

GREAT SANKEY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Estates Committee

Wednesday 20th August 2025
Whittle Hall Community Centre

Chair: Cllr Williams
Present: Cllr Simpson
Cllr Catlow
Cllr Lynas

In Attendance: K. Carter (Clerk)
A.Nugent (Head Gardener)

- 1. To receive apologies for unavoidable absence.**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Hussain, and Pennington.
- 2. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2025.**
Approved.

***PEC/2025/9:** To approve minutes of the Parish Estates Committee meeting held on Wednesday 23rd July 2025 as a true and accurate record.*

3. Parish Playing Field Drainage Project:

3.1 to receive notes from the meeting with the contractor and the Grounds Management Association.

Talbot Landscapes confirmed that they were looking at a potential start date of 15th September. Work will take 5-6 weeks, depending on weather conditions. A site visit will be arranged; the council's Maintenance Officer & Head Gardener will meet with the contractor to determine access and practicalities prior to the start of works. It was agreed that the site will remain closed to the public until Spring 2026 to allow the works to settle and the grass to recover.

***PEC/2025/10:** GSPC Maintenance Officer and Head Gardener to meet Talbot Landscapes to discuss and agree practicalities for the contractors installing the drainage system on the Parish Playing Field.*

***PEC/2025/11:** Parish Playing Field to remain closed to the public for the duration of the drainage installation until Spring 2026.*

3.2 to consider planning conditions and agree steps to meet these

There are various conditions in the planning permission that need meeting prior to the start of works. Talbot Landscapes will review these with their commercial manager and get back to the Clerk on any requirements. It was confirmed that GSPC can produce the landscape plan to meet the BNG requirements.

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PEC/2025/12: Clerk to liaise with Talbot Landscapes and GMA regarding details for the required planning conditions for the drainage installation on the PPF.

3.3 to receive quote for additional gates/bollards

Following the traveller incursion on the Parish Playing Field earlier in the year, the yellow vehicle barrier had to be repaired and strengthened. The firm also quoted for an additional barrier to prevent vehicle access from Sankey Hub car park and for manual rising bollards in front of the main gate. It was decided to postpone a decision on the additional security and discuss as part of the ongoing management of the site whilst the grounds works are happening.

PEC/2025/13: To postpone decision on additional security measures for the Parish Playing Field (gates/bollards) to a future meeting of the Parish Estates Committee.

3.4 to note items for future consideration

3.4.1 site security

As mentioned in item 3.3, the security of the site will need to be considered in greater detail, including whether to allow access for the general public.

3.4.2 pitch strategy

Advice will be sought from the GMA & WBC on the number and seasonal use of pitches and discussed with WHJFC, the anchor team on the field. The committee will also explore goalpost options. Talbot Landscapes suggested it may be prudent to install sockets for the posts at the same time as the drainage, but there may be an option to use mobile goalposts to increase the pitch configurations and reduce goalmouth wear & tear.

3.4.3 grounds management

GSPC is aware that the grounds maintenance will need greater investment in the future. As well as the standard grass cuts and pitch marking, consistent maintenance such as reseeding and topdressing will be required, along with verti-draining. This will require an external contractor and a tendering exercise to be carried out. GSPC's grounds team will undertake the relevant online course for pitch assessments which need completing twice a year as part of the funding conditions. The consequent pitch report will inform the maintenance requirements for the external contractor.

3.4.4 administrative (bookings) management

There will be a need for a clear process to manage bookings on the field, including use by the occasional teams as well as the anchor team and including a strategy to prevent overuse. Advice will be sought from WBC and the GMA.

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PEC/2025/14: *Parish Estates Committee to obtain advice to enable clear processes to be put in place for the ongoing management of the Parish Playing Field, along with carrying out a tendering exercise for the ground's maintenance.*

4. Estates Office/Childs Wood Field Project

4.1 to receive information on rental options and decide whether to explore this option further as a temporary measure.

The Parish Estates Committee had previously considered leasing an industrial unit for the Grounds Team to operate from, but this was considered as a permanent option. It has become clear that the project to build a permanent depot will take some years to achieve and therefore it was suggested that the committee reconsiders an industrial unit as an interim solution. Several units had been assessed by the Head Gardener, Clerks and Cllr Williams and a summary of options, with costs for 3-year leases was given.

The feasibility of using the grounds of Bewsey Barn Community Centre was discussed. It had been identified previously as a Plan B option for building a new depot but is not suitable as an interim site as considerable work would be needed on the access and facilities to make it a useable space.

PEC/2025/15: *To dismiss the grounds at Bewsey Barn Community Centre as a suitable site for the interim placement of the Grounds Team.*

It was agreed that the lease option on a unit in Penketh Business Park would resolve the many issues faced by the Grounds Team in their current location at Whittle Hall Community Centre and give the Parish Estates Committee more time to move forwards with the plan to build a permanent depot on Childs Wood Field. This to be a recommended course of action to the Finance Committee to consider the financial aspect and full Council for a final decision.

PEC/2025/16: *To recommend taking a lease for 3-5 years on an industrial unit at Penketh Business Park as an interim operating site for the Grounds Team whilst the project for a permanent base is considered.*

4.2 to be updated on meeting with WBC

WBC had been asked to provide costs and timescales for them to undertake a feasibility study to build a permanent Grounds Office on Childs Wood Field, including the wider plans to develop the remaining space for community use. WBC had provided some information following a site visit, suggesting that the feasibility study would cost in the region of £70-80k. A further meeting was arranged for councillors to ask about the process, timescales and WBC's fees.

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WBC advised that GSPC need to provide them with a detailed client brief for WBC to be able to quote and agreed to provide an example document for GSPC to follow. Members felt that there appeared to be a lack of clear commitment to move forwards with the project at this time and concerns were raised about timescales. It was proposed and agreed that the committee should undertake a tender exercise for an external firm to undertake the project.

PEC/2025/17: *To undertake a tendering exercise for the feasibility study to develop Childs Wood Field, with facilities for the Grounds Team as well as community use.*

5. **Date of next meeting** – 17 September 2025