

Battlebridge Sports Centre – Trustees Update # 7 - April 2024

1. Financials

- Account balance £42k
- Sue now processing all invoices and VAT quarter returns.
- Addresses for correspondence address now mostly changed from Elise to Sue / Mathew

2. Programme

Astro

- 100% astro football bookings maintained from across autumn and winter terms – considering the amount of rain this was a remarkable effort led by Dave.
- Birthday parties have picked up, helped by partnership work with MFC Saturday mini soccer and wildcat's mornings where we have an A frame and flyers where parents pay for the sessions. Year to date 8 parties mostly football. Still have lots of enquiries for younger ones and bouncy castles however the ceiling is low inside and outside upon notification of the need for conformity to PIPA regs they rarely pursue an interest.
- Speaking with an established Baby Ballet group who are trialling in early May. This could be a good booking and relationship. Their current premises is being revamped and will not be available for up to a year. The reception upgrade may have assisted the opportunity to attract new groups especially ones where parents are staying for the lesson duration

Indoor bookings

- As expected EGB Dance moved on from January finishing up their Tuesday session as well.
- New Thai Boxing club now in place on Saturday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. AS previously it's a slow burner and we are supporting the hirer, and we shall see how it goes. There is a dedicated martial arts club very nearby in Holmethorpe next to Stocksigns Ltd
- As part of the reception improvements, we also cleared the office. We are actively looking for another tenant such as a sports massage or physio practice. No luck to date
- Holistic Harmony – wellbeing group every other Wednesday going well. It's a tough offering are they are good people and have several grant applications being made to try and establish the sessions every Wednesday.

2. Publicity and Promotion and Awareness.

Party awareness work with MFC has yielded results as noted above. Web site needs an update and revamp which I hope to do in the next week or so.

- Internet provider Virgin Media
Still no update on the fast fibre service currently. No operational disbenefit to be honest but clearly would be advantageous.

3. Building and Operations

External areas

- Dave continues to keep the grass areas and perimeter bushes around the car park and Astro in good order.
- New external door with shutters now fully operational – see pics

Utilities

The new arrangements for Electricity and Gas via a Broker called "Reducer" (outlined at the last update) are producing a welcome reduction on the immediately previous rates and have materialised in a more acceptable sums being received despite an extended cold period

necessitating continued use of the heating by some hirers e.g. the Wednesday group Holistic Harmony, but with the nature of their work this is understandable.

Cleaning and Maintenance

- Dave continues to maintain cleanliness in and around the premises and the astro.
- New soap dispensers installed.
- Weekly indoor facility cleaning continues to be undertaken by primarily Dave. Rubbish placed in MFC bins to save costs as there's usually space as only a couple of bags pw.

Equipment

Defibrillator in in place and finally operational with the key pad access for Astro users

4. Update - Future issues / Development

- i) New Lease – Jo Stillwell finally response setting that a £11k pa would be charged, with a 10-year lease offered with upward only reviews every 3 years. I requested the basis for this commercial rating and to date she has refused to provide this stating commercial sensitivity. I suggested that I would be minded to put in a freedom of information request as this seems ridiculous. She then said if White and Sons were willing to provide the details/basis of the charge (remember they are under explicit instructions from RBBC (her basically) then we could have them. I asked her to do this and have not heard back. We can apply for a rental support grant (to in effect reduce the rental sum predicated on social good / community work) but only after we have agreed the lease terms which would include the base rent sum. In brief, the same situation as MFC are in, however we are now operating without a lease in place. To be continued.
- ii) Item kept on the updates as an ongoing issue for strategic consideration:
The new secondary school Merstham Park are likely to have a full size 3G pitch facility by September 2023 **Update # 3 - now late 2024 is deemed the earliest date. Update # 4 now pretty firm at April 2025**
This will mean that the Astro demand is likely to reduce significantly and certainly regarding the current main user MFC who are scheduled to be a key partner and as such transfer the existing use at BSC.
Football on the Astro is no longer the largest income source. Whilst at circa £10k it remains very important the forecast for indoor income if all current hires continue is circa £18k. However, the Astro hire largely represents the most straightforward, non-hosted source of income with only utility costs to set against this.
- iii) RBBC, CIL (community infrastructure levy) funding application as previously noted was successful. Scheme is to replace the Astro. £25k granted we would need to fund £10k for a £35k project. I requested to CIL, (as a holding point tbh) of an addition to uplift to £35k to provide additional options whilst considering recent price increases and this was agreed with no need for a pro-rata increase on our proposed proportion/share.
I now have three updated quotes, and visited two sites one with the new sand filled option and one with sand dressed, both of which can be encompassed within the circa £40/45k funding. However, the CIL monies cannot be accessed without a lease in place – see point 4.1 above.

Kind regards
Mathew

