



## Great Yeldham Sports Ground

Landscape strategy

## 1.1 Study scope

Sheils Flynn is appointed by Great Yeldham Sports Ground Charitable Trust to develop a landscape strategy for the Sports Ground in the village of Great Yeldham. Figure 1 shows the location of the Sports Ground, to the south west of the historic village core.

The project stems from the 2014 Parish Plan<sup>1</sup>, which set out a vision for the village based on the findings of an extensive community consultation in 2013. The Parish Plan was accompanied by an Action Plan, which has since been used as a framework to guide the activities and priorities of the Parish Council.

The Great Yeldham Sports Ground Charitable Trust is taking forward the redevelopment project for the village sports and recreation ground. The site currently has football and cricket pitches, a skate park, basketball hoops and a BMX track. There is also a car park, a sports pavilion and a scout hut.

The overall objective of the project is to develop a long-term masterplan for the village sports ground which is agreed by all parties and can be used to:

- provide measured areas that can be used for costing;
- support forthcoming funding bids; and
- support a planning application for the scheme.



<sup>1</sup> Great Yeldham Parish Plan - The future of our village, Great Yeldham Parish Council, 2014

Figure 1 - Site location

## 1.2 Community consultation

An outline plan for the redevelopment of the site was provided by the Trust as part of the brief for this project (Figure 2), This plan sets out the elements to be accommodated on the site, which include an extended car park, tennis courts, improved and expanded skate park and BMX Track, a new pavilion with an indoor badminton court, a Multi-use Games Area (MUGA), zip wire, football pitches and car park.

These requirements are in part dictated by the recent Parish Plan Update (see Annex A) which includes the list of action points from the Parish Plan. Action points 14, 16 and 20 are relevant to the Recreation Ground redevelopment project. However, they are also informed by comments and requests from the young people in the village. The findings of a consultation with members of the local Youth Group in February 2016 are reproduced opposite and have been an important influence on this project.

## 1.3 Report structure

Following this introduction, the report is subdivided into the following sections:

- **Section 2 - landscape context:** relevant landscape planning policy, statutory designations and a detailed analysis of the existing site
- **Section 3 - landscape strategy:** masterplan and landscape design principles for the scheme.
- **Annex A - Illustrative masterplan** (set up to print at A1)
- **Annex B - Great Yeldham Parish Plan Update, February 2018**

### PLANS FOR THE SPORTS GROUND

#### COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH CLUB (10<sup>th</sup> February 2016)

- Skate Board Park:** Rotate by 90 degrees so that size can be doubled to enable more equipment to be provided to stop queues forming (as occurs esp. in summer)  
Cut back trees near the Skate Board Park to prevent leaves, dirt, twigs, etc. landing on the equipment.  
*Floodlight the area at the back of the site!*
- Skate Board Park Area:** Provide shelter of some sort with benches under for use in bad weather.
- BMX Track:** Make sure that good, big jumps are included.
- BMX Track/Bowl:** Take a small part of the BMX track close to Skate Board Park, to make a "Bowl" for Skate Boarding (this seems to be a large hole in the ground in the shape of a bowl)
- Outside Gym Equipment:** Place adult sized outside gym equipment round the area of the Skate Board Park/BMX Track etc.
- Tennis Courts:** Comment made that these were never used in neighbouring Sports ground.
- Allotments:** Should the Allotments be moved close to the parking area? (Change places with the lower football pitch.)
- Play Equipment:** Provide a few small pieces of play equipment for young children but be careful to place it where footballs will not be a problem.
- Football Pitches/Play Equipment:** Do we need 3 football pitches? If not maybe the one nearest the skate park could be used for play equipment for younger children to use while older siblings are on their skate boards and on the BMX track.
- Car Parking:** Suggestion that car parking be provided close to the Skate Board Park so that the youngsters don't have to walk so far!
- Motor Bike Track:** Could we provide a motor bike track instead/as well as the BMX Track!!!



Figure 2 - Preliminary proposals for the Sports Ground redevelopment project

### 2.1 Landscape planning policy

Figure 3 (page 5) illustrates the landscape planning policy context for the Great Yeldham Sport's Ground. It shows the location of the River Colne floodplains, public rights of way and the conservation area in the historic core of the village. Figure 3 also shows relevant spatial policies from the Draft Local Plan<sup>2</sup>, including the Employment Policy Area, which is adjacent to the recreation ground and the two sites which are allocated for residential development.

There is a public right of way along the western boundary of the sports ground and across the fields to the north, with pedestrian links into the heart of the village (including from the sports ground itself) to the north east of the Site.

### 2.2 History of the site

The site of the village Sports Ground is alongside a small industrial area and a disused railway line which was closed to all traffic in 1964. The Parish Council website provides the following information about the historic evolution of this part of the village:

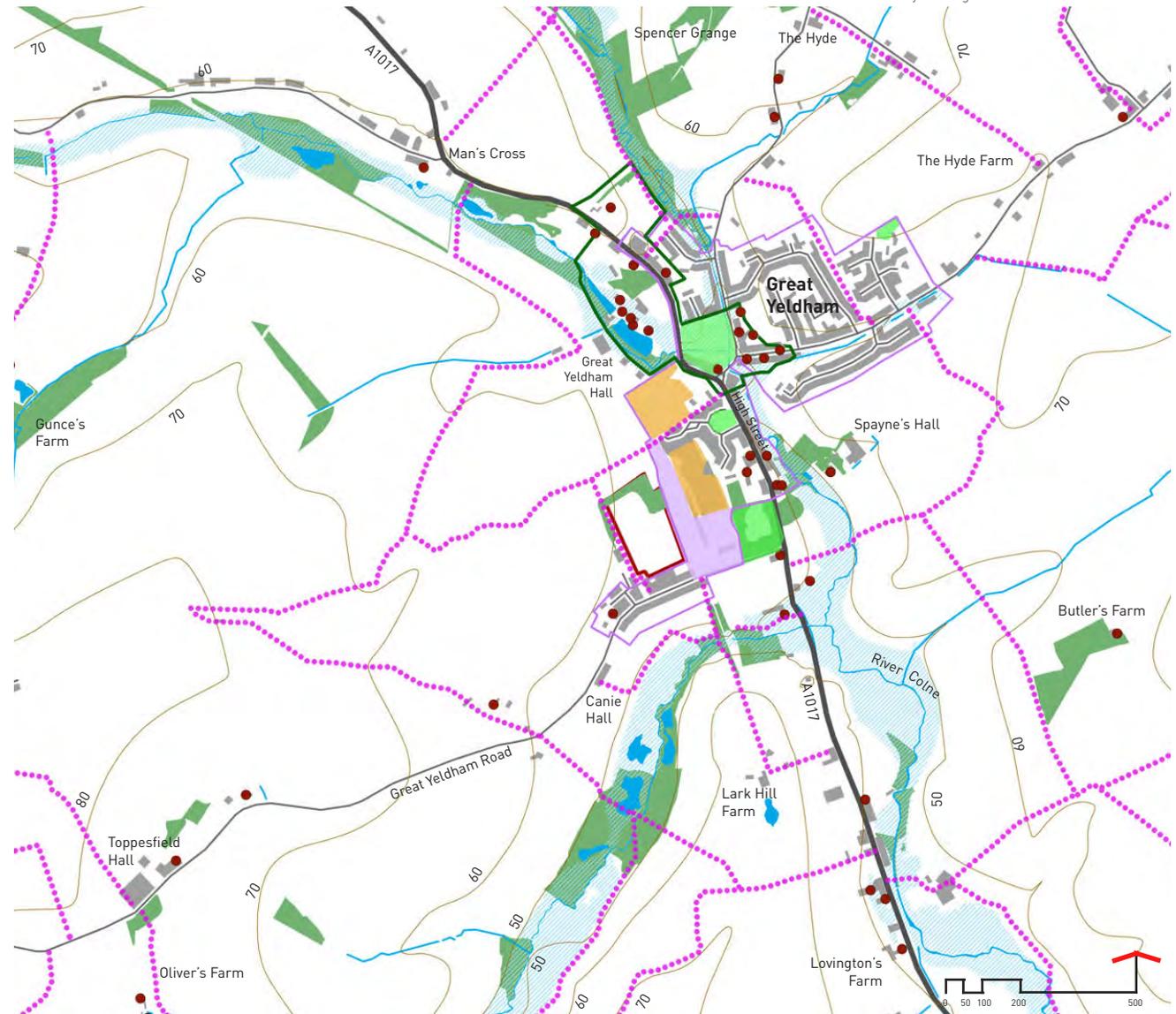
*For over one hundred years, from 1862 to 1964, Great Yeldham could boast a Railway Station on the Colne Valley and Halstead railway line which was used to great advantage by the Whitlock enterprises, by passengers and, during the 2nd World War, transported troops and munitions for the Ridgewell Airfield where 381st Bomber Command was stationed. Now only the crumbling platforms remain with access via a footpath leading from Toppesfield Road, formally Station Road,*



<sup>2</sup> Draft Local Plan, Braintree District Council, June 2016  
(Great Yeldham - Pre Submission Plan, Inset 32)

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-  Site Boundary
-  Watercourse
-  'A' Road
-  'B' Road
-  Minor Road
-  Building
-  Public rights of way
-  Contour Lines (10 m)
-  Deciduous Woodland
-  Conservation Area\*
-  Listed Buildings
-  Flood Zone 2
-  Development Boundary\*
-  Employment Policy Area\*
-  Residential Site Allocation\*
-  Formal and Informal Recreation\*



\*Draft Local Plan, Braintree District Council,  
 June 2016 (Great Yeldham - Pre Submission  
 Plan, Inset 32)

Figure 2 - Landscape context

to the Sports Field.

We also know, through research undertaken by Sport's Ground Trustees, that this was the site of hanger type buildings that were used during the second world war for storage and distribution of armaments to the surrounding airfields. Local historian Adrian Corder-Birch remembers (from the late 1950s/early 1960s) that *there was a large concrete area, which of course gives an indication of the size of the hangar. I also recall a large earth mound covered with grass between the concrete area and the Recreation Ground. I assume this was the earth dug out before the concrete was laid.*<sup>3</sup>

## 2.3 Site description

The Sports Ground is to the south-west of the village centre, with vehicular access from Toppesfield Road. It is well enclosed by large mature trees. There are arable fields to the north and west, industrial land (on the former railway line, railway sidings and station site) to the east and a residential neighbourhood fronting Toppesfield Road to the south.

The entrance drive leads to the car park, pavilion and scout hut, which are all sited along the western boundary of the Site. A loose belt of mature trees separates the sports pitches from an extensive area of hard standing in the northern part of the site, which is the site of the former World War 2 hangar. The skate park and BMX track are to the north of this tree belt.

A pathway threads through the existing trees around the boundaries of the Sports Ground with attractive views across the pitches.



<sup>3</sup> Personal email correspondence, 4/3/18

Figure 3 - Great Yeldham Sports Ground within the context of the village



Access road



Car park



Scout Hut



Pavilion



Sports pitch



Access to existing hardstanding



Access to hard-standing - under trees



Existing hardstanding



Existing hardstanding - skate park



Mound with seats



View to the Pavillion and Scout Hut from the north



Path along the east margins of the sports pitches



Path along north boundary



View to sports pitches from the east boundary



Large mature trees in the south east corner of the Site



Public right of way and overhead electric cables



Access to the village from the north east boundary



Ditch along the north east boundary

### 3. Landscape strategy

Figure 4 illustrates the proposed landscape layout for the Sports Ground. It is based on the following design principles:

The vehicular entrance from Toppesfield Road is via a new **bespoke gate/barrier**. A **signage wall** at this gateway to the Sports Ground will reinforce the sense of community ownership

**Extended car park**, with parking bays on both sides of the access road. The car park layout shown has 48 spaces (existing car park has 20–25). The long run of cars is subdivided by planting and trees to the west and pedestrian access points to the east. A hedge separates and screens the parked cars in views from the adjacent sports field

The **scout hut** is retained; it could possibly be re-clad given it will provide the first impression of the Sports Ground upon arrival.

**Two football pitches** are provided orientated at 25 degrees, in accordance with The FA Guide<sup>4</sup>. An Over 18 and Adult size pitch is located closest to the car park and an Under 11 and 12 pitch to the east.

A **cricket wicket** is located between the pitches. The outfield is 132 m boundary to boundary (the standard minimum is 137 m).

The existing **pavilion** is to be demolished and the new pavilion located on the existing hardstanding north of the tree belt. Disabled parking is located in front of the pavilion and the main car park is at a minimum distance of 70m. There is an opportunity to lift the canopies of the existing mature trees within the central tree belt and remove undergrowth in this area, so as

to open up views to and from the pavilion. The pavilion would house a central badminton court and so could be a relatively tall building.

To the east of the pavilion is a potential location for the **children’s play hill**. This would be located on the existing mound so it will afford good views in most directions. The slightly elevated play area should have a good visual presence in this central elevated area. There are many options for the design of the play area, but the images on the right show an example which seems to be a very popular form. There is a zip wire in this play area, as suggested in the Parish Plan Update (see Annex A).

North of the pavilion are **three tennis courts** orientated as per the guidance in the relevant Sports and Play Construction Association Code of Practice<sup>5</sup>. It is recommended that tennis courts be orientated approximately in a north-south direction because this minimises the effect of a setting sun on the players. However, in the UK climate, the inability to achieve this orientation need not preclude the construction of the courts.

East of the courts is a **MUGA** and north of the courts and MUGA is the **skate park** located on the existing hardstanding. It might be worth introducing some groups of native birch to break up this edge and integrate it with the surrounding woodland edge.

To the east of the hardstanding is the **BMX track** located in the same location as the existing track. We have assumed though that this would need to be reconfigured following the standards set out in the



Entrance Gates



Timber play equipment



Play area

<sup>4</sup> The Football Association Guide to Pitch and Goalpost Dimensions, 2012 - <https://www.thefa.com/-/media/cfa/.../pitch-and-goalpost-guide---july-2012.ashx>

<sup>5</sup> Sports and Play Construction Association Code of Practice for the Construction and Maintenance of Tennis Courts - [www.sapca.org.uk/technical-guidance/codes-of-practice](http://www.sapca.org.uk/technical-guidance/codes-of-practice)

relevant Sport England Design Guide<sup>6</sup>. There is a bank for spectators to the north.

A **jogging/walking track** is indicated circling around the entire area. This is over 600 m in length and might have exercise machines located at strategic intervals along its length. We envisage a central exercise hub south of the pavilion. The track would connect at various locations with the public right of way to the west and the linking path to the east. We have shown this existing linking path arcing to connect to the car park, with side paths to the BMX track, playground, MUGA and the pavilion. The jogging/walking path in the north east corner is intentionally separated from the BMX track to avoid any conflicts.

Finally near the play hill we have shown a small **seating area with long 'railway seats'** next to a line of small shade trees. From here, parents can either watch children in the play area or watch the tennis, football or cricket. The 'railway seats' are intended to acknowledge the former industrial use of the site and its proximity to the historic railway line and station (immediately to the east of the sports ground). Remnant gantry tracks are still visible today within the hardstanding and it might be possible to relocate some of these tracks to the sitting area and to develop seating which is similar to that shown in the design reference images to the right.

Play diggers, which children can climb on, could celebrate another aspect of Great Yeldham's heritage - the adjacent industrial estate was formerly the site of the Whitlock Brothers premises. The Whitlocks were agricultural engineers but were most well known for their digger which was a forerunner of the JCB.



<sup>6</sup> Sport England's Cycle Sports Facilities – Design Guide - <https://www.sportengland.org/media/4355/cycling.pdf>.

1. Signage Wall, bespoke gateway and barrier
2. Car Park
3. Scout Hut
4. Two football pitches
5. Cricket wicket
6. Pavilion
7. Children's play hill and zip wire
8. Three tennis courts
9. MUGA
10. Skate Park on existing hardstanding
11. BMX Track with spectator bank to north
12. Jogging/walking track with six exercise points
13. Exercise hub
14. Seating area
15. Railway seats



Figure 4 - Illustrative masterplan

# Parish Plan Update

Great Yeldham Parish Council

**Annex A**

**Action points, February 2018**

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## Great Yeldham Parish Plan 2014 - 2018

### **Background: What is the Parish Plan?**

The purpose of a Parish Plan is for the local community to set out a vision of what is important to the Parish: how to fit in any new development; preserve valued local features and map out facilities needed for the future. It also identifies the actions needed to achieve these.

In 2013 residents of Great Yeldham completed questionnaires to share their views and preferences in order to help shape the future of our village.

The outcome was the Parish Plan 2014 which was distributed to residents. This document included a wealth of information about our community and also a list of specific actions which would help contribute towards the community's ideas.

### **What has happened since the Parish Plan was published?**

Since 2014 the action list has been monitored and updates have been reported regularly at Parish Council meetings. Many of the concerns that were identified by residents have led to tasks that are now part of the day-to-day activities of the Parish Council and work will be ongoing in these areas. Updates will be reported monthly in the Parish Clerk's Report.

There are other actions that have become encapsulated in wider community projects, for example the redevelopment of the Recreation Ground or issues that will be addressed as part of the discussions surrounding the proposed new housing developments at the Hunnable Estate and Nun's Walk.

### **Next steps – the Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Within the responses to the questionnaire residents identified some preferences for any future developments in the village, specifically:

- the need for affordable housing
- a desire to steer away from large executive style homes
- an increased provision of local employment, particularly light industrial

One way in which the community can have a real say in the future growth of the village is through the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

This is a project that our community is now working towards.

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### Great Yeldham Parish Plan 2014 – 2018: Actions

	<b>Aims &amp; Suggested Actions</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Previous Actions &amp; Current Status</b>	<b>2018 Onwards</b>
1	<p><b>Improve the parking situation by the school</b>  <i>Suggestions: walking bus, higher police presence</i></p>	High	St Andrews School, PTA, Parents, NEPP & Essex Police	<p>Partnership approach with NEPP and Essex Police agreed.</p> <p>Parking poster competition held and winning posters displayed.</p> <p>School looking into reintroducing the walking bus to encourage more children to walk to school.</p>	School taking proactive approach to encourage walking and responsible parking.
2	<p><b>Improve Broadband</b>  <i>Suggestions: lobby BT</i></p>	Medium	GYPC (Communications), Superfast Broadband providers & Community Champion	<p>Exchange updated.</p> <p>CB &amp; SM nominated as PC leads for Superfast Broadband &amp; updating the Parish Council regularly.</p> <p>Community Superfast Broadband Champion assigned to move this forward.</p> <p>Superfast Broadband not available for most of the village. Exploring County Broadband.</p>	Work is continuing in order to move this forward. Progress will be reported regularly at Parish Council meetings.
3	<p><b>Reduce dog droppings</b>  <i>Suggestions: work with dog wardens to expediate their actions</i></p>	High	BDC & GYPC	<p>The Parish Council has had an ongoing dialogue with BDC including the Dog Warden and Environmental Protection Officers. Information on possible action against dog fouling has been shared with the community.</p> <p>A bag dispenser has been purchased and will be located at a central point to</p>	Ongoing review by the Parish Council.

				encourage owners to clear up after their dogs.	
4	<b>Reduce litter</b> <i>Suggestions: Initiate regular litter picking</i>	High	GYPC, BDC & Community Payback	Community Payback team visiting regularly.  A Village Tidy Up day is held annually.  Volunteers regularly undertake litter picking around the village.	Ongoing review by the Parish Council.
5	<b>Cut down on speeding</b> <i>Suggestions: Encourage more volunteers to join Community Speedwatch (CSW) and start more frequent sessions</i>	High	CSW & Essex Police	More volunteers have been recruited and the organisation of Community Speedwatch has been handed over to a community volunteer.  The Parish Council are investigating the possibility of purchasing light up speed signs.	Ongoing review by the Parish Council.
6	<b>Seek to get improved transport facilities</b> <i>Suggestions: Work with ECC to try to get extended operating times and better service to Sudbury</i>	Medium	GYPC (transport) & ECC	Sible Hedingham bus service (Route 333) introduced.	BDC
7	<b>Improve communication about village activities</b> <i>Suggestions: More publicity in the 4 Villages Magazine, publicise the village website, work with Halstead Gazette to get a regular column about Great Yeldham</i>	Medium	GYPC (communications) & HG	Increased coverage of Parish Council events and information in 4 Villages magazine and on Facebook page. The Parish Council website is regularly updated. The PC are looking into the possibility of erecting further noticeboards.	Subject to regular review by the Parish Council
8	<b>Encourage exercise classes in the village</b> <i>Suggestions: approach</i>	Medium	RRMC	A comprehensive programme of dance classes is now held in the Reading Room.	

	<i>Jazzercise etc</i>				
9	<b>Provide support for vulnerable people both in their homes and outside</b> <i>Suggestions: Promote Stay Safe in Great Yeldham scheme to raise awareness, work with Village Agents</i>	High	GYPC & Village Agents	GYPC have approved a partnership approach. Database to be produced. Information regarding services available to vulnerable people to be publicised.	Subject to ongoing review by the Parish Council.
10	<b>Ensure new housing meets local needs</b> <i>Suggestions: Work with Gray &amp; Dale and Hunnable Holdings to encourage them.</i>	High	GYPC, Gray & Dale and Hunnable Holdings	GYPC investigated undertaking an assessment of local housing needs. This has been postponed pending the developments at Hunnable Estate and Nun's Walk.	Issues for consideration within the Neighbourhood Development Plan
11	<b>Improve the layby near the burial ground entrance</b>	Medium	GYPC (Burial Ground Group) and ECC Highways	ECC Highways undertook an initial repair. Application made to LHP for a total rebuild. Awaiting outcome.	PC to review situation after LHP outcome is known
12	<b>Extend the existing school and preschool</b> <i>Suggestions: Work with schools and ECC</i>	Medium	GYPC, St Andrews, Acorns & ECC	Dependant on future housing developments in the village.	Issues for consideration within the NDP
13	<b>Find a suitable use for the old police station</b> <i>Suggestions: It is currently on the Community Asset Register but further plans are needed.</i>	Medium	RRMC & Essex Police	Building was listed as an Asset of Community Value. The property has since been purchased and a planning application has been approved subject to alterations.	
14	<b>Provide allotments</b> <i>Suggestions: This could be achieved if the village receives land on the corner of Toppesfield Road from Hunnable Holdings</i>	Medium	GYPC & Hunnable Holdings	Parish Clerk has attended Allotments training day. Need to secure suitable site (awaiting outcome of LDF Site Allocations). There may be potential within the redevelopment of the Recreation Ground, otherwise this will be considered within the NDP process.	For consideration within the NDP

15	<b>Indoor fitness centre</b>	Low		If still identified as a priority for residents, this will be considered within the NDP.	NDP
16	<b>Provide tennis courts</b> <i>Suggestions: The ground work is in place at the Recreation Ground even though it is in a poor state of repair</i>	Medium	GYPC (Recreation Group) and funders	Provision for tennis courts included in initial proposals for the development of Recreation ground.	Recreation Ground Redevelopment
17	<b>Improve leisure facilities</b> <i>Suggestions: The survey results indicate that the following are needed: internet cafe; pool table/darts/table tennis/hobbies; gymnasium; adult education; film nights</i>	Medium		United Charities has agreed a sum of money for the purchase of table tennis equipment. Awaiting suitable storage.	
18	<b>Help in the home (small jobs such as garden maintenance, changing light bulbs etc)</b>	High	Special group to be set up	For review and consideration by the GYPC, subject to resources and volunteers.	
19	<b>Encourage a greater Police presence.</b>	High	GYPC (Police)	Work with Essex Police.  Cllrs Rawlinson and Sargeant to attend Halstead Area Crime Prevention Panel meetings.	Subject to ongoing review by PC
20	<b>Install a Zip Wire at the Recreation Ground</b>	Low	GYPC (Recreation Ground)	Fundraising required. £1411.22 raised to date and held in GYPC reserves.  Included in proposals for the redevelopment of the Recreation ground.	Recreation Ground redevelopment

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# Illustrative masterplan

set up to print at A1

**Annex B**



- General**
-  Existing woodland/trees
  -  Existing public right of way
  -  Housing
- Design features**
-  Signage wall
  -  Gateway and barrier
  -  Car park
  -  Car park trees
  -  Hedge
  -  Fence
  -  Scout Hut
  -  Pavilion
  -  Tennis Court
  -  MUGA
  -  Skate park
  -  Railing
  -  BMX track
  -  Spectator banks
  -  Additional trees - native birch
  -  Flowering trees
  -  Seating terrace
  -  Play hill
  -  Zip wire
  -  Railway seats
  -  Exercise hub
  -  Exercise point
  -  Jogging track
  -  Football pitch
  -  Amenity grass
  -  Meadow
  -  Planting
  -  Woodland planting



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