

# **Wallingford Sports Park Travel Plan**



**Wallingford Sports Park,  
Hithercroft Road,  
Wallingford,  
OX10 9RB**

**February 2013  
Version 1**

## **Introduction**

Wallingford Sports Park is a successful multi sports centre that is home to 7 individual clubs as well as many other pay-to-play sporting and community activities. The Park is utilised 7 days a week throughout the year with the most intense activity centred at week-ends and in the evenings.

After nearly 40 years of successful operation of adult sport, usage rates have seen an upsurge over the last 10 years, particularly, in the junior sections of rugby, hockey, tennis and football, with a marked increase on Sunday mornings as well as the more traditional Saturday sport.

As a result, the on site capacity of the car park is exceeded regularly on Sunday mornings and quite often on Saturday afternoons as well, during the winter season – so that, in spite of informal arrangements to use neighbouring commercial premises, cars are parking on Hithercroft Road and, more worryingly, on the Bypass.

The Trustees, who oversee the operations on the Park, are concerned that whilst being enthusiastic about accommodating the increasing demands of a growing population in the post 2012 Olympic era, they must also ensure the adequacy and safety of those using the facilities in such a way that the environmental impact of travel is sensibly controlled.

This Travel Plan is, thus, an essential tool in delivering ongoing and sustainable access to the Sports Park.

## **Location**

The Sports Park is situated to the west of Wallingford town centre, between Hithercroft Industrial Estate and the Bypass. Whilst Wallingford itself is within walking and cycling distance, travel from the wider catchment area that the Park serves, stretching to the outskirts of Henley, Reading, Newbury and Oxford, is by car.

At present, access to the Sports Park is predominantly via the main entrance on Hithercroft Road (see location map, below) which connects the Town Centre with the Bypass (A4130). Hithercroft Road is not on any bus route, but is served by a footway alongside the road from the Town Centre up to the Sports Park entrance and, thus, provides a satisfactory means of access for walkers from Wallingford (Town Centre - 15 minutes) as well as cyclists and car users.

In addition, there are two footpaths that link the Sports Park to the Town, shown as dotted lines on the map. One extends from Fir Tree Avenue, past the allotments, to skirt the northern perimeter of the Sports Park and, in practice, serves no useful purpose for users the Park. The other runs from the centre of the Town, across Fir Tree Avenue, skirts the football pitch and tennis courts before it crosses the Sports Park between the rugby pitches and exits across the Bypass. This one, therefore, does serve as a very useful connection to the Town (10 minutes) although, at present, is only designated as a footway and is somewhat overgrown.



## Aims

The overarching aims of the Travel Plan are to address the obvious concerns of the users of the Sports Park and adjacent roads, so as to:

- decrease pressure on an already overcrowded car park
- provide safe access to and from the Park
- enable the Sports Trust to be a good neighbour by minimising overspill problems on the public highway

In general, travel patterns to and from the Sports Park over the critical week-end days are well known, already. Most adults representing home sides will travel in single occupancy cars, either playing at Wallingford or leaving cars in the car park and sharing for away trips, whilst juniors arrive with adults who will either drop them off or stay and watch. Visiting teams will usually share cars or, occasionally, come by coach or minibus. Cycling is rare, primarily because there are no satisfactory facilities for bikes on site.

The current car parking arrangements are not well regulated and made the more difficult because of the largely unmarked gravel surface. The potential for increased use of alternative parking in neighbouring industrial premises at week-ends does exist, but is not as attractive as on site or roadside parking nearer the facilities.

Realistically, cars will always be the predominant transport mode, so maximising available safe parking is important, but there is clearly scope to encourage off-site parking/meeting arrangements and multi-occupancy of cars amongst team mates as well as alternative means of transport.

## Objectives

In order to achieve these aims, the following objectives have been identified:

1. To hard pave, mark out and drain the existing car parking areas where space is frequently restricted by flooding and to identify and create any additional car parking on site, which could not otherwise be used for sporting activities.
2. To extend the Sports Park's informal relationship with Fugro (and, if necessary other industrial premises) to provide overflow off site parking on Saturdays as well as on Sunday mornings.
3. To facilitate the development and use of sustainable travel by striving to improve alternative means of access to the private car.
4. To encourage travel to and from the Park by means other than single car occupancy.
5. To communicate information on alternative car parking and transport modes.

## **Action Plan**

In order to achieve these objectives and gain the commitment of club members, it is proposed that the Sports Trust should set up a cross club working party, whose brief will include:

### **1 On Site Car Parking**

- Vigorously pursue paving, marking out and draining existing parking areas from front gate through to the Jubilee Field bridge as part of the 2013 round of grant bidding, to accommodate emergency access, unloading, disabled parking and drop-off areas
- Upgrade informal parking on the Jubilee Field
- Survey whole of Sports Park and identify suitable areas for creating additional parking, in particular, the land at the Bypass end of the AWP
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### **2 Fugro**

- Identify extent of overflow parking required for those taking part in activities at the Sports Park and those leaving cars in Wallingford whilst travelling to away fixtures
- Approach Fugro (and others, if necessary) with a view to extending and formalising existing relationship, which presently allows some Sunday parking for Sports Park users in exchange for week day parking for Fugro employees

### **3 Sustainable Travel**

- Install new 20 rack cycle shelter adjacent to pavilion – subject to available funding
- Put pressure on and offer support to relevant authorities (Town Council, SODC, OCC) to improve access by walking and cycling by clearing, maintaining, lighting and signposting existing routes
- Create new routes as part of prospective Prupim development – ongoing negotiations

- Investigate logistics and discuss with bus companies and relevant authorities (Town Council, SODC, OCC) the extension of bus routes at critical times to include stops at Sports Park

#### **4 Car Multi Occupancy**

- Carry out survey of club members and parents to establish patterns of travel and car occupancy rates
- Determine likely areas of maximum benefit from car sharing
- Launch aggressive campaign for car sharing
- Encourage off site pick up points for club sides travelling to away fixtures

#### **5 Communication**

- Make known existence of this Travel Plan to all users of the Sports Park and members of the public, via on site notice boards, Sports Park and individual club websites, libraries, schools, Town Council and SODC – February 2013
- Publicise benefits of alternative approaches, agreed actions and outcomes, as they are delivered, for which the support of Sports Park users is required, as above, to keep reinforcing the message
- Target emails at individuals or groups of individuals whose particular support is required to deliver certain key benefits