

NORFOLK PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION

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Registered Charity No: - 304126

**Please reply to the Chairman: -
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17th August 2023

Dear Member

It has been a long time since you heard from the Norfolk Playing Fields Association, so I thought I should write to advise you of the state of the Charity.

As is common with many charities, the past few years have been very difficult for the Norfolk Playing Fields Association. Gone are the days when we had a twelve-strong management committee, multiple areas of support from Norfolk County Council, a thriving membership and a strong Trustees' body. These days it is all down to individual volunteers to drive the organisation forward.

The purpose of this communication is to gauge the level of support of parishes, playing fields associations, and district and borough councils, to see if it is possible to revive the Norfolk Playing Fields Association's fortunes to fulfil its role as the guardian of precious formal and informal play areas, as well as providing finance to create and maintain facilities.

I joined the Norfolk Playing Fields Association in 1992 as an appointed member from Breckland Council. During the ensuing 31 years, 25 of which I have been Chairman, we made grants totalling many thousands of pounds to parish councils and village playing field associations, to support improved playing facilities and provide relevant technical and practical advice.

The National Playing Fields Association (now Fields in Trust) was formed in 1925 to address the need to provide playing fields for youngsters in both rural and urban areas. The Duke of Edinburgh was President of the Association for over 60 years, his grandson, Prince William, is his successor. Norfolk PFA was established in 1926.

The need for a strong county Playing Fields Association is as important now, as it was almost 100 years ago. The need for housing is now so great that all open spaces, whether used for formal or informal play, are under threat as never before.

As I am now in my ninth decade, I need some help if the Norfolk Playing Field Association is to survive.

The present position is:-

- 1 My fellow trustees are not in the best of health and so are unable to commit to the Norfolk Playing Fields Association as much as they would wish.
- 2 Membership has fallen, and due to historically low interest rates, previous income from investments has disappeared.

- 3 The Norfolk Playing Fields Association is currently unable to provide the service members are entitled to expect.

The good news is that:-

- 1 The Norfolk Playing Fields Association is financially sound with significant reserves.
- 2 The Norfolk parishes (of which there are over 500) receive substantial benefit from a strong county Playing Fields Association.
- 3 Grants awarded by the Norfolk Playing Fields Association, act as a catalyst to draw down funding from other grant bodies.

I am writing this in the hope that a new Board of Trustees (say 6 – 8 members) can be formed to revive the Association's fortunes. There is much we can do to greatly increase recreational play and leisure facilities for all ages.

If you would like to contribute to the Norfolk Playing Fields Association in any capacity, I would love to hear from you. I am willing to carry on until a new Board is settled in.

If it transpires that revival of the Norfolk Playing Fields Association is not possible, there will be no alternative other than to apply to the Charity Commission to terminate the Charity, and distribute our funds to other organisations with similar objectives. After almost 100 years of existence, this would be a very sad step to take. I do hope we can continue our important work for the benefit of the community.

Please distribute this email widely within your organisation for maximum exposure.

Yours sincerely



John Carrick

Chairman of Norfolk Playing Fields Association