

Proposal

Sefton Park Cricket Club – Outdoor Practice Facility

Club's Mission Statement

To provide a first-class practice facility accessible to members and the Community to encourage cricket participation and personal development within the Club's existing members and the outside community whilst maximising the use of the ground to host club and community matches.

Nets

"Netting" is essential for all cricketers regardless of age or ability. It provides an environment where the 2 main forms of cricket; batting and bowling can be developed.

Cricketers use nets rather than practice in open space because it provides a contained and focused environment, restricting the ball's ability to travel across the field.

There is no requirement for fielders or a wicket-keeper and there is no need to chase after balls. It also provides greater intensity and saves time allowing individuals to work on specific skills.

Nets can be used for solo practice or within a group.

Current Position

The Club has one portable net which is used to practice bowling and batting. Practice evenings are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

No practice takes place on a Friday as preparations are made for the wickets to be used for the weekend.

As a result of this no cricket fixtures can take place on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

The ability to practice cannot take place at weekends due to senior fixtures.

Junior matches take place on a Wednesday evening and Sunday morning as these are the only days the grounds are available.

Practice is restricted to one designated night depending which side you play for:

- Mondays – juniors (aged 5-16)
- Tuesdays – senior members playing for the Club's 3rd XI, 4th XI, 5th XI and Sunday XI
- Thursdays – senior members playing for the Club's 1st XI and 2nd XI

Requirement of the nets

The Club wishes to develop a new practice facility in order to:

- a) *Allow more fixtures to take place throughout the week – more junior games, Business Houses, Last Man Stands and other external bookings. Promoting the game to its members*

as well as recreational cricketers. The Club believes that the more competitive games of cricket being played, the better.

- b) Provide flexibility for mid-week junior fixtures i.e. having a choice of days Monday-Thursday. Allows consideration to be made to the weather forecasts to ensure no fixtures are cancelled.*
- c) Provide its members with the ability to practice 7 days a week at any time for 8 months of the year. Players can net regularly rather than on one designated evening – this will be possible as the number nets will be increased from 1 to 3. Currently opportunities are restricted due to designated practice sessions for specific groups, fixtures, ground work or ground conditions (wet). Having a dedicated practice facility will improve and develop all players.*
- d) Provide recreational use to members of the Community that play cricket but do not wish to become a member of the Club. Recreational players will be able to hire the facility or be able to play in matches at the Club due to improved ground availability. At this moment the Club does not have the facilities to offer these opportunities. As a result the club foresees that its links to Community particularly the Asian community will be enhanced.*
- e) There is the need and demand to improve practice facilities due to the size of the Club*
 - Over 50 Junior members*
 - 6 senior sides – the largest senior playing membership in the Liverpool Cricket Competition*
 - Introduction of a female playing section which coincides with cricket being the fastest growing female sport in the UK.*

Having such a facility will provide each member an equal opportunity to have the same level and quality of practice. Currently practices are overcrowded which has a detrimental effect on sessions and as a result player development and potential.

- f) Junior development – currently the only junior side that uses the nets are U15's. The new facility will allow all our juniors the opportunity to use the facilities in a safe enclosed environment. Younger members will be able to use the facility at a younger age which will aid their development and increase the chances of senior participation. With the facility being enclosed this will restrict the distance balls travel and as a result will not waste time increasing child engagement in the activity.*
- g) Having a dedicated practice facility will modernise the Club. The Club is in the minority of other club's within the Liverpool and District Cricket Competition not to have such a facility. This will act as an attraction to players to join the club and the community. With such modern facilities becoming the "norm" within cricket clubs across the country the facility is required to ensure the club is able to compete with other clubs. These facilities have only been recently developed hence why the Club has not been in a position to develop previously.*
- h) The facility will allow cricket to be played in all weather whilst retaining outdoor conditions required replicating match conditions. Currently practices are cancelled due to afternoon rain. With such a facility practicing and therefore player development would not be denied.*

- i) *Whilst fixtures are being played it will provide the Club with a secured area where youngsters can play safely.*

Alternatives

1) Indoor Facility

- *Cricket is an outdoor sport.*
- *Outside conditions affect the way the game is played and a facility is required outside to replicate match conditions.*
- *This would not satisfy the Club's requirement listed at (a),(b), (c), (d) , (g), (h) and (i) above.*

2) More Portable Nets

- *Lack of space and surfaces to net on.*
- *Lack of storage space - Having a cage on the field of play is dangerous as many players previously have collided with the current net trying to field the ball.*
- *The club is looking to utilise the grounds as much as possible to ensure that as many games can be played on the grounds.*
- *Ground restoration work also needs to be factored into this.*
- *Juniors unable to move nets if practicing in small groups.*
- *Using the current demise would not satisfy the Club's requirements listed above at (a), (b), (c), (d), (f), (g), (h) and (i)*
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3) Develop in the Car Park

- *The car park is not being demised to the Club.*
- *Despite this - where would people park?*
- *The car park provides a safe and enclosed area to park.*
- *Parking on the street would introduce more congestion.*
- *The club requires a right to park cars to ensure that it is accessible to everyone who frequents the Club i.e. elderly and disabled members. As a club we would not expect our members to park their car on Croxteth Drive and walk to the Club.*

4) Nets by the Scoreboard

- *The Club has tried this area before and found this area not to be adequate.*
- *The area is notoriously wet. Using a wet grass surface presents dangerous conditions as cricket balls bounce unpredictably and creates a hazard to those batting.*
- *This is a shaded area, enclosed by the poplars this effects the light. We use dark red cricket balls and bad light can pose a danger as batsman/bowlers cannot pick out the ball.*
- *This would also not satisfy the Club's requirement listed at (a), (b), (c), (d) , (g), (h) and (i) above.*

5) Nets in the Rose Garden

- *This is a spectating area for our non-playing members.*
- *The Club also utilises this area for memorial benches for past members*
- *The Club considers this area as a unique feature*

- *Regardless of the above this area is too small*

6) Nets behind lower pavilion

- *We use this area to store the Club's wicket covers when the ground is in use.*
- *Major excavation and levelling work would be required.*
- *This area is not big enough to accommodate the Club's requirements and as a result not satisfy (e) listed above.*
- *This is a shaded area, enclosed by the trees this effects the light. We use dark red cricket balls and bad light can pose a danger as batsman/bowlers cannot pick out the ball.*

Comments to Criticisms

1) "3 month facility, become a rusty green eyesore"

This will be an all-weather facility with the ability to be used all year round.

The likelihood is that it will be used regularly for 8 months of the year (March – October).

It has the potential to be used in the winter months if dry and warm enough. Much like the tennis courts in the park.

To say that it could become an eyesore is simply not the case considering how well the club maintains and invests in the grounds.

2) "the Club has existed for 130 years without the need for such facility"

See (a) to (i) listed above for the requirement of the nets.

3) "the long term plan is to brownfield it with the ability to build on it during the current or future administrations"

The Cricket Club has been in existence since 1860 – this should provide enough comfort that no further development will take place. The lease is for 80 years contracted inside the 1954 Act and alienation is prohibited.

4) The new proposed boundary plan

Other than the area where the Club intends to develop the nets facility, the other areas highlighted in red bold are maintained to a high standard by the Club and will not be used for development.

5) Loss of Open Space/Harm to Wildlife

The Club cannot distinguish the difference of this development and the fences installed around the allotments, the tennis club and public tennis courts facilities, children's playground and cafés in situ within the Park.