

Planning Committee - Thursday 08 June 2023

Annual Report - Safety of Sports Grounds 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

Recommendation(s) / Action(s) Required

a. The Planning Committee notes the activity completed in respect of Safety of Sports Grounds for the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

Report of the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Summary

1.1 This report informs the Committee of the Safety of Sports Grounds work completed during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. It describes the County Council's statutory obligations and outlines the activity to ensure that these duties have been met. The Report details the performance and highlights how this work influences the Council's priority outcomes.

2. Background

- 2.1 Staffordshire County Council is responsible for administering the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, and the Fire Safety and Safety at Sports Grounds Act 1987, in respect of sports grounds within Staffordshire.
- 2.2 This duty relates to "designated grounds" which are sports grounds with a capacity of over 10,000 (5,000 for football). "Designated Grounds" require a safety certificate granted by the local authority. Within the County of Staffordshire, Burton Albion Football Club is the only club that is recognised a "designated ground."
- 2.3 Sports stadiums with a covered stand of a capacity of over 500 standing or seated spectators (a regulated stand) require a "safety certificate" under the Act, granted by the local authority.
- 2.4 During 2022/23 Staffordshire County Council had responsibility for seven "regulated stands":
 - Staffordshire County Showground displays / exhibitions.
 - Hednesford Hills Raceway stock car racing
 - Hednesford Town Football Club football
 - Leek Town Football Club football
 - Stafford Rangers Football Club football



- Tamworth Football Club football
- Uttoxeter Racecourse horse racing
- 2.5 The Act places a statutory duty on the Local Authority and the Emergency Services to provide advice and guidance to managers of sports grounds on their responsibility under the Act, and how best to discharge their responsibility.
- 2.6 It is the responsibility of the County Council to form and administer a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) for each venue. The SAG brings key partners (emergency services, emergency planning and other key local authority officers) together to plan and prepare for spectator safety. Each SAG is chaired by an officer of the County Council and has representatives from the sports club and other partners.
- 2.7 The involvement of the SAG does not absolve the venue management of the responsibility for spectator safety. When applying the guidance and recommendations, the principal objective is "to secure reasonable safety at the sports ground when it is in use for the specified activity" (section 2(1) of the Safety of Sports Ground Act 1975).
- 2.8 The Safety of Sports Grounds team, along with key SAG partners, provide support and guidance to the management of the sporting venues to facilitate on-going crowd safety whilst ensuring that regulation is not over burdensome or restrictive on the growth of the venue. This support and guidance enable the business to progress, develop and on occasion diversify from the intended use of the venue.
- 2.9 During May 2011, following a full review of the Safety of Sports Grounds function, Staffordshire County Council's Audit Committee abolished the Safety of Sports Grounds Panel. It was agreed that the Planning Committee should receive an annual report on the work of the Spectator Safety Officer team. This report covers the period for the 2022/2023 financial year.

3. Risk Management

3.1 The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 places a statutory duty on the local authority to arrange a periodical inspection of designated sports grounds. The Act stipulates that "periodical" means at least once in every twelve months; within Staffordshire this applies to Burton Albion Football Club only.



- 3.2 Home Office guidance, which relates to stands with a capacity of less than 2000, recommends inspection once every alternate calendar year. This requirement only relates only to the "regulated stands" listed above at 2.4.
- 3.3 The inspections carried out during the year inform the planning of inspections for the following year. All venues are risk assessed to assess the efficacy of the safety of spectator controls.
- 3.4 The criteria listed below formed the basis of the assessment for each site:
 - Construction and maintenance of the venue
 - Operation and management
 - Training and development of safety staff
 - Fire safety
 - Provision of adequate medical facilities
 - Appropriate contingency plans are in place and tested.
- 3.5 To ensure there is an appropriate use of resource, the risk for each venue has been reviewed enabling the highest risk stands to be prioritised. Each venue has been categorised as High or Medium risk.

4. Risk Assessment - Designated Ground

4.1 Burton Albion Football Club was assessed as the highest risk category due to its size. Inspection on both non-event and event days was therefore a priority. The "designated ground" at Burton Albion has been allocated at least one inspection per 12-month period.

5. Risk Assessment – Regulated Stands

Risk rating	Stand
	Staffordshire County Showground
High	Uttoxeter Racecourse
	Stafford Rangers Football Club
Medium	Leek Town Football Club
	Hednesford Town Football Club
	Hednesford Hills Raceway
	Tamworth Football Club



6. Inspections

6.1 **Designated ground**

- 6.1.1 During 2022/23 the Trading Standards team continued to work with Burton Albion Football Club and SAG partners to ensure the safety management controls in place at the club were fit for purpose.
- 6.1.2 The team provided support and advice to the incumbent safety officer in her role as well as the wider club safety management team. The safety officer left the role in March 2023 at short notice, however the Trading Standards team worked closely with the club management during this period to ensure continued and uninterrupted spectator safety. The club are currently seeking to appoint a suitably qualified replacement as a matter of urgency. This has necessitated a high level of involvement from trading standards officers. The Club have put in place temporary arrangements and have engaged the support of a suitably experienced safety officer to enable the club to continue to host their home fixtures without interruption.
- 6.1.3 The completed activity for Burton Albion for the year 2022 / 2023 was:
 - The club's compliance with the requirements of the current Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations was reviewed.
 - An annual inspection of the ground was completed.
 - Two event day inspections were carried out, focussing on high-risk games.
 - The Safety Certificate was revised and updated to reflect changes in the SGSA template.
 - Three Safety Advisory Group meetings took place together with additional multi agency conversations relating to the safety officer departure.
 - Officers continued to work closely with the SGSA Local Authority Inspector, and a SGSA audit was carried out in December 2022, with a positive outcome which recognised and complemented the work and progress of the service.

6.2 High Risk Regulated Stands

6.2.1 Two regulated stands, Staffordshire County Showground and Uttoxeter racecourse, are risk rated as high and as such should receive an annual inspection. The remaining medium risk venues



with regulated stands are scheduled to receive an inspection, on average, every two years.

- 6.2.2 The completed activity for high risk regulated stands for the year 2022 / 2023 was:
 - Non-Event Day inspection work was carried out on 7th December 2022 at Staffordshire County Showground, with broad compliance reported. Visit was supported by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue and Stafford Borough Building Control teams from the SAG. Event Day inspection work was carried out on 1st June 2022 during day one of the Staffordshire County Show 2022 event.
 - Non-Event Day inspection work was carried out on 8th December 2022 at Uttoxeter Racecourse, with broad compliance reported. Visit was supported by SAG members. Event Day inspection work was carried out on 28th January 2023 during the Super Saturday racing fixture.
- 6.2.4 Engagement with high-risk venues has continued by email, telephone, or via virtual / face-to-face SAG meetings during 2022/23.
- 6.2.5 Detail of the activity carried out at each of the venues is attached as Appendix 1 to this Report for information.

6.3 Medium Risk Regulated Stands

- 6.3.1 This year, Officers have also engaged with all medium risk venues with regulated stands to ensure completion of planned work in respect of SAG meetings, Non-Event Day inspections and Event Day inspections.
- 6.3.2 The decision to visit all medium risk venues during 2022/23 has given the team assurance of the ongoing safety of the grounds following a period during Covid where physical inspections were not possible.
- 6.3.3 Detail of the activity carried out at each of the venues is attached as Appendix 1 to this Report for information.



6.4 2023/24 Inspection Planning

- 6.4.1 Inspection Plans and related activities for 2023/24 have been scheduled and are attached as Appendix 3 to this report for information.
- 6.4.2. The Inspection Plans for 2023/24 include assisting venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.
- 6.4.3 Martyn's Law is also known as the Protect Duty and is a new piece of legislation designed to ensure the public is better protected from a "multifaceted, diverse and continually evolving" terror threat.
- 6.4.4 The Duty places a requirement on those responsible for certain venues including sports grounds to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.

7. Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire 2022

- 7.1 During 2022/23 the Technical and Business Manager was invited to establish and chair a SAG for the Ironman event in June 2022. This was achieved and the SAG Chair was actively involved with the development of the plans and procedures and the practical implementation of safety management systems for the event. The event was successfully held and well received by competitors, stakeholders, and responsible agencies.
- 7.2 However, as the Committee will be aware, an incident occurred within the swim element of the event at the Chasewater venue. Unfortunately, this resulted in the tragic death of a competitor. Following an investigation, the cause of death was determined as natural causes.
- 7.3 The SAG Chair, supported by Catherine Mann Interim Assistant Director for Culture Rural and Safer Communities, facilitated an Extraordinary Safety Advisory Group meeting following the event to review the multi-agency response to the tragic incident. A high level of engagement and participation was received from a core of SAG members.

8. Resources

8.1 Following the outcome from the Hillsborough Inquests (where the jury found errors and omissions in the safety certification and



oversight, and that a lack of pre-match and contingency planning contributed to the deaths), it is important that an appropriate level of resource for this area of work is maintained.

- 8.2 The resources for this area are drawn from within Trading Standards, the Safety of Sports Grounds work forms part of the team's overall activity. This enables the resourcing for a specialist area to be managed efficiently. The Trading Standards Operations Manager holds the FSOA (Football Safety Officers Association) Certificate in Event and Match Day Safety Management and a Diploma in Spectator Safety Management Level 4 NVQ. The lead for the function has become the responsibility of the Trading Standards Technical and Business Manager for the Local Authority following the January 2021 trading standards redesign.
- 8.3 In addition to the Trading Standards Technical and Business Manager, the Trading Standards Operations Manager continues to support the activity, and a Trading Standards Team Leader has responsibility as the designated officer for conduct of the inspection work for the designated ground. Both provide comprehensive reports to the SAGs and relevant sports grounds following inspection. Additional administrative support has been provided from within the trading standards team to ensure any issues are addressed and prioritised by the risks associated with each stand.
- 8.4 Both the Technical and Business Manager and Team Leader have increased their knowledge and maintained their competence during 2022/23 to the satisfaction of the SGSA.
- 8.5 The resources committed to this activity during 2022/23 were increased from 0.5 FTE to 0.7 FTE to ensure resilience and capacity to discharge statutory duties effectively and efficiently. These resources were be drawn from the operational trading standards team. This approach will continue for 2023/24.

9. Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) Audit

9.1 Following the Grenfell fire, Central Government reviewed areas of risk to the public to ensure that all local authorities responsible for licensing designated grounds, such as Burton Albion, received an audit to check that there were consistent and adequate safety criteria in place. The Audits took place in December 2022, several recommendations were made following each audit and have subsequently been completed.



- 9.2 The recommendations are detailed at Appendix 2, however in summary the SGSA Inspector found that we have continued to improve on our previous "Good" inspection and was complimentary about the work of the officers engaged in the activity.
- 9.3 During 2022/2023 Trading Standards officers worked closely with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) Local Authority Inspector to update the processes for Safety of Sports grounds controls at Burton Albion.
- 9.4 The County Council's scheme of delegation has been updated to ensure that references to legislation are correct. Required to ensure officers are able to issue a prohibition notice under the Fire Safety and Safety of places of Sport Act 1987 when the risk to spectators at a ground is so great that until steps have been taken to reduce it to a reasonable level, the admission of spectators can be restricted or prohibited.
- 9.4 During 2023/2024 officers will continue to work with the SGSA inspector to update and enhance the way the Safety Advisory Group operates and are included in Appendix 2 of this report for information.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 2022/2023 has been a successful year for the Trading Standards team. All planned work at the designated ground, high and medium risk venues with regulated standards has been fully completed.
- 10.2 Training and development to maintain the competence of the team has been undertaken by officers in their roles. Existing qualified officers have (and will continue to) provided support for officers to ensure the delivery of roles and responsibilities within the current structure.
- 10.3 All formal inspection process has been completed this year and the team continues to engage with venues' Safety Management Teams and Partners to ensure that all events that have gone ahead, have done so safely. This has been achieved via SAG's as well as providing individual advice and support within a fluid and challenging environment.
- 10.4 During 2022/2023 significant focus was required by the team to ensure that the facilities were operated in accordance with the required standards, safe and considered manner.



11. Link to Strategic Plan

11.1 The attendance of people at these stadia using local businesses and services influences the Council's priority outcome "Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community."

12. Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

N/A

13. Community Impact

There are no specific equalities implications raised by this report. Safe access and movement within venues, particularly in the event of an emergency for all users is considered as part of the safety team's inspections. The Safety of Spectator inspections take into consideration the safety of all spectators, particularly those with disabilities, the elderly, families, and children.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

- Appendix 1 details of inspections and engagement programme carried out during 2022/23
- Appendix 2 SGSA Audit Action Plan December 2022
- Appendix 3 details of planned inspections, engagement, and related activities to be carried out during 2023/24

Contact Details:

Interim Assistant Director: Catherine Mann, MBE, Interim Assistant

Director, Culture Rural and Safer

Communities.

Report Authors: Trish Caldwell

Job Title: County Commissioner Regulatory Services

and Community Safety

Telephone No.: (01785) 277804

E-Mail Address: trish.caldwell@staffordshire.gov.uk

Mark Wilson

Technical and Business Manager

Trading Standards (01782) 297004

mark.wilson@staffordshire.gov.uk



Antony Shore Trading Standards Operations Manager (01785) 277870 antony.shore@staffordshire.gov.uk



Appendix 1 - details of inspections / engagement programme 2022/23

Risk rating	Stand	Last Inspection Date	Comments
High	Staffordshire County Showground	07/12/2022 Non- Event Day 01/06/2022 Event Day	The 2022 event returned to is traditional date of early summer. Between 3 rd and 17 th May 2022 Event SAG meetings held regarding County show event on 1 st and 2 nd June 2022. The team worked with SAG partners on safety measures and event planning, including new requirements for adoption of Zone Ex around the venue. Event Management Plan reviewed for event and additional Queens Jubilee Garden Party.
			New General Safety Certificate issued on 5 th April 2022 following revision of Operations Manual and Risk Assessments.
			Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed – 1 st June 2022 during day one of Staffordshire County Show event 2022.
			Full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) in relation to the County Showground venue held on 7 th December 2022.
			SAG process commenced for 2023 event in March 2023.
High	Uttoxeter Racecourse	08/12/2022 Non- Event Day	Special Safety Certificates issued for three events: 14th May / 9th June / 22nd July 2022 for non-racing events at venue, subject to review of Event Management Plan,



		13/09/2022 and 28/01/2023 Event Days	Safety Policy, and Risk Assessments, including necessary event SAG engagement. Completed revision of General Safety Certificate and issued revised version. Completed full Event Day Inspection (EDI) – 13 th September 2022. Full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) held 8 th
Medium	Stafford Rangers Football	23/03/2023 Non-	December 2022. Full Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed – 28 th January 2023 - Super Saturday Event – Racing Fixture. SAG / Tabletop exercise pre-Midlands Grand National held on 8 th March 2022. Completed revision of General Safety Certificate and new
Medium	Club	Event Day 04/03/2023 Event Day	Safety Certificate issued 6 th December 2022. 4 th March 2023 – Event Day Inspection (EDI) undertaken. 23 rd March 2023 – SAG meeting conducted. 23 rd March 2023 – Annual inspection undertaken.
Medium	Leek Town Football Club	03/02/2023 Non- Event Day	Full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) completed – 22 nd April 2022.



		26/11/2022 Event Day	Application for Special Safety Certificate received on 16 th May 2022 for community event "Aloha" on 4 th June 2022.
			Special Safety Certificate issued on 1st June 2022
			Completed Event Day Inspection (EDI) – 26 th November 2022 (Leek Town v Colne)
			3 rd February 2023 - SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) completed.
Medium	Hednesford Hills Raceway	13/02/2023 Non- Event Day	Non-Event Day inspection (NEDI) completed – 11 th August 2022
		12/03/2023 Event Day	Reviewed compliance with the requirements of the current Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations. Revised and updated the Safety Certificate to reflect changes in SGSA template. – re-issued September 2022
			SAG / Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) completed – 13 th February 2023
			Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed – Sunday 12 th March 2023



Medium	Hednesford Town Football Club	28/11/2022 Non- Event Day	Meeting held with venue owners re: new General Safety Certificate requirements on 1st April 2022
		19/11/2022 Event Day	Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed – 9 th April 2022
		Evene Buy	Full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) completed – 20 th May 2022. Reviewed compliance with the requirements of the current Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations.
			Application for Special Safety Certificate received 5 th July 2022 for community event "Party in the Park" on 30 th July 2022.
			Event SAG held on 6 th July 2022. Event Safety Policy, Event Management Plan and Risk Assessments to be reviewed.
			Special Safety Certificate issued 26 th July 2022
			New General Safety Certificate issued 26 th September 2022
			Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed 19 th November 2022 (HTFC vs Rushden & Diamonds)
			SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) completed 28 th November 2022



Medium	Tamworth Football Club	29/04/2022 and 30/03/2023 Non-Event Days 04/02/2023 and 25/02/2023 Event Days	Full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) completed – 29 th April 2022. Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed - 4 th February 2023 vs Mickleover Sports Incident occurred 21 st February vs Nuneaton Borough. Match abandonment Event Day Inspection (EDI) completed - 25th February vs Bromsgrove Sporting – Completed Extraordinary SAG held on 3 rd March to debrief incident from 25 th February. No issue with SAG post incident. SAG informed and understood that the game was not abandoned on safety grounds and it was due to away team refusing to continue, despite assurances from the Club and local policing team. SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection (NEDI) – Completed 30 th March
			team refusing to continue, despite assurances from the Club and local policing team.
			30 th March Engagement with Club, Safety Team and key SAG
			partners continued post FA and League review of incident, including potential replay of home league fixture vs Nuneaton Borough before mid-April 2023 – Completed



Appendix 2

SGSA Audit 20^{th} December 2022 - Action Plans from LA audit report

Action Point	Detail	Review date
1.	Complete a thorough review of the Operations Manual, including reviewing content as well as headings, and ensure that it includes an appropriate level of detail against all relevant headings and addresses the safety of all people throughout. (modified from a previous action)	December 2023
2.	Implement a process for annual review of the safety certificate, including obtaining an up to date copy of, and reviewing the capacity calculations and P&S factor assessments for the ground, using GG6 methodology	December 2023
3.	Ensure that there is a clear process for the annual inspection of the ground, including physical inspection and inspection of documentation provided by the ground, and that this process is completed within a reasonable timeframe.	December 2023
4.	Encourage the club to implement a programme of testing and exercising of the contingency and major incident plans, working with the emergency services.	December 2023



Appendix 2 cont.

Compliance with recommended actions from LA audit report – 9th December 2021

Action Point	Detail	Progress
1	Carry out a thorough review of the Operations Manual, including reviewing content as well as headings, and ensure that it includes an appropriate level of detail against all relevant headings and addresses the safety of all people throughout. (modified from a previous action)	Partially Complete / Ongoing
2	Exercise service business continuity plans to ensure the resilience of the safety at sports grounds function.	Complete
3	Implement a process for annual review of the safety certificate, including obtaining and up to date copy of, and reviewing the capacity calculations and P&S factor assessments for the ground, using GG6 methodology.	Partially Complete / Ongoing
4	Ensure that technical documents submitted by the club as part of the annual inspection are checked by competent persons, and any omissions or actions are followed up with the club.	Complete
5	Amend the scheme of delegation to ensure that references to legislation are correct: 44 refers to the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act1987 rather than the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 Act for prohibition notices. 43 also requires correcting as there is no application to a court required for a prohibition notice under this legislation.	Complete



Appendix 3 - Planned inspections, engagement, and related activities 2022/23

The planned activity for Burton Albion is:

- Continue to support the club during the critical transition to a new safety officer.
- Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.
- Review the club's compliance with the requirements of the current Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations.
- Complete a review of the Club's Operation Manual and Procedures.
- Support the club to carry out a tabletop contingency test exercise with key staff from Club's safety team and SAG partners.
- Complete an annual inspection of the ground.
- Carry out at least two event day inspections, focussing on high-risk games.
- Revise and update the Safety Certificate to reflect changes in the SGSA template, to include SIA model term.
- Safety Advisory Group meetings on a regular basis.
- Continue to work closely with the SGSA Local Authority Inspector (next planned audit December 2023)



Risk rating	Stand	Planned Activity
High	Staffordshire County Showground	Hold a full SAG - Mid April 2023 in relation to the County Showground venue to ensure all safety management controls are in place pre-County Show event.
		Event SAG and tabletop exercise scheduled for early-May 2023
		Event Day Inspection to be completed – 31st May - 1st June 2023 during day one of Staffordshire County Show event 2023. The focus for EDI for 2022/23 will be on Traffic Management and management the ticketing process. Carry out a review of compliance with the requirements of the current Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations.
		Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.
High	Uttoxeter Racecourse	Focus for 2023 / 24 is on compliance with the requirements of the new Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations.
		Attend Anti Counter Terrorism Training carried out at the venue.
		Complete a full Event Day Inspection
		Hold two full SAGs and Non-Event Day Inspection



		Consider attendance at Club tabletop exercise
		Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law
Medium	Stafford Rangers Football Club	Focus for 2023 / 24 is on compliance with the requirements of the new Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations.
		Complete a full Event Day Inspection
		Hold two full SAGs and Non-Event Day Inspections
		Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.
Medium	Leek Town Football Club	Focus for 2023 / 24 is on renewal of current Safety Certificate and assessment of compliance with the requirements, including capacity calculations.
		Complete a full Event Day Inspection
		Hold a full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection.
		Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.



Medium	Hednesford Town Football Club	Focus for 2023 / 24 is on renewal of current Safety Certificate and assessment of compliance with the requirements, including capacity calculations (following change of ownership at Club). Complete a full Event Day Inspection Hold a full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection. Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.
Medium	Hednesford Hills Raceway	Focus for 2023 / 24 is on compliance with the requirements of the new Safety Certificate, including capacity calculations. Complete a full Event Day Inspection Hold a full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection. Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.
Medium	Tamworth Football Club	Focus for 2023 / 24 is on renewal of current Safety Certificate and assessment of compliance with the requirements, including capacity calculations (following retirement of Safety Officer and



expected changes to Safety Management Team, in addition to Club gaining promotion to the National League South or North).
Complete a full Event Day Inspection
Hold a full SAG and Non-Event Day Inspection.
Assist venue safety management team with planning towards the implementation of Martyn's Law.