

Planning Statement – Proposed Non-Turf Training Facility at Turners Hill Cricket Club

1. Introduction and Purpose

This statement supports a planning application by **Turners Hill Cricket Club**, located at Turners Hill Cricket Ground, Turners Hill Road, for the installation of a new **non-turf cricket training facility**. The development aims to provide a safe, durable, and weather-resilient practice area that supports year-round training for all ages for male and female recreational cricket participants.

The proposal directly contributes to the well-being of the Turners Hill community by expanding opportunities for physical activity, social connection, youth development, and inclusive participation in sport. It aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework's emphasis on **healthy, active communities** and the protection and enhancement of local sports provision.

2. Site Context

Turners Hill Cricket Club is a long-established, volunteer-run community sports organisation situated on the outskirts of Turners Hill village. The proposed installation area is within the club's existing playing field, on maintained grass within the site boundary. The site is currently used informally for warm-ups and junior activities, as well as matches. The land is level, open, and free from ecological or heritage constraints.

The site is already designated and used for sport and recreation, and the proposal does not extend the club's footprint or introduce new land uses.

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The development comprises:

- A **double-lane non-turf cricket practice facility** built to England and Wales Cricket Board ("ECB") approved standards.
- Dimensions: 30m (length) x 7.3m (wide)
- A free-draining engineered base with synthetic turf surface.
- A surrounding **ball-stop netting system** with steel uprights. The perimeter will be surrounded by steel framing and green mesh netting 4m high, with a gated entrance. Mesh netting will form a 'roof' 18.25m long, covering approximately 50% of the area. The remaining area will be open.
- No lighting, no permanent buildings, and no changes to access or parking.

The structure is low-profile, reversible, and designed to blend into the existing landscape.

4. Community Well-Being and Social Value

Turners Hill Cricket Club plays a significant role in village life, providing structured sport, social connection, and a safe environment for children and families. The proposed facility strengthens this role in several ways:

- **Supporting youth development** through All Stars, Dynamos, and junior coaching, giving children a consistent, safe surface to learn fundamental movement and cricket skills.
- **Increasing physical activity** opportunities for residents of all ages, contributing to improved physical and mental well-being.
- **Reducing barriers to participation** by offering more training capacity, especially for beginners, women and girls, and those who benefit from a predictable, safe practice environment.
- **Strengthening community cohesion** by enabling more group sessions, volunteer coaching, and intergenerational activity.
- **Protecting the natural square and outfield**, ensuring the club can continue to host matches and community events without overuse of grass areas.

The facility is therefore not simply a sports upgrade—it is an investment in the health, resilience, and social fabric of Turners Hill.

5. Design, Appearance, and Landscape Impact

The design uses green, muted materials to minimise visual impact. The netting system is modest in height and typical of cricket practice facilities across the country. The installation sits comfortably within the existing sporting landscape and does not affect views, character, or openness of the recreation ground.

No lighting is proposed, ensuring no impact on dark skies or neighbouring properties.

6. Residential Amenity

The location of the installation has been chosen to avoid disturbance to nearby homes situated south-west (nr. Paddockhurst Road) of Turners Hill Cricket Club. Key points:

- No artificial lighting, so no light spill.
- Noise levels are comparable to existing cricket activity and limited to normal training hours.
- Netting prevents stray balls, improving safety for other recreation ground users.
- The visual profile is low and sympathetic to the setting.

The development will not adversely affect residential amenity.

7. Ecology and Environment

The installation area is managed grass with no ecological sensitivity. Works involve shallow ground preparation only, with no destruction or uprooting of trees, hedgerows, or wildlife habitats.

The free-draining design ensures natural infiltration of rainwater, and no impermeable surfaces are created.

8. Drainage and Flood Risk

The non-turf system is permeable and designed to allow water to pass through the surface and engineered layers into the ground. There is no increase in surface water run-off, and the proposal does not alter existing drainage patterns or increase flood risk.

9. Access and Construction

Construction access will use existing club entrances. The installation will be completed by specialist, ECB approved contractors over a short period with minimal disruption (approximately two weeks to complete installation). Once operational, the facility will be accessed on foot by players and coaches only.

No changes are required to parking, highways, or public access routes.

10. Policy Alignment

The proposal supports:

- **NPPF Section 8** – promoting healthy, inclusive, and safe communities.
- **Local Plan policies** on community facilities, recreation, and open space.
- **Sport England's objectives** to protect and enhance sports provision.
- **ECB technical guidance** for non-turf practice facilities.

The development enhances an existing sports site without harming amenity, landscape character, or the environment.

11. Conclusion

The proposed non-turf training facility at Turners Hill Cricket Club is a modest, well-designed improvement that delivers significant community benefit. It strengthens local well-being, supports youth and adult participation, and ensures the long-term sustainability of cricket in the village.

The development is fully compliant with planning policy and represents a positive, low-impact enhancement to an established community sports ground. Approval is respectfully requested.

Turners Hill Cricket Club holds a secure 24-year lease on the site, demonstrating a long-term commitment and support for the cricket activities provided. The planning application for the non-turf training facility has received the full support of the freeholder, Paddockhurst Estate, reflecting a positive partnership and shared vision for enhancing community sports provision.
