



Report On The Proposal to Lease Land at King George Playing Field

Introduction

The Town Council has been approached by a local nursery with a request to lease a small section of King George Playing Field. The nursery proposes to install a secure perimeter fence to facilitate the provision of outdoor childcare facilities in a safe environment.

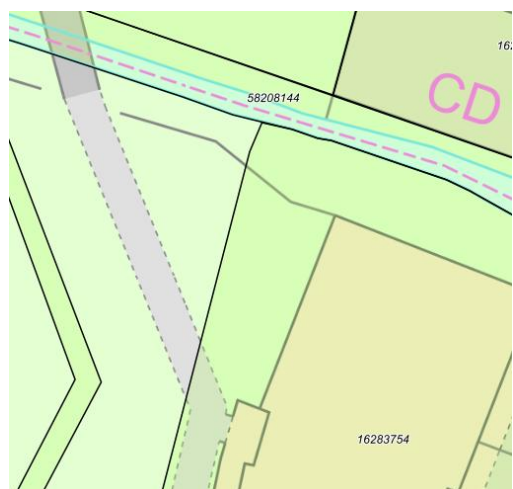
The Area of Land

The parcel of land in question is located on the northeastern side of King George Playing Field, positioned between the footpath (which connects the bridge to the car park) and the Alcombe Children's Centre. The presence of the footpath naturally separates this area from the main playing field. Due to its relatively small size and isolated position, the land has limited recreational value in comparison to the wider playing field.

This area is primarily grassed and includes a disabled access ramp leading to the Children's Centre. A street light, owned and maintained by Somerset Council, sits just off the adjacent footpath. The land is bordered by a 4 ft high hawthorn hedge and a chestnut post-and-rail fence that marks a ransom strip adjacent to the rhyme. This ransom strip contains two willow trees owned by Minehead Town Council (MTC), which were pollarded in early 2025. The MTC boundary runs to the top of the bank of the rhyme. It is important to note that a small portion of this grassed area, closest to the building, is owned by Somerset Council and is already technically leased to the nursery.



Photo of proposed area of land



Map of area of land with black line identifying divide between MTC and SC land

The Proposal

Outlined in the attached documentation, the key elements of the nursery's proposal include:

- Entering into a long-term lease for the specified grassed area
- Erecting a 6 ft high palisade fence around the perimeter with gated access
- Retaining the land as a grassed surface and assuming full responsibility for its maintenance
- Including the ransom strip within the lease, and taking on maintenance responsibilities for the trees and the MTC-owned portion of the strip
- Covering all legal fees incurred by MTC in the leasing process
- Committing funds towards reinstating the land to its original condition at the end or early termination of the lease.

Additionally, there will be a right of access for contractors to enter the site for maintenance purposes. While the nursery will be responsible for the trees, MTC would continue to include them in its regular tree inspection schedule to help identify and guide any required works.

Although the lease term is not specified in the written proposal, verbal discussions suggest a proposed duration of 25 years.

Financial and Legal Considerations

This proposed lease would be granted on a peppercorn rent basis and will not generate income directly. However, the arrangement offers financial benefit in the form of modest savings for the Town Council through the transfer of maintenance responsibilities, estimated at approximately £500–£1,000 per year.

Although MTC would retain ownership of the land, a lease exceeding seven years constitutes a *disposal of land* under Section 127(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. Legal representatives for both parties would draft and review the lease to ensure all obligations and protections are formally agreed upon.

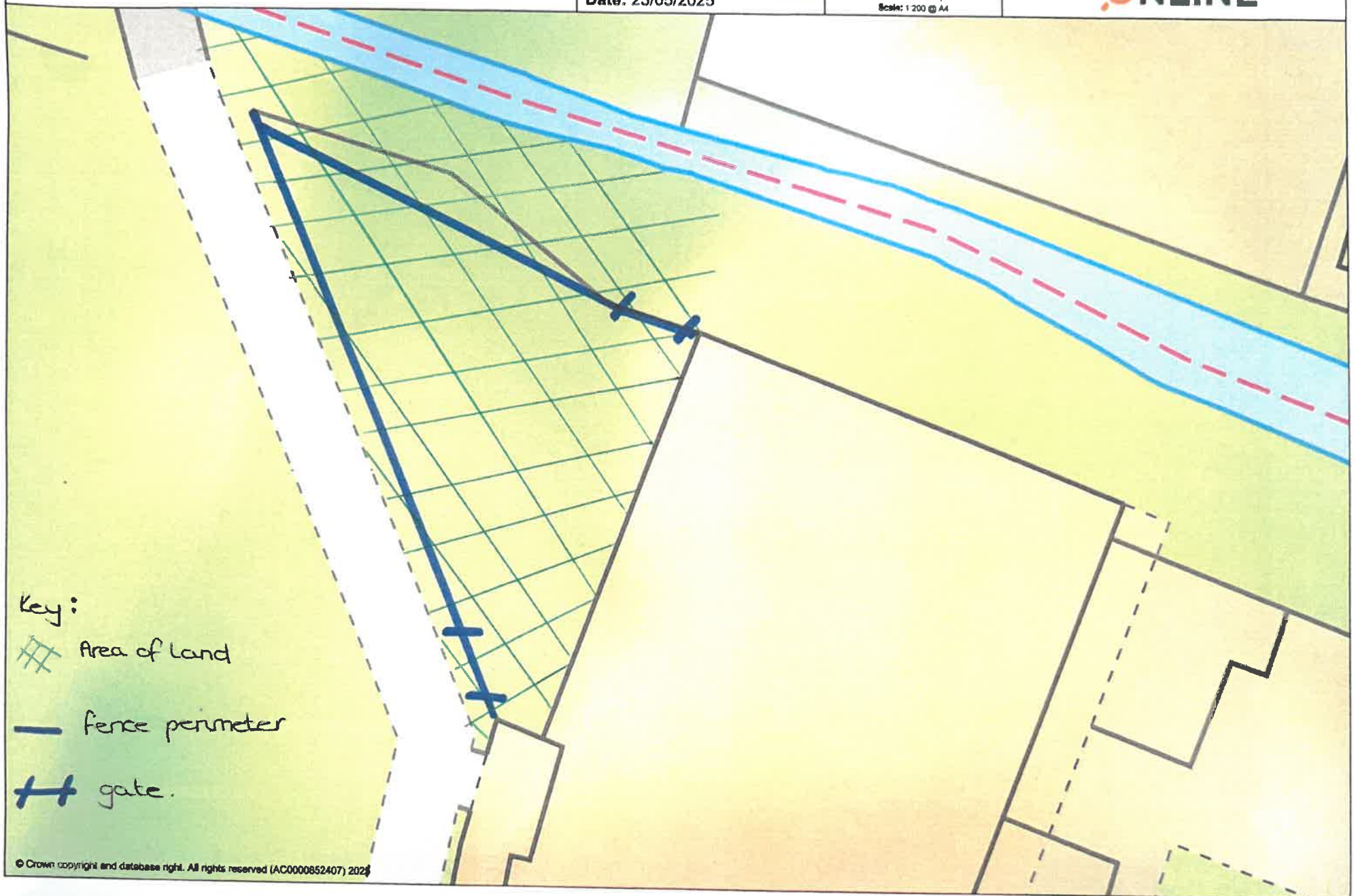
Recommendation

- That the Town Council approve the proposal to lease the land to the nursery.
- That authority be delegated to the Clerk to instruct MTC's preferred solicitor to prepare and finalise the lease agreement and proceed on behalf of the Council.

Ben Parker

Town Clerk

June 2025



Current Photos of the Land and Ransom Area



Proposed Fencing – Palisade 1.8m (6ft)

