

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE  
22 September 2021**

**Officer:** Danny Powell – Recreation & Formal Space Manager

**PERFORMANCE QUALITY STANDARDS**

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**Purpose of Report**

To receive an update on the Performance Quality Standards carried out on Shrewsbury Town Council's Grass Sports and Amenity Surfaces.

**Background**

The Town Clerk presented a report on the Play Pitch Strategy published by Shropshire Council. Within that report a desk-top survey had been done of all Town Council's sporting facilities by appointed consultants and recommendations as to condition and planned works was detailed. Officers were not supportive of many of the conditions contained. The Town Clerk's report requested the commissioning of a specialist to undertake Performance Quality Standards on all grass sporting surfaces including football, cricket, tennis, bowls, croquet together with high usage areas in the Quarry. Work was undertaken in two tranches – summer sports and winter sports and amenity areas.

**What is PQS?**

Performance, Quality, Standard is the measurement of a sports surface's quality and playability. A number of tests are carried out on the surface, and the results are used to give the surface a standard. This standard is set by the given Sport's Governing Body.

There are 4 levels, starting with High, Standard, Basic and Fail.

The following methodology was undertaken:

- Visual Assessment of grass coverage to approximately measure the percentage of grass species, weeds, pests, and diseases.
- Visual Assessment of profile, sample extracted a profile down to 300mm.
- Penetrometer, Clegg Hammer were used to test of soil compaction and Double Ring Infiltrometer for infiltration rates
- Laboratory tested soil samples of the Area.
- Assessment information measured using Performance Quality Standards which are set out by The Grounds Management Association, RFU, FA and ECB

## **Results and Findings**

### **Winter Sports Pitches**

All the Town Councils Winter sports surfaces have a current rating of standard, this is apart from Greenfields Recreation Ground which was basic due to the fact that the sports surface has undulations and requires re-levelling, which has been identified in previous reports. The only solution to improve the surfaces is to import quality topsoil, re-level and over seeding the area designated as the sports pitch. However, the whole of the amenity open space would benefit by being relevelled to alleviate the existing undulations.

Of the existing facilities classified as standard the sports turf consultant recommended that to improve the structure of the playing surfaces additional more regular programmed aeration was recommended. Supplemented by selective weed control and fertiliser, this will increase the expenditure on the revenue budgets.

Secondary drainage is recommended, sand bands on all our larger sports areas and this will be actioned by the team using the recently purchased sand band banding machine approved by the committee.

### **Bowling Greens**

All the bowling green's apart from one have measured as Standard and that one was basic.

To improve the Greens Deeper Aeration and more frequent scarification is required to remove Thatch during the Autumn period.

### **Croquet Lawns**

These had a Standard rating and Require more Aeration and Thatch removal in the Autumn renovation.

### **Tennis Courts**

All Tennis Courts were rated Basic.

They all require Aeration, Thatch reduction and Topdressing with a clay tennis dressing.

### **County Ground Cricket Squares.**

The main square has a Standard rating, the second square has a High rating.

Main square requires releveling to improve its rating and both need more aeration and Autumn renovation.

### **The Quarry**

PQS surveys were carried out on two high maintenance areas of the park the arena and the area where the fun fairs are sited.

Due to the high intense use of the arena when events take place it is recommended that subject to a check for underground services that a land drain is installed along the bank of the arena, the surface re levelled to remove some rutting supplemented by an increase in frequency of an Aeration programme.

The area often used by Fun Fairs will also benefit from releveling and an increase in aeration.

At both locations work will be programmed by the team when the climatic conditions allow.

### **Conclusion from the PQS Survey**

- The PQS survey work confirmed what staff already knew about the standards of play surface. It also provided more valuable information about the make up of both the subsoil but also the grass sward and what measures need to be undertaken to make improvements
- The results will be able to better inform the Play Pitch Strategy
- The results have prioritised areas for improvement
- The results validated the decision to purchase sandbanding and aeration equipment and the potential financial savings in undertaking the work inhouse
- All major capital requirements have already been highlighted as part of the Capital Programme works and are already in the Place Plan
- The PQS survey highlighted some major works needed to areas of the Quarry and significant drainage improvements will need to be considered and an optimum time for works identified
- The survey has highlighted the potential for every site, but that comes down to the level of resources required. Further work needs to be undertaken to determine optimal benefit of undertaking that work depending on both current and potential use. As the football season starts and fixtures are fitted into our facilities we are already seeing some COVID casualties of clubs folding and not requiring facilities.

It should be noted that the recent PQS test and report was carried out by a consultant to provide an independent overview. However, the Council employs two highly qualified Groundsmen, the Recreation & Formal Space Manager has a National Diploma in Sports Turf Science and Sports Ground Management and the Recreation & Formal Space Assistance Team Leader has an Intermediate Diploma in Sports Ground Management. Staff have the expertise and as good practice will be tasked with completing these reviews annually, reporting back to their Service Manager and the committee.

All future PQS will be completed in house with these services also being available to Local Council and external sports clubs if expressions of interest are received.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That an improvement programme is actioned by the Recreation & Formal Space Manager subject to climatic conditions;
- (iii) That future PQS reports are completed in-house with our experienced staff;
- (iv) This service is offered to Local Councils and external sports clubs which would provide additional income generation;
- (v) That the committee receives an annual report on the condition of both grass sports surfaces and amenity space (The Quarry) as part of the council's review of the amenity assets.