

Risinghurst Playing Fields Charity 1196270

Annual Report and Accounts for April 2024-March 2025

Location: Risinghurst Playing Fields, Off Grovelands Rd, Oxford OX3 8HZ

Sole Corporate Trustee: Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council

Governance

Trustees:

Elected and co-opted Parish Councillors form the trustee group for the CIO. On election/co-option they are automatically entitled to be trustees until the day of their leaving public office.

Structure:

A constitution is available. From July 2022 a management agreement is in place with Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council for the day-to-day management of both the playing fields and the finances.

Byelaw:

A byelaw came into force in October 1955 banning defacing, damaging or removing any item. It also bans cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, beasts of burden, vehicle truck or barrow or preventing any Council officer from doing their work. Dogs must be kept under control, missiles should not endanger anyone else, and park users should respect the quiet enjoyment of others. Entering the water or harming its wildlife is prohibited, as is using foul language. Offences are subject to a £2.00 fine. This has never been enforced on individuals, but preventive measures were taken to ensure ponies and motorbikes could not access the parkland by installing a kissing gate, in line with the byelaw.

Objectives:

The objective of the charity is to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Risinghurst and Sandhills and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

Team:

The Parish Council employs a groundsman for 6-15 hours a week and he works with a team of volunteers comprised of residents, Parish Councillors and the chairman of the grounds working group, who donates his time and expertise from Clifton Nurseries. The Parish Clerk is also employed by the Parish Council and administers the playing fields and is the charity administrator.

Activities on the Playing Fields

- Two sports clubs have their home at Risinghurst Playing Fields. Risinghurst Cricket Club have played there for at least 50 years. In recent years, players have come from a wide area, and the club are being encouraged to recruit local players to benefit local residents. Headington Youth Football Club have been based there since 2017 and run up to 13 teams of young players (7 to 17 years old).
- There is a woodland, and a play area in Olive Jacks Memorial field, along with the two main sports fields. Part of the top sports field is currently left fallow and mown annually until it is required to be brought back into use.
- Residents use the park for recreational walking, jogging, exercise, play, informal games, picnics, meet and chats with friends and neighbours, and dog-walking is very popular. Small leisure goal posts are provided free of charge for ball play on the sports fields and an outdoor table tennis table.
- Volunteering takes place every Thursday morning, led by the groundsman and the chairman of the grounds working group. The dedicated team have delivered significant improvements to the workshops, woodland, sports fields and playing fields. The team deliver around 2,000 work hours in a year. Materials, time and expertise continue to be generously donated by Clifton Nurseries/the chairman of the grounds team, whose leadership has made a big impact on what is being undertaken and achieved by the whole team.
- The park is used for two public events. A summer fete took place on 09/06/24 which sought to involve and include local community groups and charities to encourage fundraising for their activities and discourage visiting traders. A Fireworks and Bonfire event took place on 09/11/24 with a large fire stack safely built by the grounds team with support from local businesses, and traditional, noisy fireworks for 20 minutes. This event uses a professional pyrotechnics team for safety and the quality of display, with food, drink and toys being provided by the Sandhills School PTA and Headington Youth Football Club as a fundraising opportunity. They were successful, safe and happy events.

Work Undertaken During 2024-25

The grounds are kept tidy and free of litter by the groundsman and volunteers. The grass is frequently cut to keep it in good condition and ready for sports use. The Quadraplay is used to slit, rake, roll and brush the surface. In season, debris and leaves are cleared and the hedgerows are cut twice a year to maintain good presentation and weedkiller/fertiliser were added in September 2024. Ditches are checked and kept clear of vegetation and blockages.

Drainage:

The drainage continues to be monitored. Underwater springs in Olive Jacks Memorial field cause considerable water retention making much of the field unusable. A bid to the Oxford City Council priority fund for a survey on the water run-off across the fields was successful. Flood investigations will be undertaken by them free of charge.

Outfield Boundary:

Wire netting was secured by the volunteers along the disused cycle path fencing, to prevent cricket balls going through the railings.

Peter Jacques Hedgerow:

The hedgerow planted in 2023 has thrived and been maintained by volunteers with watering, weed reduction and checking the guards and supports. Some plants have failed and will be replaced in 2025/26.

Trees:

Works have been undertaken by the groundsman and volunteers to address dead or unsafe low branches and trees, and a tree surgeon completed the remaining work in winter 2024/25.

Bat Boxes

Ten new bat boxes were sourced from Thame Shed by one of the volunteer grounds team. They were installed by the tree surgeon free of charge over the winter.

Pitch Power Grant:

The Pitch Power grant remains suspended, pending a substantial investment in sand slitting the pitches which the OFA are leading on. However, no further progress has been made. The grounds team continue to weed kill, fertilise, tine, brush and mow the grass to maintain the surface condition.

Cricket Square

The square is maintained by the Risinghurst Cricket Club with arms-length supervision from the groundsman and chairman of the grounds team.

Machinery Renewal

An application to the Football Foundation was successful for a grant to replace the tractor and attachments in January 2024 with new machines. The Kubota tractor and mower were delivered in June 2024 and are making a significant difference to the quality of the mowing and are in use around the parkland. A high-sided trailer was also purchased. The old Nuffield 4-25 tractor was sold to a collector to offset the costs to the Parish Council. Small equipment and tools continue to be renewed when required, in order to deliver a good standard of maintenance around the site.

Storage Container

The steel storage container used for football equipment; marquee and other items was no longer waterproof. This was replaced with a new container in October 2024, and the old one returned to the supplier.

Footpath Repairs

The grounds team repaired broken parts of the concrete footpath, to reduce the risk of trips.

Funding Applications:

Throughout the year various grant applications were made to fund a footpath joining the A40 link path to the Shotover kissing gate. Small grants were successful from ward members and Oxford City Council Community Impact Fund, but some applications were unsuccessful. An application to FCC Communities has been made and the result is pending.

An expression of interest was submitted for s106 funding from the development of Land North of Bayswater Brook in June 2024. The developers were interested in funding the cricket provision.

Woodland Play Trail

The grounds team started a project in July 2024 to re-purpose wood and create play items in the woodland. Several pieces were created during 2024-25 of low-level agility challenges, for example, stepping stones and a balance beam. A budget of £2,000.00 was allocated, but the team have preferred to re-purpose parts from Olive Jacks play area and other wood. The project will be added to, on an ad hoc basis.

Play Equipment

A project to renew the whole play area in Olive Jacks Memorial field was progressed through community consultations over the previous three years. However, the selected bid was financially unachievable. A modest plan was brought forward to replace essential items, which were affordable using current CIL funds held by the Parish Council. Installation is due in June 2025.

Pavilion

The pavilion continues to be used by Risinghurst Cricket Club and Headington Youth Football Club, as well as by the ground's volunteers and Parish Council for occasional meetings. Its useful life is over, and s106 funds from Thornhill Court phases 2 may potentially allow the purchase of a new facility in the future.

Bench

A new disabled-access bench was made and donated by a Parish Councillor.

Workshop and Yard Storage

A project to create a safe space for the new machinery was funded by the Parish Council and designed and delivered by the grounds team over the winter months. Storage for all equipment and materials was created in a significant improvement to the visual impact of the pavilion area on the playing fields. An attractive metal footbridge was sourced at low cost from Clifton Nurseries to cross the adjacent ditch.

A new electricity circuit is planned to increase the supply and improve workflow, and installation is pending.

Accounts for Risinghurst Playing Fields CIO**Financial Period: April 2024 to March 2025**

	Receipts	Payments
Annual sum	£0.00	£0.00
Totals	£0.00	£0.00