

Anti-Social Behaviour at Recreation Grounds

1.0 Follow up from the Video Conference meeting with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team Leader Community Safety at Buckinghamshire Council

The following minute was recorded from the March 2023 Open Spaces & Highways committee meeting:

483/22 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) AT RECREATION GROUNDS

The notes of the video conference meeting were received. Following discussion the Deputy Clerk was asked to follow up on the actions from that meeting and report these back to the next meeting. The Deputy Clerk, working in-conjunction with the Safer Neighbourhood team, will research appropriate signage regarding behaviour at the Recreation Grounds.

The Deputy Clerk followed up with the Team Leader, particularly regarding his review of the CCTV Policy we asked him to carry out. The following reply was received:

Looking at the notes and your CCTV policy, you will need to amend your policy, giving grounds as to why you need your CCTV to have a wider coverage to capture footage of, and discourage, anti-social behaviour and crime. Your present coverage only concerns the parish buildings etc. As suggested in my later feedback, the council will need to visit the ICO site which will give advice around the use of CCTV in these circumstances. I also suggest contacting the Buckinghamshire Parish and Town Council Association based in County Hall who can provide advice and support around this issue, the link is: BMKALC – Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (bucksalc.gov.uk) I hope this helps.

The newly installed CCTV was spec'ed to cover the buildings and car parks primarily and as a result there is little purposefully coverage of the CCTV to other areas of the Recreation Grounds. Therefore the CCTV policy reflects that.

The Deputy Clerk has liaised with the Safer Neighbourhood team concerning signage. The general view is that standard signage concerning anti-social behaviour (warning signs say NO..., DO NOT...) are readily available.

Bespoke signage could be produced to our specific design / needs by the current sign production specialists we use which is local to us.

However, as discussed with the Neighbourhood team, an abundance of notices can have the opposite effect, give rise to being de-faced and vandalised and have the 'opposite' effect.

2.0 Continued Anti-Social Behaviour at Iver Recreation Ground

Regrettably, the instances of anti-social behaviour (particularly dangerous littering with broken bottles) is on the significant rise at Iver Recreation Ground.

A recent team meeting highlighted concerns and the team are now doing a second visual check of some areas of the Recreation Ground during the day and report having to clear broken bottles from certain areas of the grounds and facilities (including the baseball court and the cycle mound).

All our Recreation Grounds and Play Areas are inspected on a daily basis* including weekends with a visual inspection and litter pick. A routine inspection is carried out weekly and a full Operational inspection carried out the Deputy clerk and the Deputy Head Groundsman on a quarterly basis. Whilst we are not an enforcement agency, there is staff presence sporadically throughout the day but in summer months specifically all the grounds team are often maintaining other sites. Whilst the team have been instructed not to get into confrontation with perpetrators of ASB for their own safety, they have attempted to stop some minor ASB – someone was seen kicking over signs and when asked politely to leave them alone, a foot was put through the signage causing permanent damage.

**- Inspections are not carried out on statutory Bank Holidays*

As a result of this the Deputy Clerk and Deputy Head Groundsman carried out a walk round to potentially identify the hot spots. These are the Baseball Court, the youth shelter and the fitness equipment in the corner of the ground.

The Overhead Carousel located in the corner of the ground has been taken out of use as a result of continued damage to the button seats. These were used by irresponsible dog owners who allow dogs to 'hang off' the seats and swing the equipment round. This results in damage to the seats. We recently replaced a number of the seats but within 10 days the new seats have been damaged due to the same activity.

The situation is now critical, particularly where glass bottles continue to be smashed during the day whilst the recreation ground could be at it's busiest and the potential for adults, children and pets to be injured is at it's highest. We are just at the start of the warmer, longer days and not yet into the full summer months.

The Committee is asked to consider further measures to combat this increase in ASB. This may include considering closing off areas / further removing use of equipment that is being damaged or attracts ASB thus the minority spoiling it for the majority.

Jeremy Day
Deputy Clerk
18th May 2023.