



Dear Member,

Following on from the AGM I am pleased to advise that the SAC Management Committee will be producing a bi-monthly Club News communication which will be sent to all members and cover club plans and developments, forthcoming social events, all rackets related activity and much more. This bi-monthly communication will be supplemented by interim Club News communications which will keep members informed and up to date of all issues and actions related to the ongoing objective of the continuous improvement of the Membership experience at the Club.

To get the ball rolling, I am pleased to give an update to members on discussions which are, and have taken place, with Solihull Council in respect of the ex Solihull – Rugby Club grounds and associated land.

We will keep you updated accordingly.

Update on the Ex Solihull-Rugby Club grounds and associated land

Brief Background

As many members will be aware Solihull Bees Rugby Club left the site shortly after the turn of the millennium at which time the Old Bees Clubhouse was still standing. However, after about 5 years or so the old club house burnt down and the remaining shell was demolished just leaving the hard standing that was once the car park in front of what was the old Bees clubhouse. The land that was previously occupied by the clubhouse and the car park circa 1.3 acres, is owned by Oakmoor Developments and the remaining sporting land circa 5.5 acres i.e. ex-pitches and training areas were leased to Oakmoor by Solihull Council around the time that Oakmoor purchased the 1.3 parcel of land around 2000. In order to protect the availability of car parking space on Oakmoor Ground which has been a reciprocal arrangement of car park usage over many years, Solihull Arden Club formalised a legal agreement with Oakmoor some years ago to secure continuity of use, this agreement still remains in place.

The owned land and leased land was up until around 2018 included in the Solihull Local Plan as “Site 18”, as such being one of the sites potentially considered for the development of “affordable housing”. Several development schemes were unsuccessfully submitted by Oakmoor Developments from the early noughties until around 2017/18 at which time it had become clear that this site might be withdrawn from the SLP, this was confirmed circa 2018-19.

The bottom line is that as of today the grounds continue to remain unused, untidy, unsightly, and poorly maintained.

In order to try and find a way forward regarding the future of these grounds and importantly an opportunity for Solihull Arden to be part of an agreeable solution and outcome we have been engaged in meaningful discussions with Solihull MBC in particular their Head of Strategic Land and Property and his appointed consultants Cushman & Wakefield since Autumn 2023.

These discussions are still in progress with all stakeholders with Solihull MBC leading discussions. It is pleasing that these discussions are positive and for the first time since Solihull Bees left the site around 2000-2001 we have reason to be optimistic that an agreement may be reached which could benefit all parties.

At this stage, all stakeholders have understandably entered into an agreement to observe confidentiality, until such an agreement becomes realisable. Whilst there remains more dialogue and discussions ahead of us, we remain optimistic that such an agreement is now possible. If realised this would be significant for Solihull Arden Club and its future going forward. We hope that as the year progresses we will be able to update you further and in due course share with you any specifics once an outline position of agreement is hopefully reached.

However, until discussions relating to this whole matter are fully concluded and agreement with all parties has been achieved, we are not able to have total clarity about what opportunities Solihull Arden Club may have in terms of any of the land previously owned/ leased by Oakmoor Developments. However, we continue to be optimistic and if and when that stage is reached we will of course advise all members accordingly.

Regards,

Richard Dumbleton

Solihull Arden Club – Presiden