

Bradfield Rovers Football Club

22nd August 2025

To: The Chair and Councillors,

Bradfield Parish Council (as sole trustee of the Bradfield Allotments & Recreation Ground Charity)

Dear Councillors,

We write to you as the Committee of Bradfield Rovers FC following the adoption of the new Recreation Ground hire policy. The club has reached the end of its tether.

This decision is not about “covering costs” or “fairness.” It is about forcing Bradfield Rovers off the village pitch — a pitch the Council continues to deny even exists, despite its own Recreation Ground Policy, its own website, the club’s history, and the views of parishioners.

1. Precarious finances – ignored by the Council

When we made our formal complaint, we provided you with evidence of the club’s fragile finances. You now have before you our updated forecast for 2025–26 (attached). The facts are clear:

- The new pitch charge alone equates to £688 this season — money we simply do not have.
- Together with BVH charges for changing rooms, officials’ fees, equipment and insurance, the club faces £7,920 in outgoings against £6,442 in income — a deficit of £1,478.

You knew our position before, and you know it now. Yet you chose to impose a per-use fee that in practice means £6 for three hours or £12 per match — worse than the previous flat £10 per use.

2. A policy that is unworkable and unfair

The new system is unworkable in practice and transparently aimed at the football club:

- It requires the Clerk to generate rolling invoices, receipts, and booking forms for every single match, despite football fixtures being issued at three weeks’ notice by the League, or at any time by the Essex FA.
- It penalises the club if a game is cancelled for reasons outside our control — bad weather, an opponent cancelling, or BVH themselves requesting we move a fixture, as has happened in the past.
- It requires a new charity bank account, auditors, and an annual return — costs and bureaucracy created from nothing.

Even the Clerk has previously complained of “five hours of overtime” attributed to the football club. What extra burden do you think this new regime will create?

And where will this end? Will the new fees apply to:

- children’s parties bringing a bouncy castle onto the pitch,
- Friends of Bradfield School using the field for an end-of-year party,
- food vans in the car park,
- Scouts running outdoor activities,

- local running clubs training on the field?

Or is this entire scheme contrived solely to penalise and remove Bradfield Rovers from the village? It is also difficult to ignore the apparent conflicts of interest involved, with councillors connected to Bradfield Village Hall taking part in decisions that directly and adversely affect Rovers and the wider community.

3. Charity objects and Council reserves

The Recreation Ground exists under a charitable trust “for the benefit of the inhabitants of Bradfield...with the object of improving the conditions of life.” The Council’s own Recreation Ground Policy promises it will “not wilfully obstruct, deny or prevent such enjoyment unreasonably.”

Yet you are doing exactly that.

Meanwhile:

- The Council holds £103,457.90 in General Reserves, 145% of the maximum permitted by its own Reserves Policy.
- The Internal Auditor has already flagged this excess. You resolved to do nothing.
- Pitch maintenance is already funded in the annual budget through the precept. Parishioners have already paid.

So, what possible justification is there for extracting £688 from a grassroots football club when you don’t need the money?

4. Parishioners’ views – arrogantly dismissed

At your meeting on 5 August, 35 supporters of the club attended. A petition of 695 signatures was presented. Both were ignored.

Your Chair then told the meeting: *“We never asked you to leave, and I know you’ve sourced another pitch. We didn’t ask you to do that.”*

That comment was ignorant in the extreme. Your combined actions with BVH forced the club to seek alternatives or fold. The Frinton pitch is now gone. The only option left is Bradfield.

5. Our position

The club cannot and will not pay the newly introduced fees. All we can offer is the £100 donation we gave last year, and we respectfully ask you to formally waive the fees entirely, as you have done in previous years.

We urge you to act lawfully, transparently, and in the spirit of your duties as both Council and Charity trustee. Anything less is pure spite against a community club that has served Bradfield for generations.

Please note: We have made our MP Sir Bernard Jenkin aware of the situation, and we will be keeping the community fully informed of the Council’s decisions and actions.

Yours sincerely,

The Committee, Bradfield Rovers Football Club

Enclosure: BRFC Projected Balance Sheet 2025–26

BRADFIELD ROVERS FORECASTED BALANCE SHEET 2025-26

LEAGUE FEES					
Affiliation & Insurance		£108.00			
2 ESBL Teams Entry		£395.00			
C.S.L Entry		£80.00			
		<u>£583.00</u>		<u>£583.00</u>	
LAUNDRY £20 per wash					
76 League Games	£1,520.00				
5-20 Cup matches	£200.00				
6 Friendlies	£120.00				
	<u>£1840.00</u>			<u>£1,840.00</u>	
EQUIPMENT					
Training Balls x20	£200.00				
Match Balls x10	£100.00				
First Aid x3	£124.00				
Line Marking 8 x £20	£160.00				
Replacement Kit	£250.00				
Equipment Maintenance	£200.00				
	<u>£1034.00</u>			<u>£1034.00</u>	
TROPHIES	<u>£200.00</u>			<u>£200.00</u>	
OFFICIALS 49 x £45	<u>£2,205.00</u>			<u>£2,205.00</u>	
CHANGING ROOMS	BVH				
Saturdays 28 x £30	£840.00				
Sundays 10 x £20	£200.00				
Cups min 5 max 20 5 x £30	£150.00				
Friendlies 6 x £30	£180.00				
	<u>£1370.00</u>			<u>£1370.00</u>	
FOOTBALL PITCH	BPC				
Matches 54 Uses Min x £12	£648.00				
Training 10 Uses apx x £4	£40.00				
	<u>£688.00</u>			<u>£688.00</u>	
		TOTAL OUTGOINGS		<u>£7,920.00</u>	
SIGNING FEES*					
APX 35 SIGNING FEES	35 x £20			£700.00	
SUBS RECEIVED	72 x £66			£5,742.00	
		TOTAL INCOME		<u>£6,442.00</u>	
			BALANCE	£1,478.00	