

REC Group Report to the Annual Parish Meeting

2nd April 2025

The Recreation Group is a joint Parish Council (PC) and Village Hall Committee (VHC) working group, set up to manage the recreational projects and activities for the Boddington Sports Field (Charles Cowper Field) and Lower Boddington.

Over the last 6 years the major project to transform the field from an unused cricket pitch to a bustling social and sports complex has now been completed. The projects included:

- the new playground that was built in 2018 together with new tables and chairs to provide a central area for socialising.
- the extension to the car park and the new tarmac surface to the existing PC and VH car parks to make them more usable.
- two cycle tracks, a smaller track suitable for younger children and a more challenging track – and then connecting them together along with a new pathway to the gate, and the purchase of a stopwatch for the main challenge track.
- relaying and reseeding the football pitch, replacing the new and purchasing two sets of movable 5-a-side goal posts.
- CCTV to improve safety and security.
- building a pathway from Townsend Lane to the VH entrance to improve safe passage to the sports facilities and Village Hall; and
- a new block which comprises a disabled accessible toilet, a store and mini kitchen/serving area for use by village groups, and a covered seated area.

This project has been a major development for Boddington, offering facilities that make Boddington a destination village for many visitors from as far afield as Northampton, Banbury and Daventry. The final addition of the toilet block means that families can spend the day in Boddington which will also help to support the hospitality businesses in the parish. In addition, families see Boddington as a desirable village to live in, offering the benefit of both rural living and family-centric facilities and activities. In turn this will enhance house prices and ensure a future for the school.

The REC group is grateful to all the grant providers and financial supporters of the project:

- HS2
- South Northants County Council (now West Northants Council)
- British Cycling
- Boddington Parish Council
- Boddington Village Hall

The support of FOB throughout the project has been considerable – their relationship with HS2 to help support the grant applications and deliver the new path from Townsend Lane to the facilities has been essential.

The challenge for the future is now to continue to maintain these facilities so that they can benefit the parish and its visitors for years to come. This includes putting aside the funds to replace the facilities in due course and to repair them in good time. In the last year improvements have been made to the grounds around the play equipment and with new “hybrid” matting to hopefully reduce the mud that collects underneath. In addition, new hard slabs are being laid to ensure that the tables are able to be maintained both in terms of structural integrity and grass cutting.

The new facilities have supported a wide range of activities to take place:

- National and local celebrations.
- An inter-school football cup, the Bob Moore Cup (named after a previous headmaster of Boddington School and a fervent football player) now takes place 3 times a term and recently included 14 teams of young players from a wide range of villages. The Village Hall puts on burger, hotdogs, cakes, ice creams and hot drinks.
- West Northants Council run free children’s holiday sports activities and Phil Lines Coaching now runs football coaching days during the holidays and football-based children’s parties have become very popular.
- The annual fireworks display taking its place as one of the major and well attended displays in the area.

One of the main purposes of local government is to manage and improve facilities and services for local people. West Northants Health and Wellbeing board supports an ambition to “Live Your Best Life”. We feel that the development of the sports field has been a key element to create facilities that can be used by children and families in the parish, and surrounding villages. This not only improves the wellbeing of families and children, but it also increases fitness, mental health, and improves aspirations among young people.

Our next challenge is to fund and build the extension to the Village Hall which will create a multi-use hub for Boddington into the future – supporting a broad number of initiatives that will support and enhance the local community.

Caroline Sheers
Chairman REC Group,
Chairman Boddington Village Hall
2/4/2025