

The Dowson Field

In May, 2021, KL Football Club asked the town council to support their bid to provide vehicular access via Mill Brow and Mill Ayre to their ground, situated on the large field which also accommodates KL Cricket Club.

Several councillors made a site visit on May 10.

Since then it has emerged that:

- (a) The football club conveyance, dated September, 1976, prohibits vehicle access except for repair and maintenance or in an emergency. There is an indicated footpath to the ground from Devil's Bridge.
- (b) The cricket club bought their ground in 1970 and have enjoyed vehicle access from Devil's Bridge for the past 51 years.
- (c) The Town council is responsible for the 2.5 acre Dowson Field, which lies between the two club grounds and is fenced off with a double gate entrance. The town council conveyance, dated September, 1977, shows the land is freehold and is to be used as a playing field for the benefit of the youth of the parish and the surrounding district.
- (d) The remaining land on what is described as Parcel 297 is leased from Underley by the Nicholson family for grazing.

It has been suggested by Underley Estates that the football and cricket clubs could purchase a licence permitting vehicular access to their respective grounds, renewable annually. In one case, a fee of £500-£1,000 has been suggested.

In the conveyance of The Dowson Field to the town council, there is no mention of vehicles being prohibited. The town council is now asking local solicitors and banks about the Deeds for The Dowson Field. It is hoped we can learn more from said Deeds.

Underley's agent, Henry Armitage, has asked if the town council is agreeable to vehicles having access to both clubs.

Currently, the football club is free to apply to SLDC for planning permission to create a vehicle access to their ground. They may also consider asking Underley Estates and KLTC to permit vehicle access from Devil's Bridge.

This is a complicated issue which has legal implications for all parties. It does present an opportunity to consider changes at this site which will have long-term benefits for the local community.

Council is asked to agree:

To appoint a working group, to be known as the Property Group, to investigate further, this to include the status of the town centre Play Park from its conveyance and/or deeds. The Group will report regularly and conclude its work by making recommendations to council in due course.