



Avebury Cricket Club Committee  
c/o Bridge House  
Avebury  
Wiltshire SN8 1RF  
Chairman: Dominic Fry  
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[www.aveburycc.org.uk](http://www.aveburycc.org.uk)

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Andrew Williamson, Chairman, Avebury Parish Council  
*and*

Liz Moore, Clerk to Avebury Parish Council  
6 Rhyls Cottages  
Lockeridge  
Marborough  
Wiltshire SN8 4EE

04 April 2016

Dear Andrew and Liz

### **Slitting / Aeration of Avebury Sportsfield**

#### **Overview**

In recent meetings of the Avebury Sportsfield and Recreation Committee, one issue to which we constantly return is the challenge of how to manage the quality and health of the Avebury Sportsfield against a backdrop of significant annual rainfall, poor drainage in certain areas, and near constant, all-year round usage.

Having reviewed in committee the contents of Sport England's "*Natural Turf For Sport*" guidance, we have concluded that it would be helpful, in addition to a regular programme of cutting, fertilizing, scarifying, chain harrowing and selective weed-killing, to consider regular, annual aeration of the ground.

Unfortunately, we are currently unclear as to whether we have the authority to commission such maintenance. Once again, we turn to the Parish Council for guidance, and to ask whether it would be prepared to contract with Avebury Cricket Club to carry out this work.

#### **Background – The Procedure**

This process is carried out by use of a spike or slitted roller, running gently around the outfield with the aim of creating an even pattern of six-inch slits in the turf. Sport England recommend this procedure be carried out at least four times a year.

This procedure has not to our knowledge been carried out on the sportsfield since the football club was operational in the 1960s.

## Key Benefits

This procedure typically delivers the following benefits:-

- **Improves the physical state of the soil** – improving the overall “wear and tear” resistance of the Avebury Sportsfield.
- **Increases air content and root growth** – making the whole field even more attractive and encouraging grass growth, particularly on the football pitch.
- **Improves drainage** – allowing more Winter sports to continue during the wettest Winter months.
- **Reduces turf compaction** – Especially on heavy use surfaces such as football pitches, where pitted divots are so hard to remove.
- **Encourages deep root growth for grass** – which in turn improves resistance to “tearing” and also drought tolerance in the event of dry Summers.
- **Reduces likelihood of weed proliferation** – potentially over time reducing the requirement for annual weeding and fertilizing.
- **Aids other ongoing maintenance work** – Can also aid the “working in” of any top-dressing applied (e.g. sand).

## Contract Proposal

By way of background, we estimate that to have this work carried out by a third party professional contractor would cost in the region of **£500 to £700 annually**, assuming industry standard rates for travel, fuel and labour charges.

Our proposal takes into account the limited resources of both the Parish Council and Avebury Cricket Club.

### *Alternative 1*

The Parish Council (or ACSReC) purchases a 6-foot Aerator or Grass Slitter, to be stored securely at the sportsfield (cost i.r.o. £900 ex-VAT). Avebury C.C. agrees to operate the machine (using its tractors and members) at no cost, with such duties added to its contract for maintenance.

### *Alternative 2*

The Parish Council (or ACSReC) contracts with Avebury C.C. at an annual rate of **£250.00** for the provision of this service. Necessary equipment would be purchased and stored by Avebury C.C. at its own risk.

## Proposed Next Steps

If you are interested in discussing further, then please call me on 01672 539081, 07961 316173 or via email.

I would be delighted to attend a meeting of the Parish Council to discuss in more detail.

**Should either of these alternatives prove acceptable, we would be in a position to commence work within 7 days of receipt of approval.**

Yours sincerely

Dominic Fry  
Chairman and Janitor  
Avebury Cricket Club