

Chignal Parish Council

Chignal Playing Field: approved Hiring Policy, 13th November 2017

Background

The substantial rebuilding and re-opening of the Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall in March 2017 has provided a much improved community facility which is also being regarded as an attractive venue to hire for celebratory events such as weddings, anniversaries and birthdays. Requests have already been made by local residents who wish to hire the Village Hall for wedding receptions for permission to place a marquee on the adjoining playing field, owned by the Parish Council.

One such wedding event took place in September, involving a marquee, bouncy castle and games area. Feed-back from local residents was that the event had been well managed on the whole and had finished by early evening but that they would wish to be given advance warning of the date of such events and information on what would take place on site. There was criticism about the direction of loud speakers and these were re-positioned after a request was made by an adjacent resident.

The playing field has used on a regular basis in the winter season on Saturday mornings by a junior football team for training and on the first Sunday of the month from April – October by the Chignal Croquet Club. In addition, permission has been granted in the past for meetings of the Caravan Club on the site and the Village Hall Fête is held there on the first Saturday in June.

The playing field grass is cut several times a year as required by a contractor and the two croquet pitches are mown by members of the club at least twice a month during the playing season. Boundary hedges are cut by a contractor as required.

The use of the field for recreational purposes is covered by the Parish Council's Public Liability insurance. * This needs to be checked with our insurers.

There are several residents whose properties are sited close to the playing field. Residents immediately adjacent, at The Old School and The School House, have requested that they should be given advance notice and details of any major events on the playing field, particularly if loud speaker systems and music are to be used. It should be a requirement of the hire agreement that the hirer should let the occupants of these properties know in advance, (a minimum of two months before the event) what is being planned on the playing field and discuss with them possible ways of mitigating any potential disturbance.

In order to monitor the impact of hiring the playing field for events such as weddings, it may be prudent to limit the number of times a year that the field is hired for such occasions for a trial period of two years. This could be done by limiting the hire to

Chignal residents, especially those who intend to be married in St Nicholas Church or The Chignal Chapel.

Rationale

The Parish Council does not have a formal policy for hiring out the playing field or a rationale for setting hire charges. Given the recent re-development of the Village Hall by the Chignals & Mashbury Village Hall Committee and the possibility of hirers wishing to make use of the playing field to erect marquees, organise activities or use it as overflow car parking, it is timely to consider this matter.

Proposed Policy

For an initial period of two years from January 2018, the Parish Council will consider hiring the playing field to the organisers of events such as wedding receptions for the stationing of a marquee for a limited period directly related to that event, provided that:

1. The hirer is a resident of Chignal Parish or has close associations with Chignal;
2. The hirer is also hiring the facilities of the adjacent Chignals & Mashbury Hall for the same event;
3. The hirer provides the Parish Council with a copy of any required public event licenses and insurances for their event and undertakes to absolve the Parish Council of any liabilities arising from the hire;
4. The hirer provides full details of the activities that are planned to take place in the playing field, including a Risk Assessment and undertakes to meet with Parish Councillors to discuss their requirements before the hire is agreed;
5. The hirer undertakes to speak with the residents of The Old School and The School House at least one month before the event to explain what is being planned;
6. The hirer takes responsibility for leaving the playing field in the same state that they found it;
7. The hirer undertakes to cease the event before 12 midnight and shows consideration to neighbouring residents at all times;
8. The hirer shall not encroach upon or cause damage to the marked out Croquet Pitches and only park vehicles in designated areas of the playing field;
9. A standard set of hiring conditions, including a plan of the playing field, provided by the Parish Council is agreed by the person applying to hire the playing field.

Hire costs

Hire cost per day, paid in advance to Chignal Parish Council: **£150.00**