

Gilbert Avenue Playing Field Research Report – Annex 1

Introduction

Gilbert Avenue Playing Field is an underutilised space located on the periphery of Tuxford Town Centre and has been selected for substantial regeneration investment. It is important that the investment priorities and design trajectories are wisely chosen to ensure subsequent infrastructure meets the original desired outcomes. To best make this decision, Bassetlaw District Council (BDC) officers have engaged with local providers and researched local needs with the purpose of collaboratively agreeing the design brief for this investment.

It is noted here that final business cases or deeper analytics of data have not been conducted as a part of this report. This additional level of analysis should be conducted by the final operator and manager of the facility to ensure adequate levels of scrutiny when committing to this entrepreneurial venture.

Public Consultation Results

The most significant and clearest outcome from the public consultation conducted in August 2026 was the public's strong preference for the Gilbert Avenue Playing Field improvement proposal – receiving 70% of the overall preferences. The justifications provided for this choice emphasised broad community value, multi-use potential, unmet/incomplete provision for children and young people, and concerns over the impact on residents of the alternative skate park proposal.

The Tuxford Town Council (TTC) meeting on 3rd of September 2026 resolved to endorse the consultation's findings and progress the consideration of the Gilbert Avenue Playing Field project into the feasibility phase. The Town Council also noted that, whilst the Streetscaping Fund provides the capital funding for the project, the Town Council would need to absorb future insurance, maintenance, inspection, and other operational costs.

Capital Costs

Primary local providers engaged with include a sports pitch and grounds specialist and a local custom Pod provider. Costs are for indicative purposes only and have provided on a measure basis to make articulated decisions for final design inclusions. Full specifications are available upon request.

Pitch Construction Costs

Project: Pitch Reconstruction – (Approx 7,750m2 area)	£ 180,725.00
Recommended Secondary Drainage Works	£ 39,375.00
Temporary Irrigation - Above Ground Travelling Sprinkler System (For initial 'Grow In')	£ 15,300.00
Gilbert Avenue Car Park Re-Surfacing – Approx 900m2	£ 27,560.00
Gilbert Avenue Playing Fields Grass Pitch – Initial 'Grow In' 12 Months	£ 36,480.00
Lighting 4.8m Floodlights (estimated)	£ 70,000.00
Fencing (half pitch) £165 per metre	£ 27,555.00
Attenuation basin	TBC
Tarmac footpath £125 a meter	£ 12,500.00
Smart Pods	
Changing Room £44k/pod	£ 88,000.00
Bathroom Pod (4x Standard Toilet, 1x DDA Toilet)	£ 54,600.00
Bathroom + Ref Changing Pod	£ 80,000.00
Ground Screws (per Pod)	£ 10,500.00
Grand Total (Field, full fencing, lighting, 3x Pods)	£ 611,150.00

Assumptions and Omissions

The fees above are from single providers and would be subject to appropriate market engagement and tendering exercises, potentially providing greater value for money. It will be essential for additional external project management to be included in overall fees, assumed at least 10% of total project value.

It is noted that the pitch solution proposed will be subject to a topographical survey and a license from the relevant water authority approving our proposed drainage solution. Further, it is noted that the water authority may require an attenuation basin to be installed on the bottom south-western corner of the pitch, which is not included in the above costings.

Finally, depending on the final scope of works agreed, it is also possible that planning permission will be required. This will incur an application fee and also have implications for BNG units, which have not yet been costed.

Specifications

Changing and Toilet Pods

Customised offering and catered to end user needs, constructed offsite and delivered with connection points for mains fresh water, mains electrical power and

waste. The unit's costs for this exercise are of high quality, built with steel chassis providing a 10-year structural warranty and stated 35+ year life expectancy.

All units will be supplied with external lighting, PIR high level internal lighting and ventilation with lockable doors. They will be insulated to a good standard with double glazed, opaque windows to allow for natural light.

Changing Pod (Figure 2):

- 8m x 3m
- Benches around perimeter and middle of unit
- 4x power outlets

Toilet Pod (Figure 1):

- 7m x 3m
- 5x independent cubicles
- 1x shower

Toilet and Changing Pod (Figure 3):

- 11m x 3m
- 4x independent cubicles
- 1x 4m long changing room



Figure 1. Toilet Changing Pod, for visual purposes only.



Figure 2. Changing Room Pod, for visual purposes only.



Figure 3. Toilet and Ref/Small Changing Pod, for visual purposes only

Playing Field Reconstruction

The proposed pitch includes necessary improvements required to provide a high-quality grass pitch that could be used for all levels of sport. A full specification can be provided upon request; key elements include:

- Remove 25/30mm of top layer of grass sward
- Cultivate existing material 100mm deep, set levels for new formation, add 50mm sports sand and ameliorate into existing
- 80mm perforated lateral drains at 4m centres (approx. 2,150 linear meters)
- Main carrier drain with inspection chamber
- Outfall location to be determined by client subject to water authority agreement
- Prepare and spread seed (50g/m²), fertiliser (40g/m²) and allowance for wetting agent (10l/hectares x2 occasions)

Secondary drainage works include for additional installation of sand/gravel bands to enhance the foundations of the pitch before cultivated material with sports sand is installed on level surface. This includes sand/gravel bands at 1m centres at 50mm width and 250mm depth, backfill to comprise of 125mm 2-6mm stone then proud to surface with sports sand.

Temporary irrigation measures are recommended to ensure initial grow-in period is successful. This will include the provision of a water tank and automated wetting equipment. The provider will install equipment that provides a dedicated 8mm precipitation per pass, traveling at 18meters/hour for the length of the pitch twice a day. The fee includes the equipment hire and set up, 4 months of use and dismantling at the end of the hire period. Note, water usage (22m³/pass) is not included in this fee.

Carpark resurfacing is assumed on a like for like basis, clearing of existing material and reinstating a new surface. This will include a 50mm deep layer of 10mm Stone Mastic Asphalt.

The 12-month 'Grow-in' proposal is a highly recommended approach to ensure the pitch is fully rooted and maximises its longevity once initial usage begins. This period could be shorted, but it is expected initial usage to have most significant long-term impacts on the overall pitch quality. This proposal includes 30 sessions of regimented mowing (cut to optimal length to enhance root growth), fertilising x4 times, selective weed control, additional overseeding and sand topdressing supported with application of wetting agents and divot rectification every other month.

Additional Works

A requested tarmac footpath has been requested to connect Birtley Drive to the Linden Ave footpath. This is estimated at £125/meter and doesn't include for additional groundworks. This cost will be firmed after license from water body stating attenuation basin requirements.

There are also upgrades that could be considered with any underspend such as flooring improvements to the outdoor gym equipment, tree planting and upgrades to the BMX track if budgets allow. Once final project scope is agreed and procured, additional measures can be considered.

Needs Assessment

Investment in Gilbert Avenue is a great and potentially generational opportunity to bring additional utility to those in its vicinity, although the works carried out should be proportional and supportive of the related proposed uses. In the immediate surroundings and wider local area, there are a wide variety of professional pitch

offerings and will need to be a critical aspect in the decision making surrounding this project moving forwards.

Current Local Demand

Tuxford Youth FC

- Youth sides from U7s to U13s
- Currently playing the majority of their matches at Walker's Industrial Estate and Tuxford Academy
- Previously played at Gilbert Avenue, but didn't use it last season and don't appear to currently be using it, due to the significant waterlogging

'Tuxford Football' Facebook Group

- New Facebook group set up in September 2026, already has 3 groups of kids based on age
- Nothing particularly official (though the group is taking subscriptions), no approach made to TTC
- Originally played at Gilbert Avenue, but now planning on playing at Tuxford Academy (2G pitch) over the winter due to dark after-school nights

Tuxford 6-a-side

- New league starting in Autumn 2026, seemingly at Tuxford Academy (2G pitch)

Walesby FC

- Currently using Gilbert Avenue for practice matches/training and would like to use it more, but have been unable to due to waterlogged surface
- Mostly play at the Walesby Village Sports Club
- Very popular club and need more space for additional teams

East Markham FC, Bassetlaw Bulldogs RLFC, and East Markham & Ollerton Cricket Club

- Playing at Rayner's Field (a.k.a. East Markham Playing Field)
- Owned/operated by East Markham Parish Council

Retford United Juniors FC

- Play at Retford United's ground

Ollerton Town FC youth teams

- Play at Ollerton Town's ground

Current Available Local Resources

Tuxford Academy

- Immediately adjacent to Gilbert Avenue Playing Field, with hireable 2G pitch (includes lighting, changing rooms, disabled access, parking) and 2 grass pitches (with changing rooms, parking)
- **2G pitch** (floodlit, changing rooms, parking, disabled access) - **£90/hour**
- **Junior 9v9 grass pitch** (NOT floodlit, changing rooms, parking) - **£26/hour**
- Junior 11v11 grass pitch (changing rooms, parking) - £26/hour

Walker's Pitch (Walker's Industrial Estate)

- 4 small grass pitches (changing rooms, but no floodlights or parking)

Rayner's Field / East Markham Playing Field

- Home to East Markham FC, Bassetlaw Bulldogs RLFC, and East Markham & Ollerton Cricket Club
- One of the first fields in the country to gain "Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Field" status, then becoming a "Field In Trust" (national scheme which ensures longevity as a playing field)
- Owned by East Markham Parish Council, managed through East Markham Community Playing Field Association
- Currently waiting to hear back from East Markham PC on some more details

Walesby Village Sports Club

- Home of Walesby FC
- Clubhouse, changing rooms, accessible toilet, parking available

Elkesley Playing Field

- Basic grass football pitch (no changing rooms/toilets)

Sutton-on-Trent Sports Club

- 2 team changing rooms, referee changing room, floodlights (suitable for training only), car parking, disabled access
- 1x full-size grass pitch (£32/game)
- 1x 9-a-side grass pitch (£20/hour)
- 2x 5-a-side grass pitch (£17/hour)
- Floodlit training (£25/hour)

Anecdotal Evidence

Lionel Thursby, *Chairman – Tuxford Youth FC*

- Improvements to drainage, pitch condition, lighting, and some changing provision would all be hugely welcome.

- Lionel is willing to share more feedback about what he believes is needed at GAPF, but only once he is shown proof of the 99-year lease that is being developed.

Jonathan Coupe, *Walesby Football Club*

- Historically, Tuxford had a thriving junior football community, with over 200 local children participating in organised football, alongside hundreds of visiting players, parents, coaches, and spectators. GAPF was once a focal point for junior football, bringing families together each weekend.
- Existing pitches are relatively level, providing a good starting point for redevelopment.
- Greatest issue is year-round usage, due to poor drainage;
 - Even relatively minor rainfall can result in matches being cancelled, with water remaining on the surface for weeks
 - Places GAPF at a significant disadvantage compared to clubs with access to artificial pitches
 - “A club can organise volunteers, recruit coaches, register players, arrange fixtures and purchase equipment, but if the playing surface is regularly unusable, the entire operation becomes unsustainable.”
- Other major weaknesses:
 - Lack of suitable changing facilities, working toilets, and accessible facilities
 - Lack of ‘clubhouse’, small kitchen, or refreshment area that could support matchdays, tournaments, meetings, and community activities
 - Inadequate security, leaving the site vulnerable to vandalism/ASB
 - Unauthorised overnight parking and use as additional residential parking
 - Parking difficulties and conflict with residents on matchdays
 - No floodlighting, significantly restricting training opportunities in winter (clubs must hire expensive facilities elsewhere, increasing costs for families)
 - Limited opportunity to generate income through community hire, tournaments, or evening activities
- Tuxford children can no longer reliably play organised football in their own village, leading many families to move to clubs in other towns/villages where their children can train and play matches consistently.
- “A village that once supported 200 junior footballers now has no Tuxford junior football club. That should be a major concern for everyone involved in planning the future of this facility.”
- They would ideally want a full 3G pitch with fencing, lighting, storage facilities, and a clubhouse.
- If only choosing one amenity, they would suggest a 3G pitch with lighting
- Concerned about misuse/anti-social behaviour if left unfenced

- “We have an opportunity to rebuild something that was once a major part of this community. I genuinely hope that opportunity is not missed.”

Operational Considerations

Pitch Maintenance

The central focus of the Gilbert Avenue Playing field is to provide a quality sports pitch for the local clubs around the Tuxford area and it is therefore imperative that pitch maintenance is considered to keep it to a good standard all year round.

Quotations provided for initial grow-in period can be utilised for indicative purposes. Omitting mowing regime as this is likely to be carried out by existing grounds maintenance team and reducing fertiliser and reseeding intensity brings field annual costs to approximately £8,920. This annual maintenance would allow for:

- 1x Fertiliser sessions
- 1x Selective weed control
- 1x Overseeding (20g/m²)
- 1x Aeration session
- Sand top dressing (60 ton)
- 7x Sessions of divot repair and wetting agent application

Additional allowance should be considered for Tuxford's grounds maintenance team to maintain grass length. This will be subject to monitoring growth and seasonal variation but assumed at 1-3 cuts weekly.

Pod Operation and Maintenance

Once installed the changing and toilet pods will need routine maintenance in addition to the utility costs associated with their operation. Examples provided here utilise information from Bassetlaw DC toilet blocks and further reinforced with analysis of the proposed pod provider. There is also additional cost considerations not included in this report such as insurance, which should be undertaken by the end operator of these facilities.

Routine Checks and Maintenance

The specific routine used will be managed by the pod operator. The items discussed here are for indicative purposes only and subject to H&S engagement and risk assessments.

- Daily Cleaning
- Legionella flushing weekly (Subject to water risk assessment)
- Site landscaping / weeding / littering
- Legionella testing (Quarterly subject to risk assessment)
- PAT testing annual

- Fire extinguisher inspection (weight)
- Disabled equipment annual
- EICR 5 years

Utilities

Operating the pods themselves will incur fees from utilities such as electric and water. Using an electrically heated toilet block as an example from Bassetlaw District Council's asset pool, costs circa £3,500/year in electricity and £5,800/year in water. This is equivalent to £800/year and £1,320/year respectively comparing the Council's toilet block to the proposed 7x3m toilet pod on a m² basis.

It is expected that the changing pod will be a comparatively cheaper unit to operate on an energy basis and will not have a water charge, although this has not been modelled for the purposes of this report.

Pitch Hire Opportunities

Reviewing the rates in the surrounding area's leasable fields shows a spread of £14/hour up to £34/hour depending on the service of the pitch and the specific activity it's used for. This is depicted below in Table 1. Non-floodlit grass pitch offers have been averaged for ease of reference to better understand the potential revenue generating opportunities.

Chargeable Rates Oct 2026 (£/hour)

Facilities available	Tuxford Academy (2G floodlit, 2G accessible, changing rooms, parking)	Sutton-on-Trent Sports Club (NOT floodlit (unless training), changing rooms, ref changing, parking, accessible)	Gainsborough Academy (2G floodlit, changing rooms, parking)	Marshall's Sports Ground and the Levellings (Gainsborough) (NOT floodlit, community hall, kitchen, changing rooms, ref changing, parking, accessible)	Average Rate NOT floodlit
2G 11v11 pitch	£90		£75		
9v9 2G pitch			£40		
5v5 2G pitch			£30		
11v11 grass pitch	£26	£21.33	£23	£34.88	£27.40
9v9 grass pitch	£26	£20		£22.86	£22.95
5v5 grass pitch		£17		£13.61	£15.31
Non-floodlit training				£14.03	£14.03
Floodlit training		£25			

Sunlit hours greatly vary in Tuxford across the seasons, which will impact the useable hours that a non-floodlit pitch can be booked for. Assuming target hours of operation is weekdays 3pm to 8pm and 8am to 2pm on weekends, the pitch will only be usable for 15 hours a week during the winter, but this jumps up to 37 hours a week in the summer. Taking this approach across the year will yield 1,300 hours of lettable pitch time.

There are a variety of scenarios that can be modelled using this information, which are provided below. Outputs of these models are strongly influenced by assumptions such as opening hours and utilisation rates of the pitch for bookings within the community. These models are assuming all 1,300 hours are booked per year. Noted,

there are also other sources of revenue such as business sponsorships or crowdfunding options that have not be explored or included in these models.

Total Annual Hire Revenue

Source	Income
Match Hire (400 hours)	£10,960
Training Hire (900 hours)	£12,627
Total Annual Income	£23,587

5x 11v11 matches per week over a 40-week season

- 5 matches x 2 hours (warm up/change over) = 10 hours a week
- 10 hours a week x 40 weeks a season = 400 hours

Alternative Scenario - Training Dominant (80% Training)

If demand for training is particularly strong:

- Training = 1,040 hours
- Matches = 260 hours

Source	Income
Match Hire 11v11	£7,124
Training Hire	£14,591
Total	£21,715

Conclusion

It is clear there is a need for improved facilities at Gilbert Avenue Playing Field, however, there is not adequate budget to facilitate all the requested measures. Further, consideration of how on-going maintenance and operational costs will be funded need to be cemented by the end operator.

Reviewing the capital elements of the scheme balanced approach is recommended, keeping a contingency for the capital works and 10% allowance for external project management support the following is recommended:

Project: Pitch Reconstruction – (Approx 7,750m2 area)	£180,725.00
Secondary Drainage Options	£39,375.00
Temporary Irrigation - Above Ground Travelling Sprinkler System (For initial 'Grow In')	£15,300.00
Gilbert Avenue Car Park Re-Surfacing – Approx 900m2	£27,560.00
Gilbert Avenue Playing Fields Grass Pitch Reconstruction – Initial 'Grow In'	£36,480.00
Tarmac footpath £125 a metre	£12,500.00

Bathroom Pod (4x Standard Toilets, 1x DDA Toilet)	£54,600.00
Ground Screws (per Pod)	£10,500.00
Contingency 5%	£18,852.00
Subtotal	£395,892.00
Client-side Project Management 10%	£39,589.20
Total	£435,481.20

Taking this approach will incur ongoing operational expenditure, which needs to be considered in how the field is leased and managed by the operating authority. It should be budgeted for a minimum of £5,390/year with a target of £8,820/year for pitch maintenance by an external provider along with the additional impacts on the grounds team from an increased mowing regime. Further costs associated with the Toilet Pod include their utility charges, insurance and routine maintenance and cleaning necessities should be considered.

These maintenance related expenditures could be offset through the potential income generation of running a successful asset such as the proposed above at Gilbert Avenue, providing upwards of £20,000/year. However, the success of this endeavour will greatly depend on its quality of management, booking utilisation and routine maintenance.