

WALMER CRICKET CLUB

BASED IN THE VILLAGE OF SHOLDEN SINCE 1984

HULL PARK, SHOLDEN NEW ROAD, SHOLDEN, DEAL, KENT CT14 0AF
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Affiliated to:

England & Wales Cricket Board, Kent Community Cricket,
Shepherd Neame Kent Cricket League
Kent Regional Cricket League, Kent Village Cricket League,
Saxon Shore Junior Cricket League
Pharon Canterbury Junior Indoor Cricket League,
Corporate Member of Hull Park Sports Club.



Hull Park is a privately owned sports ground, and not a public recreation ground, hence decisions on use of the ground are the responsibility of the Trustees and Management Committee of Walmer Cricket Club, not the Parish or District Council. However, the club has always been, and continues to be keen to integrate with Sholden Parish and the village, and has always permitted use of the ground for recreation by Parishoners and villagers and Parish and village organisations whenever it was not in use by the club.

Several years ago when we needed to replace the rotten and untidy fencing along the Sholden New Road boundary, with the agreement of Sholden Parish Council, the decision was made to remove the stile at the lower end of the ground. This action was taken due to a number of incidents observed where children were exiting the field via the stile and seen stumbling down the bank and into the road.

It is true that the opportunities for villagers to use the ground have reduced over the past few years; this is a consequence of the club having an expanded Junior Section with more evenings dedicated to coaching and matches for our Juniors. Last summer saw the season condensed from the normal 22 weeks down to just 10 due to Coronavirus which added to the intensity of use by the club. Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Insurance regulations have also tightened considerably over the years, meaning that in most instances we cannot permit villagers on the ground for recreational purposes while cricket is taking place.

Sadly, late last September local youths were using the ground for drug dealing, under-age drinking and the clubhouse patio area fencing sustained damage through vandalism running into several hundred pounds. The ground was then locked shut on advice from the Police in order to prevent further such incidents. The Police subsequently issued formal cautions to a number of those involved who were identified through our CCTV images.

Once into the Autumn, the Tier 4 and National Lockdown restrictions meant that as a "Non-Elite Sports Facility" the ground had to remain closed, and this is still the case as of now, albeit the announcement made by the Government on 22 February means that there is now light at the end of the tunnel with a proposed date of March 29 for the re-opening of sports facilities. Assuming that this target date is met, then we will be able to re-open the ground to the public from 29 March, with it being available from the hours of 7am to dusk (this is to help maintain privacy and tranquillity for those households whose properties surround the ground).

We do however ask that the rules are adhered to i.e. dogs are kept on a lead at all times, and are walked only in an area within 4 metres of the boundary fencing (to prevent the possible spread of potentially life changing disease spread from contact with dog faeces), no cycling on the grass, and that football is played only in the dedicated area near to the main entrance gate, and not against fences or sightscreens. Obviously, the cricket square, and artificial grass surfaces are out of bounds. There will also be times (usually in the winter months) when signs will be displayed asking for people to keep off the grass; this is usually after periods of persistent heavy rain or when the field has been sprayed with weedkiller or fertiliser when use of the ground will either cause damage to the grass or users might sustain minor skin irritation from chemicals used.

Andy Howard-Grigg
Trustee, Treasurer & Safeguarding Officer.