**Lytchett Matravers Parish Council**

**Notes of a Discussion with Wendy Meaden on 9th July**

# Background

There are a number of projects in the Parish Council’s programme which might require grant funding. Many suppliers of grant funding require that applications need to include evidence that a consultation has been undertaken with the intended users to secure their engagement, demonstrate that there is a demonstrable demand for the intended facility/service, and that users have had an opportunity to influence the design, etc to improve the likelihood that the facility/service will see sufficient usage to justify the investment.

One of the main existing facilities for children in Lytchett Matravers is the Skate Park. This has gone through two iterations, and on both occasions the work required to design the facility, raise funds, etc has been undertaken in consultation with children from the village who had an interest in skateboarding and scootering. Wendy Meaden was involved on both occasions, and this paper is based on a discussion with Wendy to capture her recollections of the approaches taken.

# First Skate Park Project

The First Skate Park project started in 2000/2001.

A group of boys had started creating a space to skate in the car park using odds and ends including orange boxes and planks. Wendy made contact with this group one day when the youth club was shut, and got talking to them. They all attended the Lytchett Minster School, and some of them had younger siblings at the Primary School. Wendy went to the Lytchett Minster School Reception, and was put through to the Deputy Head. However, the Lytchett Minster School were not enthusiastic about being involved. At that time the Primary School had a School Council, and Wendy Meaden was a member of the School Council representing the Parish Council. She spoke to the School Council about the proposal for a skate park, and the teachers prepared a survey form which the children were asked to complete. Through this the parents got to hear about the proposal, and were keen to have more facilities for children in the village. Some of the parents reported seeing scaffold poles in Poole Park being used as grinding rails by kids on skate boards, and several residents got together to pursue the Skate Park project. There were a number of key components to the project, as follows:

* Several attempts were made to secure grant funding. There was someone in the Bournemouth Housing Department who provided assistance in getting grants. Wendy spoke to him, and a case was made for the skate park emphasising that Lytchett Matravers was a rural village with very limited facilities for teenagers. However, these attempts were not successful.
* During a meeting in the Youth Club the Parish Council said they would provide up to £5000 match funding, giving the group of children involved a challenge to raise this amount.
* A 50p entry fee was in place at the Youth Club, which was put towards the Skate Park.
* Arrangements were made for bottles of pop and snacks to be sold at the Youth Club, and the profits were contributed
* The group of kids carried out research into the different surfaces that might be used to construct the skate park, and developed a wish list of equipment. They made sure that the equipment included provision for their younger siblings as well as themselves (the little kids used scootering ramps at the Youth Club).
* It became clear that there was not enough money being raised, so it was decided to run a skate marathon in the school playground.
* Fire FM became aware of these activities, and publicised the skate marathon, and provided sponsorship. The event was broadcast for 3 hours.
* The Bournemouth Echo also got involved and ran articles about the skate park project
* Some local extreme sports shops also got involved, eg Just Add Water, and offered to donate prizes and provide judges for competitions
* Children came from various places across Purbeck, from Three Legged Cross, and Verwood, to take part in competitions, for which there was an entry fee
* A mini bus was hired to take the kids round other facilities, including Slade Farm and Redcotts to see what equipment they had and how it was laid out.

Note that the main reasons for these activities were to raise money through entrance fees and selling things, rather than through applying for grants. The activities also generated excitement about the Skate Park, and secured the engagement of a large number of children. The children involved were told about the requirements associated with use of public money, including the need to prove value for money through a tender process.

RTW Note – The Parish Council file on the Skate Park shows that in addition to the £5000 match funding, the Parish Council also provided £5000 for one of the main pieces of equipment. In addition, the DCA provided £500 for one component, and Wendy Meaden secured a grant of £3995 from Purbeck District Council. The project was completed in 2004/5 at a total cost of ~£20,000. Village residents also carried out some of the work on a voluntary basis.

# Replacement Skate Park

The first skate park included a number of components made of wood. It was expensive to maintain, gradually became unsafe, and was shut down after about 11 years. Getting a replacement Skate Park installed was easier than getting the original one built because the concrete surfaces had made up a significant part of the cost. Much if not all of the money required for installation of the second Skate Park was provided by the Parish Council. The children identified possible suppliers, including First Evolution, and permission was obtained from their parents and from the school for a trip to be arranged to visit each company to see what equipment was available, etc. This led to a successful tender exercise, through which the Skate Park still in use in 2019 was built.

Councillor Ralph Watts

July 2019