

To: Deputy Clerk, Stanway Parish Council

**Subject: New Stanway Community Facility - Pétanque playing area proposal
Stanway U3A**

1. Who are we?

Stanway U3A is a not-for-profit charity that serves the older generation of Stanway Colchester and its surrounding villages. We currently have over 800 members. We are a lively and friendly group of people who wish to continue to learn and take up new interests and activities in spite of, or because of having reached the period when we are no longer in full time employment.

For a modest annual subscription our members enjoy a wide range of talks, tours, events, plus many recreational indoor and outdoor activity groups run on an informal basis. We use mostly existing community or leisure facilities and any activity fees charged cover venue and event booking charges.

2. What is Pétanque?

Pétanque is similar to the French game Boules. It is a game played on hard surfaces such as sand or gravel, where teams of 2 or 3, or singles, try to place as many of their metal balls, or 'boules', closer to the jack than the nearest boule of the opposition.

Stanway U3A has around 30 Pétanque group members and regularly have 4 games running concurrently on our existing facility when we meet. We do not play professionally; this is an informal fun and social group. Currently we play at the Wooden Fender at Ardleigh, where we have the use of the overflow gravel car park twice a month from March to the end of October.

3. Proposed benefits of a new Pétanque area:

- As the majority of our members are local to the Stanway and surrounding areas, this would be a more convenient venue for us and cut down on travelling distance and time. This would also help reduce the car journeys through Colchester.
- It is likely to attract more players from our membership, some of whom may not participate at the moment as they do not have the means to travel to our current venue.

- A more local playing area would also allow us to play more often and all year round (weather permitting).
- A purpose built Pétanque playing area would be a great improvement on our existing playing area.
- More of our members would therefore benefit physically from regular outdoor exercise and mentally from additional opportunities to socialise.
- If operated on a booking basis, unused time slots could be offered to other Pétanque groups further afield who have the same issue as we do in not having a dedicated area to play on.
- If built to competition standard it would be a sought-after facility for regional and possibly national competitions. This would raise the profile of the game, as well as the new community facility.
- The facility could be used to introduce the game to the local community as it is an excellent pastime which could be enjoyed across the generations. We can provide free introductory sessions for Stanway residents of all ages.
- The new community facility would benefit from such additional use and revenue if the above were to be taken forward.

4. Design, Construction and Funding of a Pétanque playing area

Please refer to the below provided by the English Pétanque Association as a guide to the typical design and construction.

Funding will be required and Stanway U3A will be happy to collaborate with Stanway Parish Council on a joint approach to organisations that may be able to contribute to the materials and construction costs.

Approaches could be made to the National Lottery Community Fund since other U3As have made a successful bid. Other possible organisations include B & Q who often grant fund community projects and who are of course moving to the local Stane Park development in the autumn.

Section Four



THE DESIGN OF A PLAYING AREA



1. Designing a Pétanque terrain

Preparing a terrain for pétanque does not require a high initial outlay and maintenance is minimal once it is established. Many establishments find that they already have a suitable surface available and often it is not necessary to make any special effort to put down a pétanque terrain. Several clubs flourish on existing car parks or gravel drives.

What is required for a good terrain is a well-drained base on which has been spread a quite thin layer of small loose material. The area required for each game is called a lane. For International competition and National Championships the minimum dimensions for a single lane is 15m x 4m with a further metre outside this area before any solid barriers (see diagram below), so for one full size lane you will need an area 17m x 6m. However these dimensions are frequently altered for club and leisure situations to take account of limited space available. Many club terrains are built to have 12m x 3m lanes

2. A Playing Lane



There is no exact laid down specification for a lane, except in size (see Figure 1 for a full size International lane). As a basic rule it must not be so flat that a boule can be rolled dead straight on it, neither should the top dressing be so thick that it allows little or no forward movement of a boule once it lands. All-weather pitches can be used for pétanque but, if they are too smooth, they severely restrict the range of shots that can be used and take out the element of chance which attracts beginners. Experienced players do not like them, as a part of the real skill of the game is "reading" the surface. A good player will use the undulations of a lane when deciding the line to be taken to the jack.

Pétanque may be played on any surface but grass is not recommended, gravel or hard earth are the favoured surfaces. In the UK we try to recreate the dusty squares and areas where pétanque is played in France, however we tend to have a wetter climate so it is for this reason we construct areas similar to gravel driveways so we can play when the weather is inclement.

Please contact me if any additional information is required.

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