

MEETING REPORT

Meeting: Assets Committee, 7th October 2024
Agenda item: AS24/017
Report subject: Review of Sports Equipment
Report author: Julie Gilbert, Assistant Town Clerk

PROPOSAL:

To consider options for the goalposts in MacAndrews Field

Background

MacAndrews Field has been used as an informal football area for many years. As part of the MacAndrews Field masterplan consultation in 2016 portable goalposts were introduced, purchased using Friends of MacAndrews Field money. The advantages of the goalposts being portable enabled them to be moved to a new area of the field when the current goal mouth area became eroded. The absence of pinning would be self-managed and self-policed as the field was surrounded by houses on 3 sides.

The goalposts are robust and would require external force to tip over, however there was a recent incident with the newest goalpost (replaced last year) tipping over and injuring a child.

Mark Harrod, who supplied the goal post in 2023, were contacted. The sales advisor advised securing the goal post down with pegs.

Correspondence with Kingsbridge Town Council when purchasing the original goal posts in September 2016 advised against pinning down due to the pegs being pulled up and used as javelins. Kingsbridge TC had consulted with insurers and assessed that as this was a risk not to use pegs, and due to the weight of the ground bar the goal posts stability would be sufficient enough not to be secured.

On enquiring about alternative options due to the risks of pegging, the sales advisor suggested sand bags or counterweights could be used. Counterweights are clipped to the frame, and these could be padlocked down as an additional safety measure. This would then involve our parks team moving the goalposts on a regular basis rather than park users. It was felt sandbags would not remain in place and leave the goalposts in their current state. Portable goalposts and the measures for securing and stabilising are usually used in controlled environments, eg football clubs.

MEETING REPORT



Counterweights



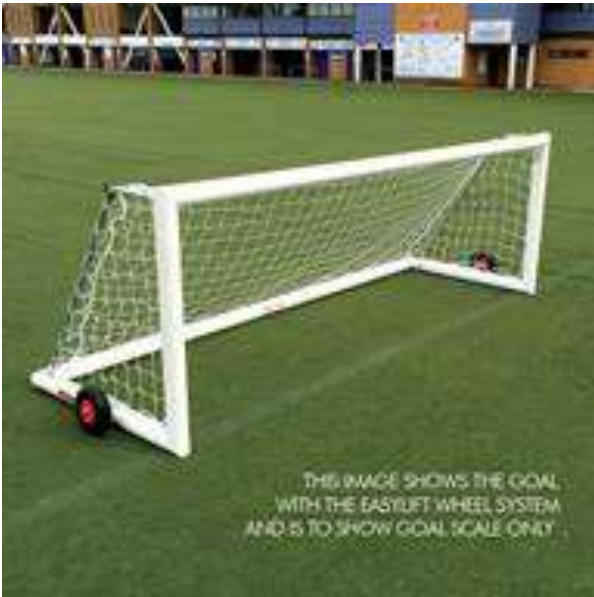
Sandbags



U Pegs

The other option would be to have weighted goals on wheels, although the sales advisor did state that again these are generally for clubs and put away at the end of the session. They do not need to be pegged down but he recommended this to avoid mis-use, however this again poses the risk of the pegs being pulled up and could potentially cause harm.

MEETING REPORT



The benefits of retaining the goalposts as portable ensures that the football area can be refreshed when the current football area becomes worn and muddy. However, options for how the goalposts can be managed safely need to be carefully considered.

- Counterweights could be a trip hazard and also a hazard if someone fell onto them and hurt themselves;
- Sandbags are not reliable as easily moved and may not stay in place;
- Pegging could be pulled out and used inappropriately;
- Introducing wheeled goalposts could encourage mis-use and are usually for controlled environments.

The Town Council's Health and Safety Risk Advisor has been involved in discussions and visited the site. He has confirmed that leaving the goalposts in place as they are is no longer an option, however by removing the risk of tipping and introducing other measures would create another risk. He considered that counterweights may be the most suitable option if they are bright and visible.

The existing goalpost frames are both in good condition, and new nets have been ordered for the older goalpost.

Members are asked to assess the hazards and risks and consider any of the following options:

- (i) Stabilise the existing goalposts with counterweights;
- (ii) Stabilise the existing goalposts with sandbags;
- (iii) Secure the existing goalposts with U pegs;
- (iv) Purchase weighted goals with wheels;
- (v) Remove the existing goalposts and do not replace.

MEETING REPORT

Resources/implications

Financial

Counterweights with chains and clips are priced at £61.38 each – padlocks would also be required –x2 per goalpost will be required, but it was suggested that these could be doubled to have x2 in each corner to provide extra protection

Sandbags are priced at £24.99 each – x2

U Peg Anchors are £28.32 for a set of 4 – x1 set per goal

The 12x4 weighted goal with the easy-lift wheels attached are £3062.66 per complete pair plus VAT.

Funds for (i) to (iii) to come from Parks and Open Spaces Budget 304/4210 MacAndrews Field Improvements.

Funds for (iv) to come from Earmarked Reserve - Parks, Woods & Open Spaces.

Staffing

Should the goalposts be retained, staffing will involve the Parks Officers monitoring the goalposts and measures for securing/stabilising them, and regularly moving them into new positions in the field.