

# Edinburgh MSP says Mallyen 3G pitches will have to be locked



*Gordon MacDonald MSP has written for us about the difficulties facing the new sports pitches recently unveiled in Balerno. A lot of hard work went into providing these pitches for the area, and it seems that their open door policy is now in danger.*

I attended the opening of the new 3G pitches at Mallyen Park a couple of weeks ago with the Minister for Sport Jamie Hepburn MSP and Councillor Bill Henderson.

These new 3G pitches at Mallyen Park, Balerno which are now being used for both football and rugby were funded in part by the Scottish Government's Cashback for Pitches programme that provided £200,000 towards the cost.

The intention was that they would be available for use during school hours for Balerno High School and local primary schools. Currie RFC and Currie Star FC would have the use of the facility at night and weekends with some community access at weekends and during the holidays.





However since their opening there have been a number of incidents that threatens that “open door policy”. There have been a number of verbal confrontations between coaches and groups of youths who refuse to leave when they are asked so that training can take place. Parents have also faced verbal abuse from some of the youngsters and there are now allegations of an assault on Friday 12 June resulting in police and paramedics having to attend.

Each morning the 3G pitches are covered in litter and there have been concerns about burn marks from dropped cigarettes. Both Currie RFC and Currie Star FC are having to spend more time making the pitches playable than coaching the youngsters.

The result is that in order to protect this investment for the community, it is actively being considered that the gates should be locked at all times and only those booked to play will gain access. The fence will also be altered, at considerable expense, to prevent access by climbing over. It is unfortunate that the actions of a minority are spoiling the opportunity that the wider community should be enjoying.