

FOOTBALL PITCH UPDATE SEASON 2026/27

AGENDA ITEM No. 11

MEETING: RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: 8th JULY 2026

REPORTED BY: WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGER

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to put forward for agreement the proposed football pitch allocations for the 2026/27 season and related matters.

2.0 Matters for Consideration

2026/27 Football Pitch Allocations

2.1 Applications have been received for the following pitches for the 2026/27 season:

Pitch	Team club	Kick off time
Oakleaf Complex 1a	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Saturday AM
Oakleaf Complex 1b	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Saturday PM
Oakleaf Complex 1c	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Sunday AM
Oakleaf Complex 1d	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Sunday PM
Oakleaf Complex 2a	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Saturday AM
Oakleaf Complex 2b	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Sunday AM
Oakleaf Complex 3a	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Sunday AM
Oakleaf Complex 3b	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Saturday AM
Oakleaf Complex 4a	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Saturday AM
Oakleaf Complex 4b	Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club	Sunday AM
Oakleaf Back Field	<i>Vacant</i>	
Simpasture 1a	Iron Horse FC	Sunday AM
Simpasture 1b	Newton Aycliffe Workingman's Club FC	Sunday AM
Simpasture 2	RnD Youth FC	Sunday AM
Moore Lane 1a	Newton Aycliffe Sports Club FC	Sunday AM
Moore Lane 1b	<i>Vacant</i>	

2.2 Members are asked to approve the allocation of football pitches for the 2026/27 as per the above table at the approved fees.

Rnd Youth FC

- 2.3 At the Recreation Committee Meeting on the 27th May 2026 it was agreed that:
- The request from RnD Youth FC for the Council to provide football pitches for youth teams at Simpasture Park be approved, on the basis of the Council providing one 7 versus 7 pitch and two 3 versus 3 pitches, on a trial basis for one year, and no temporary structures being erected on the site
 - Officers are delegated authority to agree a licence for use of the land and an appropriate rental fee.
 - Officers investigate matting options to reduce damage to grass verges from parking.
- 2.4 Following discussions with the Finance Manager it was agreed that the annual fee for RnD Youth FC be set at the standard junior rate of £495, on the understanding that while the club will provide their own temporary goals the Council will effectively supply three junior pitches.
- 2.5 Reinforced matting can be purchased to install either side of the car park at Simpasture, where its known that excess cars tend to park during larger games of football, to reduce the risk of cars sinking into the grass over the winter.
- 2.6 To provide reinforced grass matting to the left-hand side of the access road to the car park, which is approximately 20 metres, to accommodate approximately 7 cars will cost £277. There is also an option to double this on the grass between the MUGA and hedge, just off the car park, therefore totalling approximately £554.
- 2.7 Members are asked to consider the above investment which has not currently been budgeted for.

Newton Aycliffe Sports Club FC

- 2.8 Newton Aycliffe Sports Club FC have submitted the grant application to Durham FA to improve the pitch at Moore Lane. A decision on whether this bid has been successful, should be known in the next month.
- 2.9 As part of this application, the club will also have to invest in the improvement of the pitch, as highlighted when the club presented their proposal to the Recreation Committee on the 25TH February 2026
- 2.10 Members will recall that at the time the Council agreed exclusive rights to the pitch for the club, if they fulfilled their obligations to the Council, including continued pitch hire and payment of fees.
- 2.11 Unfortunately, as Newton Aycliffe FC is focusing on the rebuild of the first team following relegation, this year, it is unlikely that they will be taking both pitch allocations. They have however, confirmed they plan to return with a second feeder team for the 2027/28 season.
- 2.12 If Newton Aycliffe Sports Club are successful with the grant application to provide additional maintenance funding for the pitch, consideration should be given whether it is appropriate for the Council to offer any vacant slot on the Moore Lane site to a team other than the Sports Club for the 2026/27 season.

- 2.13 Officers would highlight that there would be a reduced income of £495 for a junior pitch, if the pitch is held vacant. However, subject to the FA grant being agreed, there is the potential advantage of having only one team on the pitch for the first season which will give the area time to be renovated to a higher standard, as the area will be played less often for competitive matches.
- 2.14 If an extra team did express an interest in playing on the pitch the Council is within its rights to offer the pitch, however, as this incumbent team would not have invested their own funds into the improvements, they are less likely to consider the conditions when playing, which would impact the long-term improvement of the facility.
- 2.15 Members are asked to consider the issue of the second pitch at Moore Lane.

3.0 Policy Implications

- 3.1 This report complies with the Council's Strategic Aims 2 and 3: -
"To manage the Council's finances and assets in a responsible manner".
" To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities".

4.0 Staffing Implications

- 4.1 Staff time is required to complete renovations between seasons and establish the goals and lines prior to the season. Staff would then complete weekly line marking of the football pitches and cleaning of changing rooms during the season.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Pitches are purchased on a seasonal basis by the allocated teams.
- 5.2 The pitches at the Oakleaf and Moore Lane are charged at £910 per team and Simpasture £640. Junior teams are subsidised at any venue at a rate of £495.
- 5.3 The variation in prices for the various venues is due to the fact that the Oakleaf and Moore Lane have shower facilities whilst Simpasture does not.
- 5.4 Assuming all teams return as per the applications in the table in paragraph 2.1, the total income for the football pitches for the 2026/27 season will be £8,465.

6.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Equal Opportunity Implications

- 7.1 None

8.0 Environment Implications

- 8.1 None

9.0 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 It is not considered that the matter contained in this report poses a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

10.0 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- 10.1 Is any personal or sensitive data required for this proposal which may have any implications for GDPR? **NO**

11.0 Recommendations

- 11.1 It is recommended that Members:
1. Receive the report.
 2. Agree the proposed allocation of football pitches for the 2026/27 season.
 3. Agree to give Officers discretion to appoint additional teams to the vacant pitches if the opportunity becomes available.
 4. Advise Officers whether a second team should be considered on Moore Lane, for the 2026/27 season, if the opportunity arises.
 5. Consider the information provided regarding the installation of grass matting at Simpasture Park, and whether this investment should be planned into the budget setting process.

Contact Officer: Steve Cooper