MURRELL'S FIELD IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Evolution of the Field

History of Improvements at Murrell's Field

On the 31st January 2001, a 100-year lease was granted by WSCC to Barnham Parish Council for use of Murrell's Field as a public open space.

Between 1999 and 2008, £58,183 was raised to support a group of volunteers who cleared the area of vast amounts of glass rubble and scrap from old buildings, cleared old trees brambles and scrub, rabbit proofed the Field and planted circa 300 new trees and shrubs. In 2006, a gravel car park was finished and new gates installed.

In 2010, the Community was awarded £99,958 by The Lottery to build the Trim Trail, Children's Play Area, and Picnic Area. This was match funded with £23,200 by the Parish Council and community fundraising.

In 2011, a £50,000 grant was secured from Sita Trust to build the MUGA. This was match funded with £19,600 by the Parish Council and community fundraising.

In 2011 (amended in 2014), a development application for Angels and Hyde Nurseries was successful and a S106 contribution was agreed (£1,000/dwelling) for the improvement of Murrell's Field. It took 13 years for this agreement to deliver.

In 2013, Barnham Community Hall was completed at a total cost of £1.47m. This was funded by the Parish Council (£1.0m – Land sales and Public Works Loan), grants (£250,000), Community Fundraising (£45,167) and more than10,120 hours of volunteering.

In 2018, WSCC Operation Watershed awarded a grant of £55,840 for the redevelopment of the carpark as a SuDS component. This was match funded with £18,500 by the Parish Council and community fundraising.

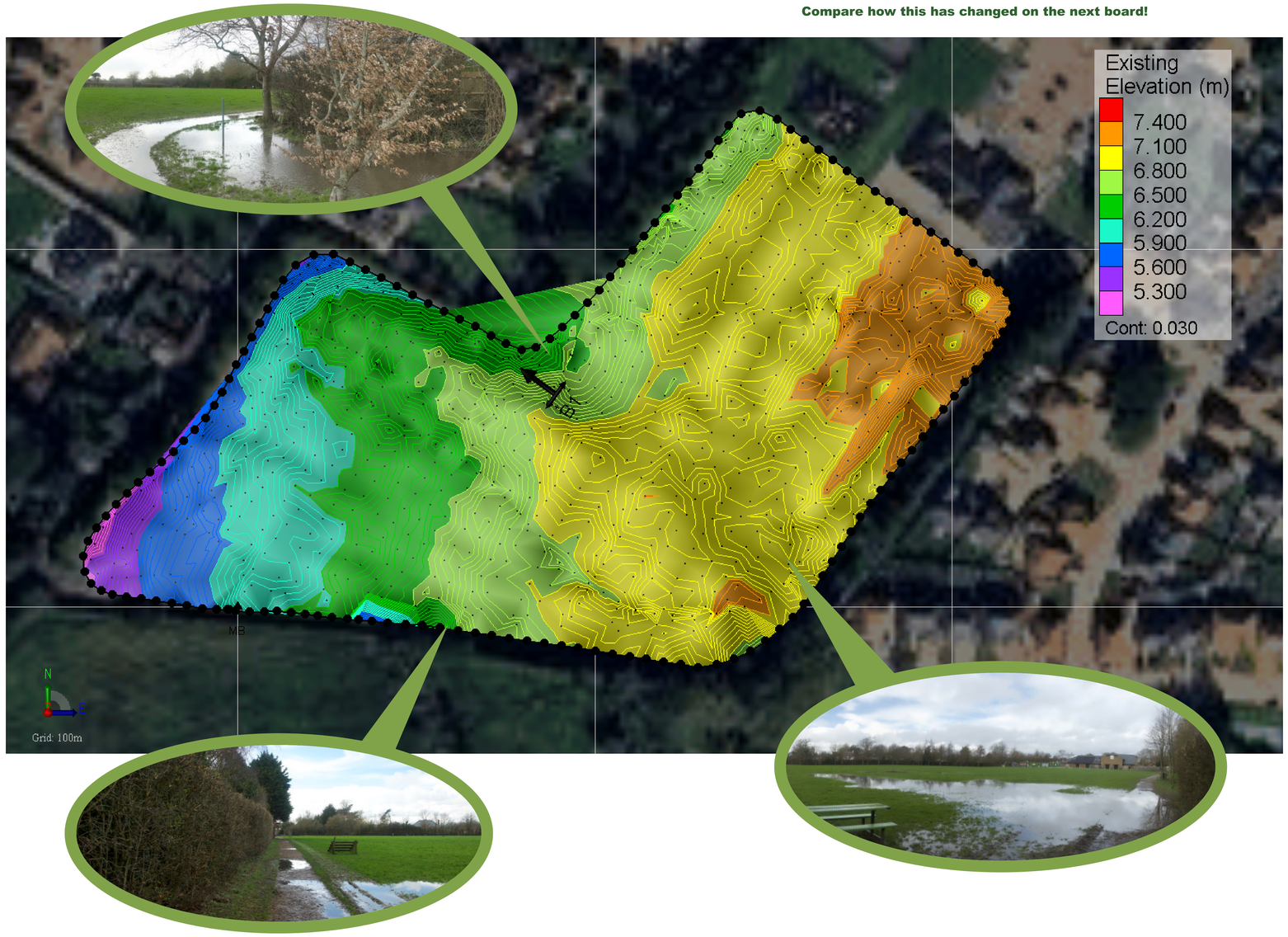
In 2024, the S106 monies (just over £200,000) were finally paid to Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council effectively ring-fenced to undertake drainage and levelling works to improve Murrell's Field. This was the last major item to be completed from the Community Scheme envisioned in the late 1990's.

The core scope of the improvements works was completed in late summer 2025, with additional minor drainage works undertaken in November. This exhibition presents nature of interventions on the Field and the progress of returning it back to residents' use and enjoyment.

We would like to thank the many volunteers and staff who have been involved over the last 25 years, particularly a group called Barnham Leisure Amenities Development Executive (BLADE). Many of the original volunteers are still involved although there are many more new supporters. They have left a significant legacy which is continued to this day.

A detailed topographical survey reveals the true relief of the Field with areas of highs and lows contributing to impeded drainage and poor experience of recreation.

Compare how this has changed on the next board!



Please email any questions to:
clerk@barnhamandeastergate-pc.gov.uk

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Project Overview

Field Improvement Works Project

In early 2024, the Parish Council established a project team. The original plan assumed the installation of a subsoil drainage system draining to the existing surface water drainage and pipework systems; grading and levelling the whole Field; reseeding; setting out pitches for a wide range of sports and creation of an access path from the former Angels Nursery development to the recreation ground. Given sports facilities elsewhere in the villages and the BEW Strategic Allocation, the original intent to set out formal sports pitches was dropped many years ago.

In terms of the drainage, the original plan envisaged an implementation of a system of land drains across the Field. Following engagement with Arun District Council, this required a fundamental rethink to overcome some serious constraints associated with the local drainage conditions, such as the lack of a suitable and acceptable receptor of the collected water, as well as staying within the budget.

Scope of Works

The scheme was designed to improve the evenness of the surface and minimise pools of water after periods of wet weather. This will improve the comfort and safety of the turf when used as a general amenity, for informal sports and major events.

The proposal did not envisage any changes to the existing footpaths or addition of new areas of hardstanding that would have increased the surface runoff from the Field.

The scope of works comprised:

✓ **Levelling the Field**

The surface was stripped of grass and graded to achieve free-flowing contours. Modern technology allowed to follow the major topography and minimise the cut and fill interventions, which was more cost-effective and easy on the soil structure.

✓ **Improving water storage capacity and reducing surface runoff**

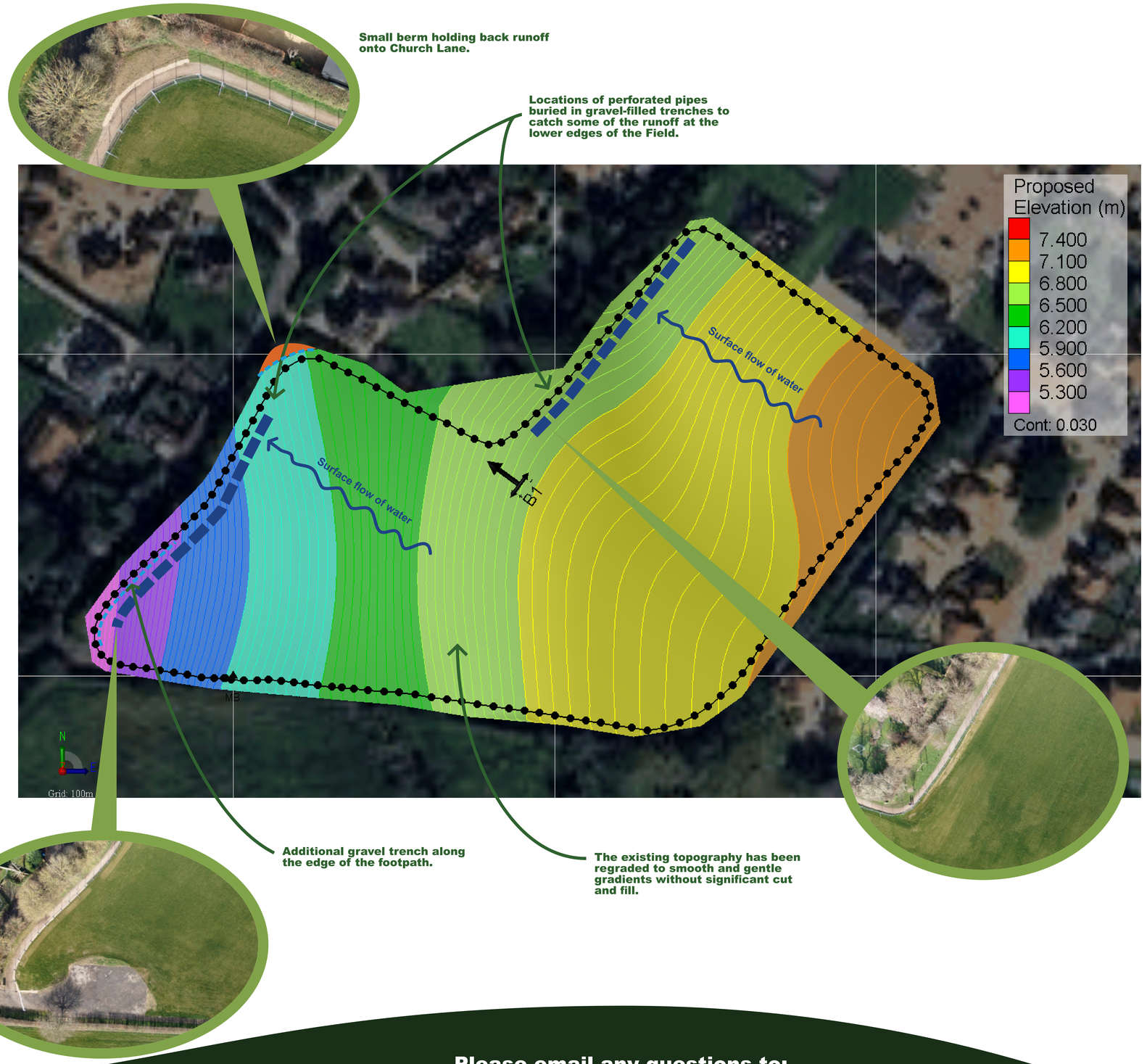
The soil has been improved with sand to facilitate infiltration of rainwater and grass growth.

Sections of 300 mm diameter pipes were installed in gravel-filled trenches overlain with permeable soil along the western edge of the Field to capture surface runoff and hold more water than the soil on its own.

Following the completion of the core scope of works, an additional gravel trench was installed along the edge of the south-west edge of the Field and a small berm formed from the spoil to further minimise runoff onto Church Lane.

✓ **Recreating the sward**

Following the groundworks, the grass sward was recreated from seed and a maintenance programme of at least six months started.



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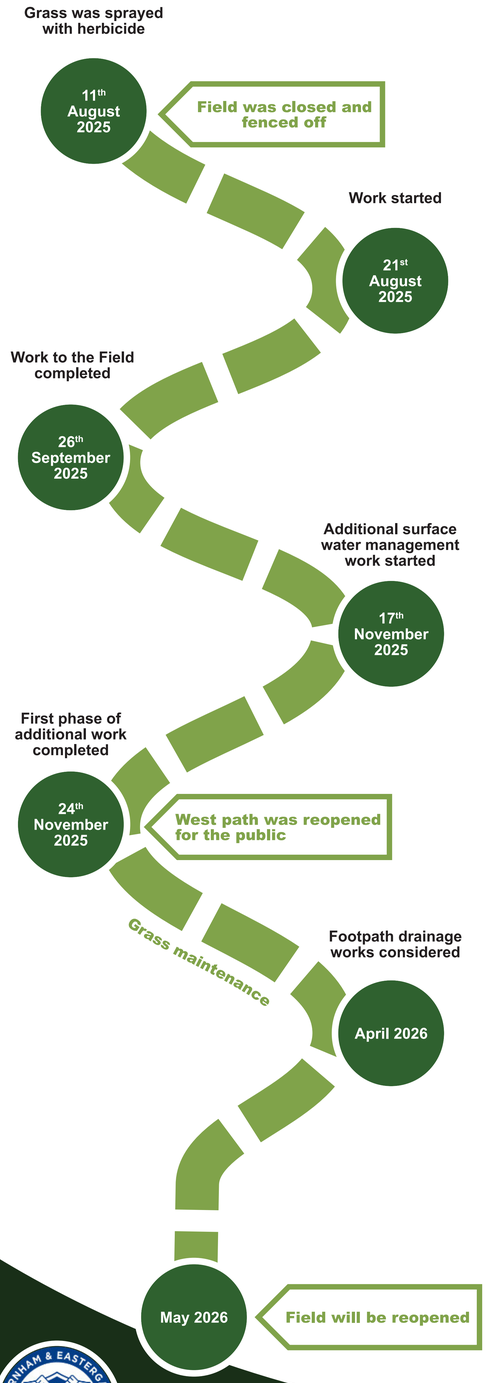
Project Timeline



Improvement Works - Step by Step

Step 1 On the 11th of August, the Field got closed for the general public and fenced off ahead of herbicide application. The existing grass was killed off with Glyphosate to make it easier to strip from the surface. This made the work progress faster and helped lowering the cost.

Step 2 The first site operation after spraying was to scarify the Field to remove the thatch. That was completed in one day.

Step 3 On the 21st of August, the soil profile was subsoiled to loosen it, which was then followed by rotovation in preparation for grading.

Step 4 On the 25th, grading of the Field using a tractor-towed, GPS-controlled grader started. This was the key exercise to achieve the new levels. The highs and lows were removed to prevent water from ponding and to improve the experience of play. Due to bad weather, only half of the area was completed and it wasn't after a few days later when the work could recommence.

Step 5 In the first couple of days of September, large ditches were dug along the path and perforated pipes embedded in gravel were installed to provide some underground water storage.

Step 6 During the second week, cultivation work started to help dry it out after all the heavy rain that we had.

Step 7 On the 19th, sand was applied and worked into the soil profile using a power harrow to facilitate infiltration and improve surface drainage.

Step 8 A stone burier was used to bury the stones bigger then 20 mm under the ground.

Step 9 At the end of September, the ground was rolled down using the tractor wheels to firm it ready for the final trim by a rotor rake in preparation for grass seeding.

Step 10 On September 26th, a three-way rye grass mixture was seeded, followed by a pre-seed fertiliser application.

Following the completion of the work to the Field, some additional work was instructed to further improve the rainwater management and to minimise runoff from the site onto Church Lane.

Step 1 The additional work commenced in mid-November.

Step 2 Narrow trenches were dug along the edge of the footpath on the Church Lane side. They were then filled with pea gravel to further facilitate capturing runoff from the Field.

Step 3 The spoil from trenches was used to create a low berm on the outer edge of the path where heavy runoff onto Church Lane had previously been observed.

Step 4 The works were completed by the 24th of November and the western section of the footpath was reopened to the public.

Step 5 The Council is considering some further interventions to the western section of the footpath with an aim to prevent water pooling on the surface, minimise surface flow along the footpath that causes its erosion and to create additional storage capacity.
Options have been discussed and estimates are being sought from the contractor.

Mechanical Power in Action

Rotovation

Grader levelling the ground

Pipe embedded in gravel

Pre-seeding fertiliser application

Grass seeding

Additional trench dug

Jargon Buster

A quick guide to some technical terms used on these boards:

SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) – It is an approach to stormwater management that addresses not only the volume (quantity) of water, but also its quality (level of pollution), creates opportunities for wildlife and public amenity. The system can be built from various components, such as water butts, rain gardens, swales, underground tanks or permeable paving, to name a few.

Rotovation – Mechanically breaking up and loosening soil to prepare it for planting or seeding.

Grader - A four metre blade which is pulled behind the tractor. The operation is controlled by GPS which moves the blade up or down automatically to achieve the new levels. It cuts the highs and fills the lows to create a balanced cut-and-fill formation

Contours - Lines on a map that connect points of equal elevation, helping to visualise the shape of the land.

Infiltration - water soaking into the ground.

Soil amelioration – Improving soil health and structure, often by adding organic material or sand to support healthy plant growth.

Subsoiler – A machine that breaks up compacted layers of soil deep below the surface to improve drainage and root growth. It has heavy, vertical tines called legs attached to the frame that extend down into the soil to break up the compacted layers.

Rotary rake - a machine that uses rotating arms with tines to lift and move hay or to prepare a seed bed for sowing.

Power harrow – A tool that finely breaks up the top layer of soil, creating an even surface for sowing grass or wildflower seed.

Stone burier – Equipment that buries stones and debris below the soil surface, creating a clean top layer for planting or turfing.

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