

HESKETH PARK FACELIFT



Artist's impression, above and below, of how the new cricket pavilion at Dartford will look

£20,000 boost for club's centre of excellence dreams

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Plans to create a cricket centre of excellence in Dartford have moved a step closer thanks to a £20,000 grant.

Dartford Cricket Club, which wants to build a new pavilion at its home in Hesketh Park, was granted the money at a council cabinet meeting last week.

Its current one is in a poor state and contains asbestos.

The grant means the club can now apply for planning permission and, if granted, work is expected to start in May.

Along with a new pavilion, the club is improving its pitches by erecting new nets and installing a rain water harvest and sprinkler system. Members also want to build an indoor cricket centre



and school at a different site.

Club chairman Jim Lowrie said: "Everyone is very excited. This is a major step forward. There is a certain amount of scepticism though because we have been talking about rebuilding it for such a long time."

The club is now hoping to submit its planning application within the next four weeks and work out the overall cost of the project.

"It is going to be in excess of

£1m," added Mr Lowrie.

"Last April we were given £1m by the council, but we still need to raise somewhere in the region of £200,000 to £300,000, which is not an insignificant sum

"We are trying to bridge the gap through grants and sponsorship, so we are making a plea for anyone that wants to get involved in terms of sponsoring the club."

It is hoped the pavilion will be completed this year.

Mr Lowrie added: "The impact when it's completed will be massive. There is nowhere in the local area that has a facility like this.

"Our current building is tired and we spend a lot of our money on heating, lighting and patching it up."

To find out more or to contact the club regarding sponsorship visit www.dartfordcc.co.uk

Pavilion will capture spirit and memory of past members



A MESSENGER CAMPAIGN

The new pavilion will also become a permanent memorial for former player Graham Dilley, who died of cancer in October 2011.

The Kent fast bowler was part of the England team which won the Ashes twice in the 1980s. A blue plaque will be placed in the pavilion after a successful Messenger campaign, backed by council leader Jeremy Kite and Dartford MP Gareth Johnson,

overturned a council rule that no person can be considered for a plaque until they have been dead for 10 years.

Club chairman Jim Lowrie said: "We are very proud of our history as one of, if not the oldest club in the country.

"I want the new pavilion to capture the spirit and memory of past members like Graham so we will be looking at how we can best do that as part of the build."

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