



I was not able to attend the last Norton Town Council meeting but here is an update from campaigner, Mark Scott.

"On Monday 21st February a few members of the public met the council before the main council meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to primarily discuss how we can get the skatepark open again. This did not include the halfpipe as this is being treated as a separate issue.

We were all pleasantly surprised at how the meeting went and the information that we were given. There was a much better atmosphere in the room, and it felt more like working together, something we only wish had happened sooner!

The council have recently gone out for quotes from two reputable and experienced companies that build skate ramps for a living. They have come back with proposals and costs which are very similar and clearly of a high standard. We have been told that there are potentially enough funds available to put right 6 out of the 7 ramps. We were also told that the 7th ramp would likely follow in the next year or two.

Ryan Swain has put out a vote VOTE for people's opinions on which ramp should be left for now. We all thought that the volcano was the most sensible option, but we would appreciate it if anyone who uses the park could vote on this.

Please also note that all of the above is based on the council passing a vote to agree to spend the money putting the park right and getting it re-opened. This vote was promised to be via an extraordinary meeting which will be shortly after March 4th to avoid further delays.

Hopefully we are finally getting somewhere and with a bit of luck the park will be back to its former glory by summertime 2022. Then we can get back to concentrating on the halfpipe and the original [#rescuetheramp](#) campaign!!"

Regarding the Half Pipe, the interim clerk, Tim, has confirmed that the structural report is due in by the end of this week or early next week, and that the report and quotes for the Half Pipe would be discussed together. If an Extraordinary Meeting takes place after 4th March, it feels like this could also be included and voted on at the EO meeting. If this timetable slips, then at the very latest the March Council meeting.

I also wish to share some info around the "community asset" route. This was originally designed to block any attempt to demolish the ramp. But since then, there have been various suggestions about creating an incorporated community organisation. The Rescue the Ramp Project Team and MNAP considered this route carefully and are clear why a town council solution is preferable. I thought it useful to explain why.

- * The land is leased, and the leaseholder (Fitzwilliam Malton Estate) would require a lessee to have substance. A newly created incorporated organisation backed only by volunteer fundraising would not be sufficient. The only obviously feasible guarantor would be a town council, and the only likely option would be Norton TC.

- * A new organisation would require a stand-alone insurance policy. Around £2,000 would have to be raised every year just to pay the premium. Whereas for Norton TC, the skatepark is simply added to the standard local council insurance, and has very little impact on the premium.

- * A new incorporated organisation would have to deal with the administrative overhead required to meet rules, and would need to keep good accounts. A town council already meets relevant statutory rules, and already has an effective accounting system, where a few extra transactions are not a significant issue.

- * Whilst appreciating that there is enthusiasm at present, volunteer organisations taking on something of this kind have difficulty keeping up interest, especially when there are dull but necessary outgoings such as insurance, lighting, etc that need constant fundraising. Typically, such organisations have a limited life, as people drift away, whereas a council has perpetual existence.

The last item is not meant to disparage the valuable offers from

volunteers, which are warmly and readily welcome and should be accepted as part of the project. It is the ongoing grind of keeping an organisation going, and funding it, that is questionable. Volunteer involvement in the management of the skatepark and the creation of events should be part of it, but there should be a basic level of provision by the town council.

Really, the costs should not be high, if the skatepark was efficiently managed. Kirkbymoorside has a similar skatepark, although without the big half pipe, and has not spent large sums. Regular maintenance is important, and there should be cost cutting opportunities for some of the past maintenance items.

We will alert you to the date of the Extraordinary Meeting and ask that when it comes to the crunch, the discussion and vote, you try your best to join us, if practical.

Ryan's poll closes 4th March for those who use or want to use the skate park!

Best wishes

Rachel (Rescue the Ramp)