

Liss Forest Residents Association and Liss Parish Council:

Our Vision for Liss Forest Recreation Ground

The Recreation Ground is an open space in the heart of Liss Forest on the main road, with houses on each side and bordered by trees and hedging. It is owned by Liss Parish Council (LPC) who manage it with the support of Liss Forest Residents Association (LFRA). This vision has been developed by LFRA in consultation with LPC and is subject to obtaining necessary funding from public authorities and other sources.

Our vision for the Recreation Ground is to ensure it remains a green and pleasant open space. One of the advantages of the Recreation Ground is the multi-functional and attractive area of open grass which is enjoyed by children, football players and dog walkers alike. It is the only public outdoor gathering space in Liss Forest. Our aim is to enhance the space whilst respecting its multi-functional use and natural look, whilst enhancing the range of activities which it offers and encouraging re-naturing and biodiversity.

It should be remembered that the Recreation Ground is situated in a residential area and has no off-road parking, lighting for night time use or an indoors facility such as a pavilion. It is therefore unsuitable for any enhancements which would encourage large groups (for example team sports), or late evening activity/noise.

However, we would like to be able to diversify activity on the site and make it appealing for different age groups and interests.

Green space

Any investment or change to the Recreation Ground shall first and foremost seek to minimize the impact on its intention and purpose as a natural, multi-use space.

Children's Playground

It will be a priority to maintain and continue to gently evolve the playground over time, to ensure it remains a fun and safe environment for under 12 children.

Petanque Court

We shall continue to protect the petanque court, which was relocated to this area following the development of its previous site in the grounds of the Temple Inn and which is popular with older adults.

Basketball Court

We recognize that the small area of hard standing is popular both as a basketball court and a multi-use surface, used by older children and teenagers, and adult fitness groups. We shall continue to maintain this area of hard standing and would consider proposals to enhance or possibly slightly enlarge it to enable more diversity of use, provided this does not exacerbate the current drainage and waterlogging issues.

Football Goals

The field is regularly used for football by children of all ages, including teens. However, there are two barriers to creating a permanent football pitch: size of the green and the problems with drainage which often make the football area waterlogged. LPC has therefore agreed the purchase of purpose built, moveable goal posts, like those recently installed at West Liss and Newman Collard, which will allow teams to site them on the most suitable part of the green. We note that the Recreation Ground

previously had moveable posts which were popular, these became unsafe and were replaced several years ago by the fixed location ones you see today.

Furniture

There are currently a small number of picnic tables and benches available for use. These require maintenance, which is undertaken largely by the local community. We would like to consider more seating or picnic tables but would need to be clear on the responsibility and maintenance thereof.

Drainage

One of the most impactful improvements we could make to the Recreation Ground would be to enable its use all year round by improving the drainage throughout the rec including the wooded area at the back. Residents have tried to improve things to the rear of the wooded area by raising the ground level using compostable material from their gardens. This has provided some localized improvement but is not a satisfactory long-term solution. We have formed a group which includes the residents with significant land boundaries to the Recreation Ground, to work together with Liss Parish Council to come up with a long-term land drainage solution and to prioritise any investment required to enable this to happen. Responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of drains will need to be considered.

Nature Area

In line with the drainage investment, we would like as a community to create a small nature area at the back of the recreation ground, to encourage local wildlife. Our intention is that this would be maintained by the community and could include a wildlife pond, natural planting, a woodland walk, and bird boxes. Ongoing maintenance and development of this area should be considered.

Future enhancements

In reviewing Liss Forest's recreation provision we think that all age groups are catered for. However, we identified a small number of enhancements in provision, not already mentioned above and, following consultation with Liss Forest residents, we shall be seeking investment in:

- Outdoor exercise equipment (subject to consulting on likely usage)
- An outdoor table tennis table
- Enhancement and possibly slight expansion of the basketball court (whilst preserving the green space and the look and feel of the recreation ground, but possibly enabling a second post to be erected or enhancing it in other ways).

In all this we will work closely with Liss Parish Council and other Liss Recreation Ground management groups including Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust to ensure complementary provision across the village, appropriate to the different settings. We are also considering ways of physically linking the sites through walking, running and cycling routes and wildlife corridors.

We are committed to continuing to consult local residents as future developments begin to take shape. We shall also work closely with other stakeholders and aim to co-design future facilities with relevant groups within the local community – for example, working with the Crossover youth centre and its members on designing informal recreational provision for older children and teenagers.