

Proposal for a Dedicated Bridge Centre at Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge

1. The Grosvenor Estate and the Universities Superannuation Fund have formed a company (Trumpington Meadows Land Company or TMLC) to make proposals for redevelopment of the existing Cambridge United football ground and the development of a sports centre and further housing at Trumpington Meadows. The Sports Centre includes provision for a bridge room, expected to be of 150 m², as well as parking, disabled access and a café.
2. TMLC has applied for planning consent to both Cambridge City Council and South Cambs. District Council. The proposal has reference S/1925/16/OL in South Cambs and is available [here](#).
3. The proposal involves building on what is currently green belt land – albeit of the less valuable kind with currently little recreational use and near the M11. This makes the proposal controversial and has led to very generous proposals by the developer for community benefits. While most of these benefits are for physical sports (particularly football), there is generous provision for playing bridge in what is likely to be high quality space. The developers would welcome support from bridge players for their proposal. Comments in support and otherwise can be made [here](#), if possible by 19 September.

Legal and Commercial Structure

4. TMLC will form a subsidiary, Cambridge Community Sporting Company (CCSC), to own the land for both the Cambridge United ground and the Trumpington Village Sports Centre. The facilities for physical sports will then be leased to the football club and to its sister organisation the Cambridge United Youth and Community Trust. The sports centre – including the bridge room – will be retained by CCSC, which will lease the Bridge Room to a new charitable company to be set up for this purpose (currently referred to as the Cambridge Area Bridge Centre or CABC).
5. The initial outline proposal from TMLC reads as follows:
 - Cambridge Community Sporting Company would be the landlord
 - Premises 150m² with access to shared toilet facilities and community café
 - Term of 1 year minimum with the ability to extend
 - Rent of £20 per hour during daytime and £25 per hour during evenings
 - Fully repairing and insuring

The proposals include up to 250 car parking spaces immediately adjacent to the building for use by all the differing users which will include disabled car parking.

There will be ample cycle spaces

The Park and Ride has 1400 spaces and is 600m or a 6 minute walk

Operational Arrangements

6. We envisage the bridge tables, chairs and bidding boxes being near-permanently in place, so that there is little physical arranging to be done for each playing session. CABC will replace this equipment as necessary to maintain a high-quality environment.
7. To date, discussion has involved the leading EBU-affiliated bridge clubs in Cambridge (Cambridge, North Cambridge, Thursday, and Cambridge Friday) and the University of the Third Age in Cambridge (which currently runs five bridge groups and would like to run more). Other bridge clubs are welcome to

become involved. At present we expect that no financial commitment will be requested from clubs until planning consent has been granted and lease terms are essentially agreed.

8. The Bridge Centre will allow for up to three sessions a day (morning, afternoon and evening). There is likely to be space for at least two different groups at most times (eg during the day a teaching group and a drop-in playing group; during the evening, a scheduled duplicate game of higher standard and a cut-in Chicago bridge game of lower standard). There should be a movable divider to give reasonable visual and acoustic separation of two spaces. Space can also be let to groups playing other mind sports, e.g. chess, scrabble, backgammon, mah-jong.
9. Current thinking is that the clubs mentioned in Paragraph 7 will retain their autonomy and separate memberships, and rent space from CABC for most of the evening and day sessions they presently organise. Other clubs might retain their existing premises and start at second session at CABC. We expect that the availability of a new centre will encourage teaching there; and that students so recruited will then progress to playing sessions of their desired standards, increasing the total amount of bridge played. This is what has occurred in other towns where bridge centres have been established.
10. Current thinking is that the Trustees of CABC should appoint a committee to manage the day-to-day arrangements, and that all users who so wish should be represented on it.
11. CABC will be responsible for providing equipment (much of which may be donated by the initial club as part of the start-up arrangements). This will include tables, chairs, a dealing machine, cards, duplicate boards, bridge mates for computerised scoring, a computer (or two), one or (desirably) two electronic whiteboards and a printer. The whiteboards can be used for teaching (their principal use), for showing results in major competitions and for showing the time available for play of the current round in duplicate competitions.
12. If the Centre is successful, it is likely to make sense to employ a part-time manager to liaise with clubs, prepare documentation, relate to members, renew equipment as required and generally to create a welcoming and efficient environment. It probably anyway makes sense to set up an office in the original layout of the bridge room, to contain the various pieces of movable equipment and to give space for a future manager. This space can then be used by bridge clubs for their own administrative purposes, such as dealing hands and managing league tables.

Issues

13. We will need to manage charges to users and to do this in a way that is felt to be fair. In the first two years, before new business has developed, economics are likely to be challenging.
14. Bridge Clubs like to play until late in the evening (or at least not to be forced to leave before play is complete). We have asked for a 11 pm close, but do not know if this is available.
15. At present bus service at night is very limited. While most evening bridge players currently attend their clubs by car, it would be very helpful if the bus service ran until closing time.
16. It would be good to have our own tea, coffee and biscuit facilities in the bridge room and (ideally) also to be able to offer beer.

Roger Salmon
Chairman, Cambridge Bridge Club
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