

## **Open Spaces needs Group review - January 2015**

The Group investigated the provision of open space in the town against the standards established in LP1. In considering how any identified needs might be met, the Group recognised the serious impediments to acquiring that land for open space and protecting it for posterity.

When the Group issued its report in March 2013, it was thought that according to the open space standards set in LP1, Alresford had an existing shortfall in Open Space of 11.23 ha. Given planned population growth, it was thought that the need in 2031 would be 27.6ha and hence that the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) should include the need to provide an additional 16.37ha. Since publication of the report, however, two things have happened that require a revision of these figures. First, Winchester City Council (WCC) issued an "Open Space Strategy" that purported to show that Alresford's provision of open space was more than had been estimated in the "Open Space Assessment" which had originally been provided to the Group as its baseline. Second, WCC discovered an error in its estimation of the population of the Town in 2013, the end of the period addressed by the Local Plan. These combined indicate that LPP2 should include the need to provide an additional 4.09ha. Most of this would be provided by the requirement levied on developers to include open space in their schemes.

The Group is now working with the full Town Council to clarify the content of WCC's Open Space Strategy in terms of the categorisation of open space into that which needs to be protected from development even though it might be thought to have little practical access and that which is clearly publicly accessible and need protection from that point of view. The results of this may mean that more public open space in addition to that required to be provided by developers needs to be included in LPP2.

In the March 2013 Recreation and Open Space Needs Group report, the following specific suggestions for satisfying the general requirement include:

- One or more allotment sites - 0.5 ha in total
- A dedicated cricket ground that could also provide facilities for runners - 1.5 ha
- Assuming rugby pitches are completed in the near future there will be a need for facilities particularly for youth rugby and mini-rugby purposes - 2.0 ha
- Additional tennis courts - 0.5 ha in total
- Further housing development will require new equipped Children's Play areas
- A BMX Park.

The Needs Group is now reassessing these in view of the changing plans for the total amount of open space to be provided by 2031. This might also affect the size of the problem of acquiring additional land alluded to in the opening paragraph of this Section.