

## **MORPETH TRACK PROJECT**

Following the welcome announcement in the early autumn that Castle Morpeth Borough Council had agreed to put aside a sum of £300,000 towards a synthetic athletic track, steady progress has been made towards turning this long-awaited project into a reality.

A Project Steering Group has been formed which includes officers and councillors from CMBC, Tony Bray and Mike Bateman from the Harriers and representatives from Northumberland Sport and England Athletics. This Group has already met once and that was followed by a visit to Craik Park which has been chosen as the preferred site for the development.

A draft project scope document has been drawn up, hopefully for approval at the next Steering Group meeting. This includes:

- 1 a 6 lane synthetic track, possibly with an 8 lane straight;
- 2 a full range of field event facilities (with synthetic surfaces where relevant);
- 2 support equipment (landing areas, hurdles, throwing implements, throwing cage etc.);
- 3 storage facilities for this equipment;
- 4 a trackside cabin with a small public address system (for T & F meetings);
- 5 extension of and improvements to the CMBC changing rooms;
- 6 improvements to the access road and car park.

It is intended to appoint consultants to co-ordinate the implementation of the project and the bringing in of the additional funds which will be necessary if it is to be carried out as described above. Decisions relating to the long term 'ownership' and operation of the facility will also have to be made.

Discussions will be taking place with Morpeth Town FC and other users of the playing pitches on Morpeth Common, all of whom it is anticipated will benefit from the improvements being brought about as a result of the project.

The anticipated total cost of the project will only be known once the scope has been agreed and the full details worked out, but it is likely to be in the region of £500,000, meaning we still have to find £200,000. The project consultants will be given the task of seeking the necessary funding - from government grants, charitable foundations etc. However, we will also be looking to our own members to play a part in this process by seeking out commercial organisations and even individuals who are prepared to sponsor the project.

We'll do our best to keep our members involved as things progress but in the meantime you can help by letting Tony Bray (01670 514700) or Mike Bateman (01670 712228) know about any potential sponsorship leads.