

Castleton Parish Council
Annual General Meeting May 27th 2021
Report from Castleton Playing Fields (Charity No. 520429) 2020-2021

Trustees

Paul Borland (Chair)
Steve Hayes (Secretary and Treasurer)
Lynn Trainor (representing the Women's Institute)
Peter Johnson
Alan Baskerville

- 1 **Introduction** For many organisations and charities this has been a year like no other. Fund-raising has been impossible using village events, where residents, visitors and fell runners usually contribute in the region of £2300 each year. Rent for the car park and Hollowford Centre events usually amounts to £2000. This loss of income of over £4000 is significant. The Finance Report from Steve Hayes indicates that our income was £240 with outgoings of £1493. My personal thanks to Steve for looking after our finances and contributing in many different ways. We continue to have a contract with High Peak Borough Council to inspect the play space and the whole field is insured as a facility for public use.
- 2 We have had 3 virtual Trustees' Meetings and a series of worksite meetings at the field to assess the progress of various projects. The latter in particular proved very useful for our day to day business and planning. I would like to say how much I appreciate the Trustees and volunteers who have given their time and expertise towards the management of what is a substantial village asset.
- 3 We manage the playing field and woodland on behalf of the residents of Castleton. The Trustees know it is important that we are open and transparent in our communication with the village. The easiest thing is to put articles in the Peveril Post and on the Castleton Village website, keeping people up to date and inviting feedback. There are good links with the Parish Council.
- 4 **Playground** We also explored getting new equipment for the playground. In a recent consultation with the village, respondents had told us not to spend too much money on new equipment. The quotes for play equipment we received showed that to be good advice. So we are planning to put environmentally friendly low wooden units in the enclosed play area. We have improved the swing seats, chains and renewed rubber matting underneath. The slide has been repainted and steel erosion dealt with - thanks to Peter Naylor for this.
- 5 **Sport** We had been asked to provide better facilities for Walking Football and possibly erect a fence. We met with two representatives to discuss an industry-standard wire fence around the tarmac pitch. These quotes were in excess of £8000 and would not have been aesthetically pleasing so we have decided not to proceed with the plan. We wanted to test out the uptake of Walking Football. We set up a grass football pitch for five-a-side, walking football or simply children's play. This is often used by youngsters.

- 6 We are improving the **stone shed** near the road. Peter Johnson has assessed what needs to be done and has tied the walls in with a steel bar. This building will shortly have a new roof as we want to remove the asbestos roof. It will also be re-pointed. We are grateful to the Breedon Group for giving us £2500 towards this work. The small concrete shed nearby has new secure doors and is partly used by the school. This will also have a new roof.
- 7 Our use of a **tractor mower**, courtesy of the Parish Council, has been a major change. We have had a reliable team of volunteers to mow the grass during the year. We have saved over £1000 since March 2020.
- 8 **Boundary walls** The rebuilding of the dry stone boundary continues and locals passing by seem to appreciate the improvement. My thanks to Peter Johnson, Mick Mattia, and Ross Luke for their contribution.
- 9 **School** We have been particularly pleased about the Castleton School Woodland Adventure Area. The piece of woodland at the top of the field, above the old football pitch, has been loaned to Castleton School. We cleared the wood of some self-seeded trees and branches and improved the fencing, gates and stile. It is really good to see groups up there on a Monday afternoon. We are pleased to be able to contribute to the children's education and play.
- 10 **The future** Our direction of travel is to use some of the land for improved bio-diversity. We were initially discussing this in 2019 and have asked Hope Valley Climate Action for advice. We are grateful for their input and Scharlie Platt has produced a possible plan which we will share with the village this year. We have started by planting trees (thanks to Helen Hayes) on the edge of the field and allowing grass to grow longer to encourage wild flower growth. The initiative of establishing a woodland area for the school has fed into these ideas and there are nest boxes already up in that area. We are keen to involve the school in some of this planning and activity and have established a good liaison with the staff.
- 11 Despite the restrictions of the pandemic it has felt like a busy and relatively successful year for us.

Paul Borland

15.05.2021