Playing Field and Playground of the Year Results Announced

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association the Winners and Runners Up in the Playing Field and Playground of the Year Competition were announced and presented with their awards by the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dame Janet Trotter DBE.

In the Playing Field Category there were 14 entries all of a very high standard from across the county and the final decision was made.

**Winner:** Poulton Playing Field

**Runner Up:** Corse and Staunton Playing Field

**Highly Commended:** Upper Up Playing Field, South Cerney

The judges were impressed by not only the excellent facilities at Poulton but also recognised the sterling work of the volunteers and trustees who look after the field. Similarly at Corse and Staunton, the facilities there have improved considerably in recent times as a result of the hard working committee. The cricket pitch at Corse and Staunton is ranked as amongst the best in the county.

Highly commended was the Upper Up Playing Field at South Cerney, which plays host to a number of sports including cricket, football, tennis and BMX

In the Small Playground Category the decision of the judges was

**Winner:** Freeman Playing Field, Gotherington

**Runner Up:** Rye Crescent, Bourton-on-the-Water

**Highly Commended:** Upton St Leonards Playing Field

The winner, Freeman Playing Field at Gotherington is a very well maintained and popular small playground. Rye Crescent at Bourton-on-the-Water had been revamped in 2011 and the resulting new playground is again very popular. The Upton St Leonard Playground was Highly Commended by the judges for the recent improvements they have made.

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Playing Field and Playground of the Year Cont.

The Large Playground Category attracted 8 high class entries again from across the county and the decision of the judges was:

Winner: Bussage Pleasure Ground
Runner Up: Bredon Play Area
Highly Commended: Walnut Tree Field, Fairford

The play area at Bussage was a previous winner in 2009, and it is a fantastic community facility used by children of all ages. Bredon is a newer play area and thanks to the hard working group of volunteers they secured funding for the improvements.

The judges also highly commended Walnut Tree Field Fairford where the Town Council is to be congratulated for the recent improvements made to this popular site.

Finally the Multi-Use games Area (MUGA) went to Bredon Playing Field.

The competition was sponsored by the Grimshaw Group based in Cheltenham with over 60 years experience in providing playing fields and surfaces throughout the county.

Commenting on the success of the competition, the Chairman Major Hancock said “This is the fifth year that we have held the awards so naturally we are delighted to have had such a high standard and number of entrants. It is also pleasing that support for the competition has been from right across the county. Next year we are hoping for even more entries”

GPFA Volunteer of the Year Award

The GPFA Volunteer of the Year is a new award and has been introduced to recognise the contribution made by the many unsung heroes in Gloucestershire who work tirelessly on their playgrounds and playing fields. In total there were six nominations, Andy Russell from Upton St Leonards; Brian Cosgrove from Gotherington; Colin Gittings from Corse and Staunton; Roger Ovett from Angus Buchanan Memorial Field; John Barnfield from Shurdington and finally Tony Bennett from Yorkley. Any of the six nominations would have been worthy winners and the judges had a difficult decision to make. After some deliberation the GPFA Volunteer of the Year for 2012 was awarded to Roger Ovett for his outstanding voluntary work over a number of years at the Angus Buchanan Memorial Ground in Coleford.
The GPFA Honourable Company of Gloucestershire Award 2012

For the past 9 years the GPFA administered an award scheme for young sports people kindly sponsored by Ben Jeffrey. Sadly Ben passed away in 2011 but we are delighted that the award is now being sponsored by The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire to whom the association is extremely grateful for their generosity.

The new award called The GPFA Honourable Company of Gloucestershire Award opened for applications in June 2012 and by the closing date in September some 26 entries had been received from young sports persons across the county. Unfortunately only four awards could be made and after considerable deliberation they were presented to the following young people by Patrick Brooke, Warden of The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire at the AGM:

Chris Bell-Hartley age 14 from Brockworth. Chris is an extremely talented young athlete who is marking his mark in the competitive sport of hurdling. His hard work put in at the Cheltenham and County Harriers resulted in Chris winning the Under 15 80m Hurdles at the England Athletics Championships in August 2012. Chris now has his sights set on continuing reaching the National Junior Team

Sophie Hall age 14 from Gloucester. Sophie is making a name for herself in the competitive world of swimming based at the Gloucester City Swimming Club. In March 2012 Sophie finished in 3rd place in the 400m freestyle at the British Gas Swimming Championships (Selection Trials) for the Olympic Games. At the ASA National Age Group Championships in July 2012 Sophie took silver in both the 100m and 200m freestyle events. She has also won numerous regional titles. In 2013 Sophie is hoping to go one step further by winning gold at the national championships.

Lucy Mason age 12 from Cheltenham. A taster session at her local brownie colony introduced Lucy to the sport of Archery. Since then she has become one of the country’s best young archers. Lucy is currently the British Under 12 Outdoor and Indoor Champion. Not only that but she is holder of 10 national records and became the first person in Britain to achieve a perfect score on a Bristol Round (144 golds from 144 arrows). Finally, she achieved the highest score ever recorded nationally for a metric round, 1429 out of a possible 1440.

John Feaster age 15 from Bourton-on-the-Hill. John is one of three talented brothers who all excel at their chosen sport of fencing. John was British Youth Champion in 2011 and English Youth Champion in both 2009 and 2012. His talents have been recognised nationally with his elevation to the GB Cadet Squad in 2011. John then went on to compete in the World and European Cadet Championships for Great Britain in 2012 giving creditable performances in both events. His long term aim is to represent Great Britain at the Olympics.
Skate Park Refurbished Thanks to Grant from the GPFA

The skate park at Yorkley Recreation Centre was first installed over six years ago and since then it has proved to be a very popular facility with young people in the area. In fact such is its popularity that it became a victim of its own success when a number of the ramps became badly worn as shown in the picture below. Either the ramps had to be refurbished or on safety grounds the skate park would need to be closed. As with many facilities such as this across the county they are not funded by the local authority instead it is maintained and provided by the Yorkley Recreation Centre, a registered charity which also looks after the village hall and football field on the same site. The trustees and users set about fundraising to find the £6500 required to repair the ramps and were successful in generating some £4500 of funds. However they were still £2000 short. As members of the GPFA Yorkley Recreation Centre was eligible to apply to our Grants and Loans Scheme and the association was delighted to make an award of £2000 to enable the remedial work to be carried out. The plywood surfaces of all the ramps were replaced by Evolution Skate Park Ramps with a Phenolic Ply material which is significantly more durable. The refurbished ramps were officially opened in September and the site is as popular as ever.