particularly during periods of adverse weather or prolonged drought. As participation levels continue to grow, ensuring that the pitches remain safe, playable and resilient is increasingly important.

The Grass Pitch Improvement Programme provides an opportunity to support the long-term sustainability of the site by enhancing the quality and durability of the playing surfaces, helping to meet current demand whilst accommodating future participation growth.

4) Current Financial Position

The Parish Council already makes a significant financial contribution towards the provision and maintenance of football facilities at Hinks Meadow.

The Council currently receives annual income of **£9,514** from Taverham Football Club for the use of the pitches. Against this, the Council incurs annual pitch maintenance expenditure of approximately **£22,374** under the current maintenance specification. This represents a net annual contribution by the Parish Council of approximately **£12,860** towards the maintenance and provision of football facilities for the local community.

Description	Annual Value
Income from Taverham Football Club	£9,514
Annual Pitch Maintenance Costs	£22,374
Net Parish Council Contribution	£12,860

The Council's existing commitment demonstrates a substantial and ongoing investment in grassroots football provision. The proposed Grass Pitch Improvement Programme would therefore build upon an established maintenance regime rather than replace existing expenditure.

5) Programme Objectives

The Grass Pitch Improvement Programme aims to:

- Improve the overall quality and resilience of grassroots football pitches.
- Increase the number of matches that can be played throughout the season.
- Reduce fixture cancellations caused by poor pitch conditions.
- Improve player safety and playing experience.
- Encourage sustainable grounds maintenance practices.
- Support clubs and facility operators with expert technical advice and funding opportunities.

6) Eligibility

The programme is available to a range of organisations involved in grassroots football, Including:

- Grassroots football clubs.
- Leagues.
- Charities.
- Educational establishments offering community football access.
- Town and parish councils hosting grassroots football clubs.
- Eligible clubs within the National League System and Women's Football Pyramid.

Applicants are generally required to have suitable security of tenure and obtain a Pitch Assessment Report through the PitchPower assessment process before applying for funding.

7) Pitch Assessment Process

The programme begins with a PitchPower inspection, which provides a detailed assessment of pitch condition and maintenance requirements. Following the inspection, applicants receive a Pitch Assessment Report outlining recommended works and identifying opportunities for improvement.

The assessment typically considers:

- Surface quality.
- Grass coverage.
- Soil compaction.
- Drainage performance.
- Maintenance practices.
- Machinery and equipment requirements.

8) Current Pitch Maintenance Regime

The Parish Council already undertakes a comprehensive annual maintenance programme across the football pitch area, approximately 3.5 hectares in size. Despite this significant investment in maintenance, the site faces a number of environmental and operational challenges. Previous pitch assessments identified that the underlying soil profile is predominantly sandy and unable to retain water effectively, contributing to reduced pitch quality following dry weather. Whilst the sandy, free-

draining nature of the soil assists drainage during wetter periods, it provides limited moisture and nutrient retention. During prolonged dry weather, grass growth can become stressed, turf coverage declines and surface quality can deteriorate more rapidly than on heavier soil types.
These challenges have been exacerbated by recent weather patterns. The most recent summer was characterised by a prolonged period of hot and dry conditions which placed considerable stress on the grass sward. Looking ahead, similar or more severe periods of heat and drought are likely to increase the importance of measures that improve moisture retention and turf resilience.
A further challenge is the absence of a dedicated water supply at Hinks Meadow. There is currently no on-site water source available for irrigation, meaning the Parish Council is largely reliant upon natural rainfall to support grass establishment and recovery during extended dry periods.

Fertiliser Applications
The current fertiliser programme consists of:
- Mascot Delta NPK 12:4:8 applied at 35g/m² during mid-April.
- Mascot Delta NPK 8:6:6 applied at 35g/m² between the end of June and mid-August.
- Mascot Delta NPK 7:0:14 applied at 35g/m² during mid to late October.

Aeration
To reduce compaction and encourage root development, the pitches are aerated using a Verti-Drain fitted with 24mm tines:
- Mid to late April.
- Late September to early October.

Overseeding and Turf Establishment
The pitches are overseeded using a disc seeder in two directions with Mascot TG14 seed at 35g/m² at the appropriate establishment period. Following successful germination and establishment, Mascot Greenor selective herbicide is applied to control broadleaf weeds.

Mowing Operations
The entire pitch area is gang mown to a height of 30mm:
- Every 10 to 12 days between early April and late October.
- Increased to seven-day intervals during periods of rapid growth.

Weed Control
Boundary areas are treated with herbicide on four occasions between early April and late October to maintain presentation and reduce weed encroachment.

Winter Surface Management
Between mid-October and late March, pitches are harrowed at approximately 14-day intervals, subject to weather and ground conditions, to repair divots and footmarks and assist surface recovery.

Moisture Management
Breaker Fairway No. 2 wetting agent is applied three times annually between May and September to improve water infiltration and soil moisture retention.

9) Grant Funding and Six-Year Tapered Support
A key feature of the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme is the availability of a six-year tapered grant to support enhanced maintenance activities recommended within the Pitch Assessment Report. Eligible works may include top dressing, scarification,

aeration, overseeding, fertiliser applications, decompaction, specialist contractor operations and other enhanced maintenance activities identified through the assessment process.
Grant funding is calculated on a per-pitch basis and varies according to pitch size and condition. For pitches requiring enhancement, funding is available for 11v11, 9v9 and mini-soccer pitches, with no maximum number of pitches eligible for support on a single site. The total value available to Hinks Meadow would therefore depend on the number and size of pitches included within the approved PitchPower assessment
For pitches assessed as requiring enhancement (Performance Quality Standard rated "Basic" or below), current grant values are:

Pitch Type	Years 1-2	Years 3-4	Years 5-6
11v11	£3,200	£2,133	£1,067
9v9	£2,560	£1,707	£853
Mini Soccer (7v7/5v5)	£1,920	£1,280	£640

These grants are tapered over the six-year period, with funding reducing every two years as improvements become established and organisations move towards a sustainable long-term maintenance model.
As Hinks Meadow contains seven pitches of varying sizes, the overall funding opportunity could be significantly greater than the value associated with a single pitch. The precise grant allocation would be determined through the PitchPower assessment process and the recommendations contained within the subsequent Pitch Assessment Report.

10) Top Dressing Programme

Whilst the Parish Council already undertakes a robust maintenance programme, the current specification does not include a routine top dressing operation.
This is particularly relevant given the combination of sandy, free-draining soils, increasingly prolonged dry summers and the absence of an on-site irrigation water source. Previous pitch improvement assessments specifically recommended top dressing to improve the soil composition and help address the site's poor water retention characteristics. The assessment also noted that the sub-soil's inability to retain water had contributed to declining pitch quality following periods of dry weather.
Top dressing is recognised as a key component of an enhanced pitch improvement strategy and is frequently recommended where improvements to soil structure, moisture retention, surface levels and grass establishment are required.
Top dressing is typically undertaken at the end of the football season, generally between May and July, as part of an annual renovation programme. This timing allows the dressing material to be incorporated into the surface while grass growth remains active, supporting recovery and establishment before the following season. Top dressing is commonly carried out alongside aeration and overseeding to maximise benefits to soil structure, turf density and surface performance.
The operation does not normally require pitches to be taken out of use for extended periods. By scheduling works immediately following the end of the playing season, disruption to football activity can be minimised whilst allowing sufficient time for recovery before pre-season preparations begin. Consequently, disruption to the 20 teams using the seven pitches at Hinks Meadow would be minimal.
Whilst rainfall following renovation works is beneficial for grass establishment, top dressing does not rely solely on rainfall to be effective. However, the absence of an on-site water supply means that establishment of newly seeded areas remains dependent upon natural weather conditions. This challenge is heightened by the site's sandy, free-

draining soil profile and the increasing frequency of prolonged hot and dry summer periods.
When incorporated into a long-term maintenance strategy, top dressing can contribute to:

- Improved moisture retention within the rootzone.
- Enhanced nutrient availability.
- Improved soil structure.
- Improved root development and turf density.
- Better resistance to wear and compaction.
- Increased playing capacity.
- More consistent playing surfaces throughout the season

Top dressing should be viewed as a long-term investment in pitch quality rather than a one-off treatment. The six-year grant period would provide an opportunity to improve the soil profile and increase the moisture-retention capacity of the pitches. Given the site's sandy, free-draining soil structure and the absence of an on-site irrigation source, improving the rootzone's ability to retain moisture will be critical to maintaining grass cover during future periods of hot and dry weather. Whilst some level of top dressing may continue to form part of future annual renovation programmes, the objective of the funded improvement period is to establish a stronger and more resilient rootzone that requires less intensive intervention over time. This approach would help ensure that the seven pitches can continue to support the demands of 20 teams whilst maintaining acceptable standards of playability and surface quality.

11) Relationship to Existing Maintenance Operations

The Parish Council already undertakes many of the maintenance activities identified within professional pitch improvement programmes. Consequently, any grant funding secured through the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme would complement and enhance the existing maintenance regime rather than replace it.
The introduction of funded top dressing and other enhanced maintenance operations would build upon the current programme and support progression towards higher pitch quality standards. This approach would maximise the benefit of the Council's existing investment whilst helping to achieve improved moisture retention, better turf establishment, greater resilience during dry weather and enhanced year-round playability.

12) Expected Outcomes

By implementing the recommendations of the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme alongside the existing maintenance regime, the Parish Council can expect:

- Higher quality playing surfaces.
- Improved soil structure and moisture retention.
- Improved drainage and recovery.
- Increased pitch usage capacity.
- Reduced maintenance inefficiencies.
- Enhanced player experience and safety.
- Greater long-term sustainability of football facilities.
- Better value from existing maintenance investment.
- Improved resilience during periods of adverse weather, drought and intensive use.

13) Financial Implications Beyond the Six-Year Grant Period

The Grass Pitch Improvement Programme provides tapered funding over a six-year period to support enhanced maintenance activities, including top dressing and other renovation works identified through the Pitch Assessment Report. Grant support reduces progressively over the funding period, with the expectation that improvements

made to the rootzone and soil profile will deliver lasting benefits beyond the life of the grant.
For Hinks Meadow, the principal objective of the programme is to address the limitations associated with the site's sandy, free-draining soil profile and poor water-retention characteristics. Through the introduction of a structured top dressing programme, the Parish Council would seek to improve soil structure, increase moisture retention and establish a more resilient playing surface capable of withstanding periods of drought and intensive use.
It is anticipated that some level of top dressing will continue to form part of future annual renovation programmes following completion of the grant period. However, the intention is that, by the end of the six-year programme, the pitches will have benefited from sustained improvements to the rootzone and soil profile, reducing the need for the same level of intervention required during the initial improvement phase.
Any future top dressing requirements would be determined by ongoing pitch assessments, available budgets and prevailing site conditions. The Parish Council would retain flexibility to undertake lighter maintenance applications as part of routine end-of-season renovations rather than continuing a full-scale improvement programme.
Whilst the exact future requirement cannot be determined at this stage, it is anticipated that annual maintenance top dressing costs following completion of the grant programme would be significantly lower than those incurred during the initial improvement phase. As a planning assumption, the Parish Council may wish to allow for an indicative budget provision of **£3,000 to £8,000 per annum across the site**, depending on the extent of treatment undertaken, material costs and prevailing pitch conditions. This figure is an indicative estimate for financial planning purposes only and would be subject to review through future pitch assessments and market conditions.

Whilst there will be some ongoing maintenance costs associated with preserving the benefits achieved through the programme, these should be considered in the context of the Council's existing financial commitment to maintaining football facilities at Hinks Meadow. The Council currently contributes approximately **£12,860 per annum** towards pitch provision after taking account of income received from Taverham Football Club. The Grass Pitch Improvement Programme would help protect this existing investment by improving the resilience and quality of the playing surfaces, reducing the risk of deterioration associated with the site's sandy, free-draining soil profile and increasing pressures arising from prolonged periods of hot and dry weather.

14) Conclusion

The Grass Pitch Improvement Programme provides a structured framework for improving grassroots football facilities through expert assessment, technical guidance and long-term grant funding. The six-year tapered grant model, including support for enhanced maintenance activities such as top dressing, enables organisations to implement sustainable improvements that increase pitch quality, capacity and resilience.
With 20 teams regularly using seven pitches of various sizes, Hinks Meadow is an important community football hub. The intensity of use, combined with the site's naturally sandy and free-draining soil profile, the absence of an on-site water supply and the increasing likelihood of prolonged hot and dry summers, creates a compelling case for additional investment through the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme.
The Parish Council already demonstrates a strong commitment to pitch maintenance through its comprehensive programme of fertilisation, aeration, overseeding, mowing, weed control, harrowing and moisture management. This commitment is reflected in the Council's annual maintenance expenditure of approximately **£22,374**, offset by **£9,514** of income from Taverham Football Club, resulting in a net annual Council contribution of approximately **£12,860** towards the provision of football facilities at Hinks Meadow.
The addition of grant-funded enhanced maintenance works, particularly a structured top dressing programme, would build upon this foundation and help address the site's poor

water-retention characteristics. This would support the continued provision of safe, sustainable and high-quality football facilities for the local community whilst protecting the long-term future of football at Hinks Meadow.

The proposed six-year programme should therefore be viewed not as a recurring annual cost commitment, but as a targeted investment designed to improve the underlying soil profile and reduce the long-term impact of the site's naturally poor water-retention characteristics. By strengthening the rootzone and improving moisture retention during the funded period, the Parish Council would be investing in the long-term resilience of the pitches and helping to ensure that they remain capable of supporting intensive community use in the years beyond the grant programme. Whilst some ongoing top dressing will form part of future annual renovations, it is anticipated that the level of intervention required will be significantly lower than during the initial improvement phase, reflecting the cumulative benefits achieved through the six-year programme.

Given the existing annual financial commitment already made by the Parish Council, the proposed six-year Grass Pitch Improvement Programme represents an opportunity to protect and enhance that investment. By improving soil structure, increasing moisture retention and strengthening the resilience of the pitches against drought and intensive use, the programme would help secure the long-term sustainability of seven football pitches serving 20 teams and the wider community.

Clerk to the Council
20 October 2026