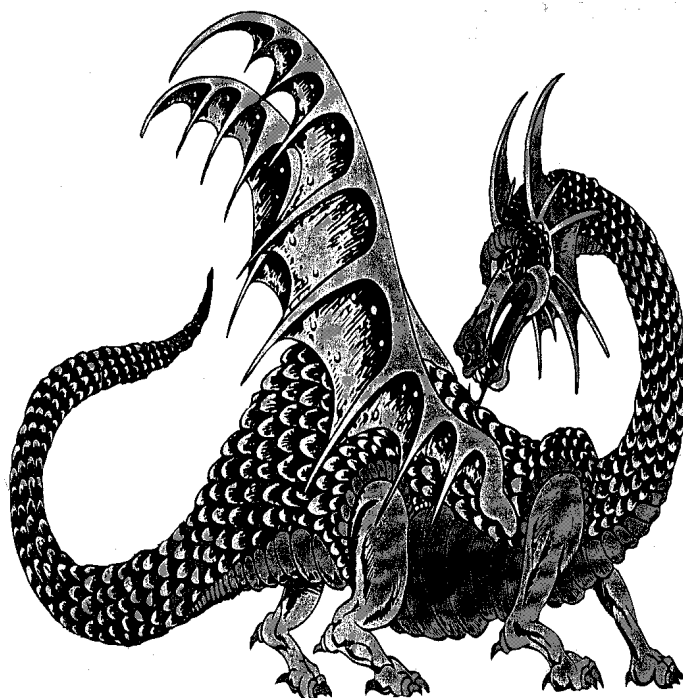


Doncaster Baseball Club

Facilities Report – July 2003



Version Control

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1 Introduction

Doncaster Baseball Club (DBC) is the only baseball club operating in the Manningham area and, while our membership is concentrated around the Doncaster area, our catchment area extends to Ringwood/Croydon, Bundoora, Eltham and Balwyn North. Better facilities would enable better servicing of this catchment area.

Our Senior and Junior playing membership grew by 60% and 40% respectively last Summer season and we had 21 teams in total (5 senior men, 2 senior women, 14 junior), together with a total membership of 250. It is conceivable that we will add 6 teams (1 senior men, 1 senior women, 4 junior) this season, taking our total teams to 27 and club membership to over 300 (refer Appendix 1). In addition to our Summer numbers, we also have Winter program at Deep Creek Reserve that accommodates between 50-75 Winter players.

Overall, the recent and projected member growth places unprecedented strain on our already inadequate playing facilities.

This facilities report is intended to:

- Provide a single reference for current Doncaster Baseball Club facilities issues;
- Make an analysis of the current state of facilities;
- Develop an action plan to address immediate issues;
- Recommendations on the development of facilities to support future club growth.

This report follows a number of communications between the Club and Manningham Council over the past 18 months. A summary of these communications is as follows:

DATE	COMMUNICATION	INVOLVED
3 May 2002	Letter from DBC to Manningham Council on a range of facilities issues including critical H&S items	John Hollingsworth (DBC) to Zac Anver (MC)
14 May 2002	Meeting b/w DBC and Council to inspect Deep Creek Reserve & discuss current issues	John Hollingsworth, Rob Mitchell (DBC), Zac Anver (MC)
22 May 2002	Meet b/w DBC & Council officials to discuss a range of facilities issues including potential for junior relocation to Stintons Reserve	John Hollingsworth, Geoff McDonald, Rob Mitchell (DBC), George Coster, Zac Anver, Barbra Gaiotto (MC)
11 August 2002	Discussions and various e-mails about the specific development of Stintons Reserve to support baseball	Various
02 October 2002	Letter from DBC to Manningham Council on a range of facilities issues including escalation of critical H&S items	John Hollingsworth (DBC) to Zac Anver & Paul Reading (MC)
21 October 2002	Meeting between DBC and Council officials to inspect urgent H&S issues at Deep Creek reserve	John Hollingsworth (DBC), George Coster, Jeff Young (MC)

DBC is in no way criticising the opinions or efforts of the council representatives that have been involved in the above communications, however the bottom line is that there are

serious facilities limitations at both Deep Creek Reserve and Stintons Reserve, some of which are basic H&S issues. This report is intended to summarize the overall facilities situation and propose a resolution for each.

2 Overall Facilities Strategy

2.1 Limitations of current facilities

The greatest limitation of the existing DBC facilities is the available land in and around Deep Creek Reserve. Four of our twelve 2002/03 VBA Sunday teams had to train and play their home games away from Deep Creek Reserve. With our projected growth in 2003/04, we will have to use an alternative home venue for six of our fifteen VBA Sunday teams. Our local Friday night and Saturday morning domestic competitions are now both at stretching point.

Last Summer 2002/03 DBC relocated our Under 12 and Under 14 junior playing operations from Rieschiecks Reserve to Stintons Reserve, as it provided us with better access both for training and matches and suited Councils needs to lighten the load at Rieschiecks. The relocation was also on the basis that the council would seriously explore the potential to upgrade the Reserve to better support baseball on a more permanent basis.

DBC has a very active school clinic program which flows into a combined Saturday morning competition involving both club and local school teams. Because of our limited space, we have already had discussions with the local State Development people this month about our concerns at being able to service this competition this Summer. We do not presently have access to any facilities other than Deep Creek Reserve on Saturdays.

We do not want to turn players away from the sport because our facilities cannot support the numbers. Equally, we do not want to lose members because our facilities cannot cope. The bottom line is that our membership levels would easily support the existence of three permanent baseball diamonds, preferably at one location.

As a clear example, leading clubs like Waverley, Upwey and Cheltenham have dedicated facilities in place with a minimum four to six diamonds with fixed back nets, ample parking and clubroom facilities. These clubs all provide a central, baseball specific venue for the development of the sport in their region of Melbourne. Their facilities provide a benchmark for what we need to achieve in order to position and sustain Doncaster as the baseball leader in the North Eastern suburbs.

2.2 Option One - Relocation of club to a newly dedicated facility

The relocation of Doncaster Baseball Club to a new facility (Stintons reserve or similar), where a minimum of three fixed diamonds could be installed.

2.2.1 Advantages

- All teams would be able to train and play at the one venue.
- Positively address the space limitations at Deep Creek Reserve (i.e. the general lack of warm-up space for teams).
- Enable council to reallocate Deep Creek Reserve to another sport.

2.2.2 Disadvantages

- Doncaster Baseball Club loses would lose the historical home and what is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque venues in Victorian baseball.
- Requires additional incremental capital over other available options.
- Requires early write-off of capital associated with new back net.

2.3 Option Two - Develop a second baseball venue

Option Two would see DBC retain Deep Creek Reserve and have a second local venue developed to a standard that could support two fixed diamonds. Early discussions with council over Stintons Reserve were aimed at achieving this option via the development of Stintons Reserve as a dedicated Summer baseball facility.

2.3.1 Advantages

- Retains Deep Creek Reserve as our main venue, with the history and picturesque location.
- Ensures recovery of capital recently invested in Deep Creek back nets and drainage.
- Better utilisation of Stintons Reserve.
- Provides the additional space required to service our existing membership.
- Probably requires less capital to upgrade Deep Creek and develop a second two-diamond venue (e.g. Stintons Reserve), than to completely relocate the club.
- If at Stintons Reserve, the development would occur in the heart of our growing catchment area (i.e. Park Orchards).

2.3.2 Disadvantages

- All teams do not train and play at the one venue.
- Additional council rates for club.

2.4 Recommendation

It is the clear preference of Doncaster Baseball Club to proceed with Option 2, which is to retain Deep Creek Reserve as our primary venue and to permanently locate a number of our Summer teams to Stintons Reserve.

This can only be achieved through the progression of a number of complementary and interdependent development activities:

- Extend Stintons Reserve playing area and install fixed back nets at both ends in line with Section 4.2;
- Bring Deep Creek Reserve facilities up to the minimum standards as set out in Section 3;
- Upgrade the existing Deep Creek floodlighting to enable scheduling of night fixtures and thus alleviate some of the existing playing area limitations.

3 Short-term Needs

Irrespective of the medium to long-term facilities strategy for Doncaster Baseball Club, there are a number of facilities items that require urgent immediate attention.

As previously communicated, we are cognisant of the fact that finalisation of the Deep Creek Reserve Management Plan is contingent upon the sale of the quarry, however we are extremely concerned that this is delaying resolution of basic facility issues.

The level of frustration within the club membership has reached peak levels on the majority of the following issues and they have been the subjects of a steady stream of communication with council for a number of years.

3.1 URGENT - Terracing in front of Deep Creek Pavilion

The most urgent immediate need is the terracing in front of the Deep Creek Reserve pavilion - at best it can be described as disgraceful. Over the past 18 months this item has been the priority subject of both correspondence and meetings between DBC and Manningham Council - in real terms there is a shared public liability risk for both.

A previous Board took the unprecedented step of installing a stone wall and timber platform immediately behind the back net in order to mitigate the risk of people "tumbling" down the ever-increasing crumbling timber hill in front of the pavilion. I am advised that this step was only taken after repeated requests to council failed to achieve any tangible outcome. The terracing presents our single greatest safety concern at the facility.

As the following photos show, even to the "untrained eye", cracked paving that is crumbling and falling away, together with protruding "sawn-off" posts presents an unacceptable health & safety risk. It is no exaggeration to state that people stumble and trip over the existing structure every time the facility is used



Sawn-off pole (one of four) protruding in front of pavilion



Poor state of front terracing (note the uneven, crumbling pavement, ageing timber deck and front door step restricting disabled access)

At a meeting at Deep Creek Reserve on 21 October 2002, Council representatives committed to survey and redesign the terrace area, provide plans to DBC for sign-off and then commence work immediately on new concrete terracing and spoon drain. DBC assumed from the conversations that all work would be completed by the end of the 02/03 Summer season. In the intervening 9 months, no communication or advice has been received from council on this issue. We can only assume that nothing has progressed due to funding challenges.

It is in all parties interests for this area to be rectified prior to the commencement of the 2003/04 Summer season, when the safety risks will again be magnified by increased pedestrian traffic.

3.2 URGENT - Disabled access to Deep Creek Pavilion

It is both embarrassing and demeaning for members of our club to be carried into the pavilion when they need to utilise the amenities and this is certainly the case for a couple of our wheelchair-bound members, plus any wheelchair bound visitors.

It is ironic that we have disabled toilets in a pavilion with no disabled access. We urgently require the installation of a ramp at the front entrance to Deep Creek pavilion. This work could easily be completed in conjunction with any front terracing concrete work.

Our challenges with disabled access are further compounded by the fact that it is near impossible for a wheelchair bound visitor to alight and traverse the unsealed car park unaided.

3.3 URGENT - Home Run Fence

Three major problems exist with the Home Run (perimeter) fence. The fence is dilapidated and falling apart and, in many places, just hanging together and on a severe lean.

Secondly, the “ditch” that has developed over many years at the base of the fence has now reached a dangerous depth and it is only a matter of time before a player suffers a serious injury attempting to catch a ball at the fence.

Thirdly, the fence is too low, particularly from the left field corner to centre field, where in effect the ground runs downhill. During Senior Men’s fixtures, many balls bounce off the newly erected footbridge, some narrowly missing people on the bridge.

The following photos show the existing state of the fence.



Dangerous “ditch” at foot of dilapidated Home Run Fence



Proximity of Home Run Fence to footbridge (note top rail of fence parting way)

It is ironic that a significant amount of money was spent recently on the construction of a footbridge (displayed in the above picture) immediately adjacent to a hazardous eyesore fence that presents a danger to the large numbers of people traversing the bridge.

3.4 URGENT - Batting Cage

The batting cage at Deep Creek Reserve is derelict to say the least. We understand it was previously a cricket batting net relocated from a local cricket ground and hence is too small and too low. In addition, it is in a dangerous state of disrepair and the club is continually patching holes in an attempt to alleviate the problems with it.

At numerous other Melbourne based baseball clubs (e.g. Waverley, Montmorency, Diamond Creek, Upwey) there are excellent examples of quality batting cages. In principle, a baseball-batting cage should have ample height and depth, a wire outer structure with soft netting inside to make multiple actual tunnels during practice. It should be a structure wide enough to house three “tunnels”, with the base of the cage adequately drained and surfaced. A concrete pad at one end would accommodate pitching machines.

Again, the safety problems associated with the existing cage make rectification a priority (refer following picture).



Dilapidated Batting Cage at Deep Creek Reserve

3.5 Deep Creek Reserve Car Park

The state of the car park, both in the surface and (lack of) design, causes severe traffic congestion and presents safety risks on training and game days, when up to 75 vehicles attempt to park at Deep Creek Reserve. It is not clear where the "car park" starts and finishes, as there are no marked bays or signage.

In addition, the surface severely degenerates following periods of rain, as it is at least 50% dirt, again presenting risks as people are forced to traverse the "slush". Through no fault of the drivers, vehicles often spin their wheels when attempting to exit.

As already stated, our challenges with disabled access are also compounded by the fact that there is no marked disabled parking space and it is near impossible for a wheelchair bound visitor to alight and traverse the car park unaided.

While we understand the delays over finalisation of the Reserve Management Plan, we are not sure why this should totally block any design and development of minimum acceptable car parking.



Appalling state of "car park" at rear of Deep Creek pavilion

4 Improvement Opportunities

4.1 Lighting Upgrade

As communicated formally on 2 October 2002, the Victorian Baseball Association (VBA) will schedule first-grade night games at Deep Creek Reserve from 2003/04 Summer season. In addition, they will also relocate Victorian Institute of Sport Baseball Team to Deep Creek Reserve during Winter. The VBA formally advised last year that they are:

"very supportive of your Club in pursuing a venue that is capable of hosting night Baseball. Currently only one suitable venue is available in Melbourne and that is at Altona. A high standard lit venue in Melbourne's population belt will create a wonderful opportunity for the playing of Senior, Junior and Women's Baseball at night and in the twilight"

In addition, at recent meetings with Scott Dawes (CEO VBA), he stressed that it is critical for the VBA to have an alternative lit venue in order to enable efficient fixturing for the coming season and further, he committed that the VBA would use the maximum available dates for 2003/04 scheduling as could be accommodated by DBC at Deep Creek Reserve.

The core requirement to achieve the scheduling of night games is for the existing lighting to be upgraded to VBA minimum standards. This can be achieved by the installation of a minimum of ten additional fittings to the existing towers.

It is pertinent to note that Manningham Council fully supported a previous 1997 submission by DBC to upgrade the existing lighting and had formally committed \$9,000 of Council capital funds towards the project (refer Section 7.3). Unfortunately, this proposal did not proceed due to a lack of formal support from the then Board of the VBA. It is clear that this support from the VBA now exists and accordingly DBC is determined to proceed with a lighting upgrade.

Overall, upgrading the Deep Creek lighting presents a real opportunity for DBC and the Manningham area to have a venue capable of hosting first-class night games. Being able to play night games will partially alleviate some of the scheduling challenges detailed in Section 2 and provide the vehicle for us to achieve greater venue utilisation and increase participation numbers through extended hours use.

We have already commissioned Versalux to prepare a Deep Creek Lighting Plan that brings the lighting levels up to VBA standards and specifies the number of additional fittings required to achieve this.

In order to complete the lighting upgrade prior to the 2003/04 Summer season, we seek tangible financial support from Manningham Council and we are looking to agree a way forward as soon as possible.

4.2 Stintons Reserve development

Doncaster Baseball Club is of the view that the recent move to Stintons Reserve is a positive step for both Club and council.

As communicated to council both at meetings and in writing on 31 May 2002, DBC agreed to relocate junior playing operations to Stintons Reserve on the basis that the council would seriously explore the potential to upgrade the Reserve to better support baseball on a more permanent basis. This included:

- A potential extension at the Northern and Southern ends to provide a playing arena capable of hosting two games in conjunction;
- The installation of fixed back nets at the North and South ends of the playing arena.
- Access to the facility on Friday evenings and Saturdays.

Clear benefits to the club and Manningham council of making the move to Stintons more permanent are:

- Addressing the core playing area limitations detailed in Section 2 of this report and, in essence, enabling the progression of Option 2.3;
- Increasing the profile of baseball in a growing junior player catchment area, making the sport more available to prospective new players;
- An increased and more intensive utilisation of the existing Stintons Reserve facility (we estimate that we would have in excess of 150 players using the facility each weekend, without taking into account family and spectator numbers or training during the week);
- Encouraging children to participate in physical activity and providing a highly participative sport as an alternative to the more traditional summer sports.

In order to progress this, we seek a formal position from Manningham on the previously discussed permanent modifications to Stintons Reserve, together with expanded days of access.

4.3 Female Change Facilities at Deep Creek Reserve

Doncaster Baseball Club is committed to the growth of Women's baseball and, accordingly, increasing female participation levels in sport. We currently field two Women's baseball teams in the VBA Summer competition. This will increase to three teams in the 2003/04 Season.

Three of our Women players are Australian representatives and a further three have represented Victoria at the State level. Doncaster is seen as a leader in Women's baseball.

A current limitation of our existing Women's baseball program is a lack of dedicated female change facilities at Deep Creek Reserve. Our Women players are currently forced to utilise the female toilets of take the risk of changing in the "shared" rooms. Both of these options are highly unsuitable and inappropriate.

We are interested in possible solutions that the council may have through modification or extension of the existing pavilion.

4.4 Deep Creek Storage

The existing external storage at Deep Creek Reserve is totally club funded, ageing and inadequate. It is an eyesore and is out of keeping with the picturesque surrounds.

While improving the storage facilities is not urgent, it is certainly an item that requires resolution in line with any medium term plans associated the management of the Reserve and the pavilion.

In the event that steps are taken to improve the female change facilities, it would be opportune to solve storage issues as part of a wider pavilion modification.

5 Appendix 1: Playing Member Demographic – Summer 02/03

This table is an excerpt from our club Business Plan and shows playing members by their relevant playing age category for 02/03 and then projected to 2003/04.

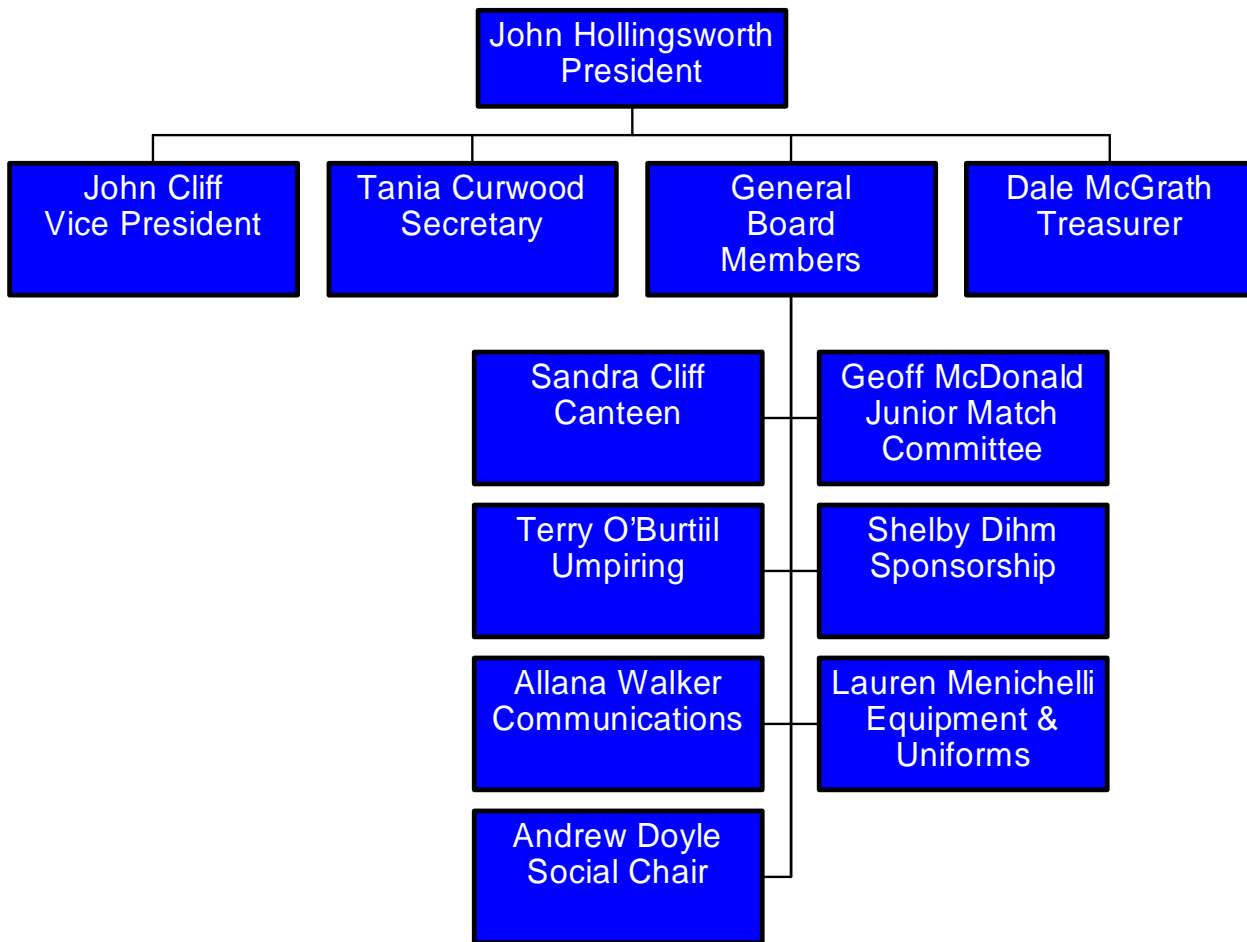
Age	No.	Age Group	02/03	2003/04			
				Flowed	Adjusted ¹	Target	Shortfall
Open Women	26	Women	26	26	29	33	4
Open Men	50	Men	50	57	59	63	4
18	7	Under 18	15	18	15	12	-3
17	8						
16	10						
15	8	Under 16	18	16	14	12	-2
14	8						
13	12	Under 14	20	29	28	24	-4
12	17						
11	11						
10	10	Under 12	38	36	43	60	17
9	15						
8	7						
7	7						
6	3						
5	0	T-Ball	32	17	18	40	22
Totals	199		199	199	206	244	38

Key points to note are:

- The 43 Under 12 players include 16 from 02/03 T-Ball, making T-Ball retention and flow through a priority. The 43 also includes 3 Winter players that may play Summer;
- The above does not include participation numbers associated with school teams involved in DBC domestic competitions;
- The above does not include Winter membership numbers;
- Given the likelihood of Under 12 VBA players not being required to play domestic baseball, there is a need to recruit at least 10 players to maintain 4 domestic Under 12 teams. However, with the prospect of 2 Under 12 Sunday VBA teams, we should aim to recruit 17 additional Under 12 players;
- Assuming most of the 9 year olds move to Under 12 baseball, there is immediate pressure on our T-Ball recruitment, with carry-over numbers at 18 (without wastage);
- If we retain them all, the 15 Under 18 players will create a dilemma, as the squad is too large for one team. We could consider some lower skilled Under 18 players playing mid-grade Seniors only;
- 28 Under 14 players will require us to consider entry of 1-2 VBA teams or one VBA team and one domestic team into a rival Club League;
- Full retention, plus modest recruitment will see us enter 3 Women's teams;
- If we retain all of our senior players, including the seven promoted Under 18's, and we recruit modestly, we could enter 6 Men's teams for 2003/04.

¹ Adjusted figure takes into account new players already committed and 02/03 players that will definitely not play.

6 Appendix 2: Organisation Chart



7 Appendix 3: Council Correspondence

7.1 Letter from DBC to Manningham Council - 31 May 2002

31 May 2002

Mr Zac Anver
Sports Liaison Officer
Manningham Council
PO Box 1
Doncaster, VIC 3108

Dear Zac,

Doncaster Baseball Club Facilities

Further to our meeting of 22 May 2002, I am writing to express our appreciation of your guidance, support and assistance during the past six weeks. Your responsiveness certainly makes our job far easier, particularly given the number of issues and competing priorities that the new Doncaster Baseball Club Board is currently addressing.

Given the number of items that we are discussing with you at present, I thought that it would be of value to confirm all of the current discussions and actions that we are taking in conjunction with you.

Deep Creek Reserve Capital Works

The ground drainage, irrigation and back net maintenance work has progressed extremely well and all work is near completion. The following are the remaining items relating to the back net.

- Complete the gate at the Eastern (Right Field) end
- Replace the wire around the Eastern (First Base) dugout
- Fill in the two front panels of the Eastern (First Base) dugout
- Fill in the two front panels of the Western (Third Base) dugout
- Fill in the last panel on the Western end of the back net
- Re-installation of barriers restricting vehicle access from car park

As discussed at our meeting, we are aiming to hold the VWBL Winter Finals at Deep Creek Reserve in late August/early September. Hosting the finals has proven to be extremely beneficial from a revenue

perspective in the past and we would appreciate your assistance in having the facility ready to meet this timeframe.

Stintons Reserve Availability

Doncaster Baseball Club currently comprises in excess of 250 members, with growth projections to 400 plus members in the 02/03 season. The majority of member growth will be in our junior age groups, placing an enormous strain on our existing grounds and facilities.

As discussed on 22 May 2002, we are keen to explore the availability of an alternative ground allocation for our junior grades in the summer season. We have inspected the ground at Stintons Reserve and believe that, with some modifications, we could relocate our junior grades from Rieschiecks Reserve to Stintons Reserve with effect from October 2002.

At our DBC Board Meeting on 28 May 2002, the Board approved a motion to relocate junior playing operations to Stintons Reserve. In supporting this relocation, the Board is seeking the following:

- Full access to the pavilion, including storage and canteen facilities – preferably with Doncaster Baseball as the primary Summer tenant;
- Playing area to accommodate games at Under 14 and Under 16 age groups at the same time. As discussed, the existing playing area may require extension at the Northern and Southern ends to facilitate this. In order to progress the planning activity, I e-mailed the minimum Under 14 and Under 16 playing areas to Barbra Gaiotto on 22 May;
- Installation of fixed back nets at the North and South ends of the playing arena;
- Dedicated access to the facility for scheduled games on Friday evenings and all-day Sunday. We would also like to explore the option of Saturday access;
- Dedicated access to the facility for training on two evenings per week;
- Satisfactory inspection of the pavilion facilities;
- Negotiation of a favourable lease.

Clear benefits to the club and/or Manningham council would be:

- Increasing the profile of the baseball club in a growing junior player catchment area, making the sport more available to prospective new players;
- An increased and more intensive utilisation of the existing Stintons Reserve facility (I estimate that we would have in excess of 160 players using the facility each weekend, without taking into account family and spectator numbers or training during the week);
- Encouraging children to participate in physical activity and providing a highly participative sport as an alternative to the more traditional summer sports.

Deep Creek Reserve Management Plan

In order to ensure that our amenities are both maintained and continually improved in line with member and ratepayer expectations, we are keen to see the finalisation of the Deep Creek Reserve Management Plan. Specifically, we seek to discuss, agree and progress:

- Sealing of the parking area and entrance.
- Extending the existing pavilion to meet projected member growth, with priority on an upgraded kitchen to meet minimum hygiene standards and increased storage to facilitate the removal of the existing storage “eye sores”.
- Upgrading the existing batting cage by raising and covering the roof and replacing the broken wire netting.

We do understand that, at this stage, finalisation of the plan is contingent upon the sale of the quarry and resolution of the shared title boundary. Please advise us of any steps that you believe that we can take in order to expedite this process and/or progress the above initiatives.

Deep Creek Reserve Maintenance

An outstanding maintenance item that we discussed on 14 May 2002, but I omitted to mention at our 22 May meeting, relates to the paved area in front of the pavilion. The paving is cracked, crumbling and falling away and we are concerned about public safety and associated liability.

At your earliest convenience, could you please inspect the area, provide an opinion and advise what steps will be taken to fix or re-pave the area.

Community and Capital Grants

As discussed with Paul Reading on 28 May 2002, I am interested in initiating discussions with the council in relation to the availability of Community Grant funding. My key aim is to obtain funding in support of our junior member growth. As suggested by Paul, I will make contact with Lisa Waters to progress this issue in conjunction with our Club Business Planning cycle.

I understand that there appears to be a long list of items under discussion, however I reiterate that the majority of these items relate to positive improvements and represent clear and active support from Manningham Council. We are more than impressed with the responsiveness and positive nature of our discussions with the council to date and the excellent progress in conjunction with you, Barbra and George. We are enthusiastic about the future prospects of the Doncaster Baseball Club and the role that the council will play in contributing to our success.

I would be pleased if you could respond on the above at your earliest convenience. In the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me during business hours on (03) 8416 4001 or 0419 330 496.

Yours sincerely,

John Hollingsworth
President
Doncaster Baseball Club

cc. Barbra Gaiotto
George Coster
Paul Reading

7.2 Letter from DBC to Manningham Council - 2 October 2002

2 October 2002

Mr Zac Anver
Sports Liaison Officer
Manningham Council
PO Box 1
Doncaster, VIC 3108

Dear Zac,

Deep Creek Reserve Facilities Issues

Further to my letter of 31 May 2002 and my various conversations with yourself and various council representatives since that time, I thought it would be of value to confirm the current status of our playing facilities. While I am raising a number of issues about the facility, please do not take this as a reflection of your efforts to date, as I am of the view that we have achieved a lot in a short space of time, particularly in relation to the playing arena.

Deep Creek Reserve Capital Works

The major ground drainage, irrigation and back net maintenance work was successfully completed and, as discussed in previous correspondence, the Club Board had intended to host the Victorian Winter Baseball League (VWBL) Finals at Deep Creek Reserve in late August/early September. However, the grounds were deemed unsuitable for play by the VWBL, as they were concerned about the amount of loose sand still resident in the areas where the drainage was installed. While this decision was disappointing, it reflects one of the risks associated with major drainage work of this type and we thank you for your efforts to meet the original deadline. Needless to say, the playing surface is looking good and is rapidly improving with the onset of Spring weather.

Deep Creek Reserve Public Safety

As discussed in my letter of 31 May, in order to ensure that our amenities are maintained at a minimal acceptable level and continually improved in line with member and ratepayer expectations, we are keen to see the rectification of a number of basic facilities items at Deep Creek Reserve. While we are cognisant of the fact that finalisation of the Reserve Management Plan is contingent upon the sale of the quarry, we are concerned that this appears to be delaying resolution of a number of basic facility issues. These issues relate to the car park, spectator terracing and disabled access and we are seeking their urgent resolution. All three have been raised on a number of occasions by myself since April 2002 and by previous Club Boards over the past ten years.

The state of the car park, both in the surface and (lack of) design, causes severe traffic congestion and safety risk on both training and game days, when up to 75 vehicles attempt to park at the reserve. It is not clear where the "car park" starts and finishes, as there are no marked bays or signage. In addition, the surface severely degenerates following periods of rain, as it is at least 50% dirt, again presenting risks as people are forced to traverse the "slush".

I understand that the terracing immediately in front of the pavilion has been the subject of a steady stream of communication with council for a number of years. A previous Board took the unprecedented step of installing the stone wall immediately behind the back net in order to mitigate the risk of people "tumbling" down the every-increasing crumbling stone and timber hill in front of the pavilion. I am advised that this step was only taken after repeated requests to council failed to achieve any tangible outcome. The terracing presents our single greatest safety concern at the facility. Even to the "untrained eye", cracked paving that is crumbling and falling away, together with protruding "sawn-off" posts must surely present an unacceptable health & safety risk. As previously requested, could you please advise when and what steps will be taken to upgrade the area.

While the pavilion has a disabled "toilet", the pavilion itself does not allow disabled access, as there is a step at the main entry with no ramp. Consequently, we have a number of disabled members and visitors who suffer the indignity of being "lifted" into the pavilion when they need to access the facility. Disabled access to the facility is further hindered, as traversing the "car park" and terrace areas is extremely difficult for disabled visitors and there is no marked "disabled" parking space.

I am of the view that these requests are not unreasonable and, in fact, are simply aimed at bringing the Reserve up to a minimum publicly acceptable standard of safety and efficiency for a sporting facility of this nature. I would be pleased if you could provide me with written advice on these three items as soon as possible.

Night Baseball

On a far more positive note, I received written advice from the Victorian Baseball Association that, subject to certain criteria being met, they would schedule first grade night games at Deep Creek Reserve, including playing Victorian Institute of Sport night games at the venue during Winter. The VBA have advised that they are:

"very supportive of your Club in pursuing a venue that is capable of hosting night Baseball. Currently only one suitable venue is available in Melbourne and that is at Altona. A high standard lit venue in Melbourne's population belt will create a wonderful opportunity for the playing of Senior, Junior and Women's Baseball at night and in the twilight".

The core requirement is for the existing lighting to be upgraded to minimum VBA standards - this can be achieved by the installation of additional fittings to the existing towers.

This presents a real opportunity for Manningham to have a venue capable of hosting first-class night games and provides the vehicle for us to achieve greater utilisation and increased participation numbers through extended hours use. In order to progress this, I will be seeking a meeting with key stakeholders within the council to discuss how we can progress this exciting initiative together.

I look forward to a response on all of the above items at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

John Hollingsworth
President
Doncaster Baseball Club

cc. Paul Reading

7.3 Letter from Manningham Council to DBC - 30 October 1997

MANNINGHAM

BALANCE OF CITY AND COUNTRY

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Enquiries to: Bob Jones
Telephone: 9840 9258

30 October 1997

Mr Noel Pinnell
Secretary
Doncaster Baseball Club
19 Hadlow Drive
WANTIRNA 3152

Dear Noel

Manningham City Council has allocated funds in its current capital works program to improve, update and install new floodlighting at sporting reserves. The Culture & Leisure unit has decided that if your club as indicated previously is prepared to allocate \$5,000 of its funds to the upgrading of the floodlighting at Deep Creek Reserve the council will provide up to \$9,000.

If your club is prepared to accept this proposal, would you please confirm by return mail. George Costa from our City Parks Unit will be in charge of the project. He will discuss requirements with your club and organise to have the work carried out which will involve collecting three quotations. Work Michael Iacoune has already done in this area will be most helpful.

I look forward to receiving your prompt response.

Yours sincerely

BOB JONES
Sport Liaison Officer