

Justification Statement for a Planning Application at Roefield Leisure 2019

1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 Part of the existing Roefield Leisure Facility is an Ex Stable/Coach House that as been converted in to a gym, it as been given Local Grade 2 listed status. The elevations that are now the most visible have had little physical change from the original. The leisure centre into which it is now encapsulated is wrapped around the back and is now not on view.
- 1.2 It is not part of our remit to make comment on the way the centre was developed, however to house the required sports uses, these types of structures are the best for the application in relation to cost/value for money

2.0 Justification

- 2.1 Roefield is a community leisure centre. As a leisure charity we are unique as we are a charity. We offer a range of activities for various members of the community. The centre improves the quality of peoples lives and life skills to help the community to be healthier. Services include numerous classes for people of all ages; gym; small aerobic/dance studio, climbing wall; spinning room; sports hall; for children, play schemes; gymnastic clubs with exclusive Saturday evening slot, an indoor bowling league for senior citizens. Roefield also has links with disabled groups, including GP referrals and people with psychological and family issues.
- 2.1 Over the past five years the centre has seen a 90% increase in membership, all coming from the local community. As a result we are struggling to cope with demand and maintain existing standards. There are several reasons for this increase: stronger management; more and varied classes; higher standard of instruction; extensive marketing. Since 2010 there as been a rapid increase in population due to new housing development. In 2010 the population of Clitheroe was 18,000 in 2020 it will rise to 27,000 and this trend is set to continue. This is the same pattern in the Ribble Valley the Local authority which we are part. As we are located in a semi - rural area there is no other facility for some considerable distance.
- 2.2 The present aerobics studio has capacity for 16 which results in many people being on a waiting list. We are requesting funds from Power to Change to build a new modern aerobics room on a flat roof on top of the building. Plans drawn up shows this new facility will have the capacity for 75. This will result in an increase in participants. Over the past 7 years the number of schools attending has increased dramatically with the majority of students coming from a non

sporty background, there can be 70 on any one visit so it is essential we have more space. The community groups that attend the centre include GP referrals; physical and psychological disabilities; swimming club; Ribble Valley Council; mums and babies class; Up and active and Ribble Valley Netball would all benefit. This would be in keeping with Roefields aim of continuing to develop facilities for the benefit of the health of the community. A healthier community is a happier place to live and takes pressure off the local health authority.

2.3 Objectives will improve-

To develop an empty and unused space into an aerobic studio

To generate additional revenue streams

To expand activities

It will create employment

To improve the quality of product

2.4 Roefield has a 99year lease for the land and the gym which as 91years remaining. Roefield owns the rest of the buildings which includes reception, existing small aerobics room, sports hall, hit room, spinning room, climbing hall and office. If successful Roefield will own the new extension building.

3.0 Presence in the Area and History of the Facility

3.1 Roefield Leisure is set in a semi rural location in the heart of the Ribble Valley just on the outskirts of Clitheroe the principal town of the district. The centre is easily accessible to the numerous surrounding villages in the Ribble Valley, none of whom have leisure centre facilities. There is a vary large car park 20 metres opposite, so parking is not a problem. The centre refunds the car parking fees to members. Roefield is a member of 'Active Network' where membership enables them to use 16 other centres in the large towns of Blackburn, Burnley, Accrington, Rossendale and Pendle.

3.2 In the early 1980's the local authority wanted to sell the barn which was used as a badminton court. A local charity was set up with people from within the local community. They had various fund raising events, including buy a brick and had contributions from local business's. A sports hall was built and the barn was converted into gym. The aim is to keep improving the facilities for local people. Grants were later awarded to add a climbing wall, small aerobics room, spinning room and functional room.

- 3.3 The local community has provided donations for us to keep moving forward. The donations we have received have come from Ribble Valley Borough Council; Clitheroe Town Council; Clitheroe Mayors Fund and Bowland Trust. Roefield over the years has received a number of grants from Sports England. The credibility of the leisure centre and the faith put into it by the parties donating demonstrate that Roefield Leisure is on a sound footing and acting in a positive and professional manner.
- 3.4 We have had people resign their membership citing they can't get on an aerobics class, this tells us clearly there is a need for a larger room on site. Roefield is always customer focused and regular NPS surveys are done with members and members of the community are encouraged to write down their views. Roefield has an extensive schools programme and most weeks over 350 pupils between 9 - 18 visit the centre. They come from the community of the Ribble Valley. Regular meetings are held with school staff and their overwhelming reaction is that Roefield needs a larger aerobics room. We have regular visits from local councillors who are keen to promote Roefield within the local community and share Roefield's aim for providing high quality for the community.
- 3.5 We have undertaken as much research as reasonably possible and have concluded that there is a very substantial requirement for this proposed extension.