

RAWCLIFFE RECREATION ASSOCIATION

A brief history

Rawcliffe Recreation Association was founded in the late 1970s when, through Rawcliffe Parish Council, a virgin field of about 6 acres became available for recreational purposes.

A committee was formed by a public spirited band of volunteers and meetings were held with the aims and objectives of developing, maintaining and managing the field as a recreation ground. In particular, to provide buildings, structures and necessary equipment for the recreational needs of Rawcliffe and the neighbourhood and offer membership of the Association to the general public.

Numerous fund raising activities were undertaken such as discos, barbeques, bonfire, Christmas sleigh, annual summer gala, sponsored walks and swims, car booters and house to house collections. All these efforts were with a view to erecting a pavilion that would include changing facilities for two senior and one junior football teams that had, by this time, become affiliated to the Association.

When the time came for seeking grants and loans for the project, invaluable help and advice was forthcoming from Rawcliffe Parish Council and, in particular from its Chair, Councillor Bob Eccles. In 1984 the Association became a registered charity and, with its own funds now in place, plans were drawn up for the pavilion, planning permission obtained and applications successfully made for grants from North Yorkshire County Council, Ryedale District Council, Rawcliffe Parish Council and the Sports Council (grant and loan). Building work commenced that year and the pavilion was opened in 1985 at a cost of just over £50,000, followed shortly afterwards in 1986 by two tennis courts.

A playschool soon became established in the main hall followed by weekly York City Dog Training Club sessions. Further activities have included various dance classes, aerobics, youth club, hirings for adult celebration and children's parties, wedding receptions, blood donor sessions and a meeting place for local councils and other bodies.

In 1989 funds permitted a bar extension and a second garage to be added to the buildings. In the same year a free senior citizens' Christmas/New Year party was established and has continued every year since, entertaining between 60 and 70 of the more senior residents of the area.

A multi-use games area (MUGA) was first suggested in 1990 by a parent of the junior under 12s football team operating at that time, who thought that the existing tennis court area could be floodlit and cater for football, netball and tennis. Nothing transpired at this time, due mainly to the cost of such an undertaking. Rawcliffe Ladies Netball club were using the tennis court area, but in the ensuing years had to leave due to the surface deteriorating rapidly. This fact, coupled with an explosion of interest in junior football in 1996 for all ages from 8 to 16, and the coming on stream of national lottery funding brought up the subject in 1998.

Plans were drawn up for the enlargement of the tennis courts to a multi-use games area and a further building of four fully equipped changing rooms, with separate referees accommodation plus a Petanque piste. Obtaining a major grant from Sport England Lottery Fund of £152,196 supported by further monies from the Football Association, City of York council, Rawcliffe

Parish Council, numerous business and other organisations, as well as the Association's own contribution, building work commenced in 2000 and was completed at a total cost approaching £240,000.

Over the years Rawcliffe Recreation Association has seen many changes in its personnel – both in officers and committee members. Although difficult at times to persuade new volunteers to give up their time, they have eventually been forthcoming and today with the many various talents able to be called upon when necessary, the Association is in a strong and healthy position.

There are no founder members remaining, but the buildings and structures to be seen today on what was originally just a field, is a lasting and fitting tribute to all past and present members of the Association for their foresight, dedication and hard work in providing sport and recreational facilities for the area.