

**Meeting of the Ernest Stevens Trusts
Management Committee**

**Monday 18th July, 2022 at 6.00pm,
Committee Room 3, Council House, Dudley**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To report the appointment of any substitute members serving for this meeting of the Committee.
3. To receive any declarations of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct.
4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 4th April 2022, as a correct record.
5. Public Forum
6. Wollescote Hall Bowls Club (Pages 1-4)
7. Update on future investments by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) in tennis facilities across the Borough (Pages 5-7)
8. Bernard Oakley Memorial Garden Project – update (Pages 8-10)
9. Update on Wollescote play area – verbal update - D Fildes
10. Update on Trusts Accounts – verbal report - D Mcnaney
11. Parks Licensing Scheme (Pages 11-14)
12. Update on planning application – Cricket pitch, Wollescote Park – verbal update – M Wilcox



13. Tintern House – verbal report – R Tilley
14. To consider any questions from Members to the Chair where two clear days' notice has been given to the Monitoring Officer (Council Procedure Rule 11.8).



Chief Executive

Dated: 8th July 2022

Distribution:

Members of the Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee:

Councillor I Kettle (Chair) – Pedmore and Stourbridge East Ward
Councillor A Hopwood (Vice-Chair) – Wollaston and Stourbridge Town Ward

Councillor D Borley – Lye and Stourbridge North Ward
Councillor J Cowell – Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Ward
Councillor T Creed – Norton Ward
Councillor T Crumpton – Cradley and Wollescote Ward

Co-opted Members (Non-voting):

Friends of Stevens Park, Quarry Bank – D Sparks
Friends of Wollescote Park – J Marks
Friends of Mary Stevens Park – H Rogers

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**Minutes of the Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee,
Monday 4th April, 2022 at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 2, Council House, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor I Kettle (Chair)
Councillors R Clinton, T Crumpton, M Hanif and A Hopwood

Co-opted Members

H Rogers (Friends of Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge)
D Sparks (Friends of Stevens Park, Quarry Bank)
J Marks (Friends of Stevens Park, Wollescote)

Officers:

M Bieganski (Strategy and Governance Section Manager), E Bradford (Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services), D Fildes (Parks Development Manager), C Ludwig (Finance Manager), M Wilcox (Principal Lawyer), and L Jury (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance:

A Hart – Lawn Tennis Association – for agenda item no. 5 only
Councillor S Phipps (Ward Member for Belle Vale) - for agenda item no. 6 only

40 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor L Taylor-Childs.

41 **Declarations of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

42 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 31st January, 2022 and 23rd February 2022, be approved as correct records and signed.

43 **Parks Tennis**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Director of Public Health on the partnership work the Council were undertaking with the Lawn Tennis Association as part of a £30 million Government initiative to refurbish 4,500 tennis courts across the country.

In introducing the report, the Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services advised that a representative from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) was in attendance at the meeting to present the Government initiative to the Committee and answer any questions Members may wish to raise.

A Hart, a representative from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), the national governing body for tennis across Great Britain, advised that the association had received £30 million Government funding to refurbish 4,500 Local Authority tennis courts across the country with the aim to find a sustainable operating model across the parks to ensure that the future of tennis could be secured across Great Britain and drive a physical and social outcome for local communities.

It was noted that the association had been working with the Government for some time and had now secured the funding to refurbish a number of park courts to restore them to a playable standard for the use of park residents, ensuring that they were available to book on-line, which would address one of the main barriers that had been identified in relation to the public not being aware of the location of their local courts or how to book them.

It was noted that 1.74 million people play tennis in parks each year in Great Britain and the aim of the initiative was to increase people playing tennis by more than one million by 2024, acknowledging that it was a once in a generation opportunity to really make a difference in local communities by getting tennis rackets into the hands of people who might not feel comfortable attending a tennis club, but would be happy to play tennis in their local parks. It was acknowledged that the scheme was in its infancy and the LTA hoped to work with Dudley to ensure that it was one of the first Local Authorities (LAs) in the Midlands to move forward with the initiative.

The LTA would be looking to implement an on-line booking system to encourage more people to play and looking at capital investment to resurface or replenish the courts, put in new fencing or fix existing fencing, replace nets, etc and install a gate system which would only allow access to those that had booked the court on-line via a code. It was noted that some LAs had already implemented this system and had reported on its success.

It was noted that a mapping exercise had already been undertaken with the Parks Team and the LTA, and as a result, Officers had identified the following sites which had the potential for improvement:

- Huntingtree Park
- Mary Stevens Park
- Wollescote Park
- Priory Park
- Silver Jubilee Park
- Wordsley Park

It was reported that the next steps would involve technical services assessing the type of intervention that would be required on the sites, and it was anticipated that around circa £200,000 would be required in terms of the investment needed across the courts in Dudley. It was noted that a more detailed figure would be available once all technical service visits had been undertaken.

All monetary funding available to Local Authorities across Great Britain would be 100% grant funded and it was advised that a number of issues needed to be agreed with the successful LA's before initiating the scheme. This would include a challenge that had been identified with procurement. To address this issue, the LTA had agreed with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to produce a procurement framework which it was anticipated would address the issues raised by speeding up the process.

The aim of the scheme was to have courts available to book on-line as soon as possible and have a good operator model in place so that in 10 years-time a sustainable plan would be in place to generate enough revenue to refresh the courts again without the need for additional funding.

It was hoped to engage the local communities with a free tennis offer, which would be run by volunteers for a few hours a week, similar to Park Run, to encourage the public to use the courts, and it was anticipated that this offer would be promoted through local schools. A recreational competitive offer would also be provided, already available at some sites, namely 'The Local Tennis Leagues', as a competitive element often retained people in the game.

In conclusion, A Hart advised that should the Committee be in agreement, discussions would be held with the Parks Team to ensure that the remainder of the technical service visits were undertaken and assess the total cost of refurbishment and agree an operating model to move the proposal forward. The Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services also made reference to the recommendations as set out in the report.

Arising from the presentation, Members made comments as follows:

- The Chair welcomed the scheme in terms of advocating a healthy/active lifestyle, however, concern was raised in relation to the seasonality of tennis and its sustainability. In response to questions raised with regards to timescales and whether companies had already been identified to undertake the refurbishment work required, A Hart advised that the grant funding would be available until April 2024, hence the urgency to move the proposal forward. It was noted that technical visits had already been undertaken on some sites and the next step was to obtain a final figure on the funding that needed to be spent to refurbish the courts and agree the procurement process with the DCMS, as already discussed. The Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services advised that companies had already been procured through the LTA's framework, which had been agreed with the Government, to enable the scheme to be delivered in line with the timescale.

- Councillor T Crumpton welcomed the initiative and stressed the importance of providing a safe environment for people to play tennis and the importance of being realistic in terms of what could be achieved within the funding limit. The seasonality of the game was again acknowledged, and reference was made to the challenge that could be faced with relation to the restrictions in place in some parks on playing ball games on Sundays. In response, A Hart stated that technical service visits had been undertaken on most sites and £200,000 was the anticipated figure for Dudley, however this figure would be confirmed once the report had been received and it was anticipated that more information would be available within the next few weeks and would be sent to the Head of Street and Green Care and Amenity Services for consideration.
- Referring to paragraph 7 of the report in relation to the sites that had been identified for improvements, the Representative of the Friends of Stevens Park, Quarry Bank, requested that further information be presented in relation to the criteria used to identify the sites. Concern was raised in relation to the licensing scheme in operation in some parks where people paid for a licence to use any facility in the parks for their own personal business, and any restrictions this may have on access to courts. It was requested that Officers undertake a review of the licensing scheme. In response, A Hart advised that locations had been chosen on demographics and population and the LTA had worked with a company to identify courts that had a high demand of use and also prioritised those courts that required work to be undertaken to provide a playable surface as it was important to achieve an operating model that would allow the Authority to generate an income to maintain the sites going forward.
- The Representative of the Friends of Stevens Park, Wollescote welcomed the scheme and stated that the scheme would increase footfall on the courts which would prevent use of the courts for other purposes. The need for further improvements at Wollescote Park was also acknowledged.

- In response to a question raised by Councillor M Hanif in relation to feedback from other LAs in the West Midlands who had been chosen for allocation of funding, A Hart stated that Solihull Council had already seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour since installing the gated system to the tennis courts and it was anticipated that by increasing the use of the parks by providing fun, free activities would assist in developing an ownership of the courts and reduce anti-social behaviour. It was stated that the scheme was in its infancy, and it was hoped that Dudley would lead the way as the first authority in the Black Country to take up the initiative. If the Committee agreed to the proposal, it was anticipated that work on the sites identified could commence July/August this year.
- The Representative of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park, referring to the deeds for Mary Stevens and Wollescote Parks advised that children should not be charged for playing tennis and referred to the restrictions with regard to playing ball games on a Sunday. In response, A Hart stated that if it was not viable to play tennis on some of the courts on a Sunday, the booking system could be adjusted to prevent booking on Sundays. The Principal Lawyer advised that should the scheme prove successful, and should the desire be to increase playing to include Sundays, consultation would need to be undertaken with the public to ascertain their views and the Charity Commission would need to be approached. It was acknowledged that a gated system that only allowed access to the courts through the booking system would help address the current situation where the courts could be accessed at all times, including Sundays.

In concluding, the Chair, referring to the timescale, stressed the importance of moving the proposal forward and requested that further information in relation to the operating model and costs agreed, be presented to the next meeting of the Committee, however, if information became available before the next meeting, that it be emailed to Members for consideration. It was also requested that a report in relation to the licensing scheme in operation in parks in the Borough be presented to the next meeting for consideration.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report in relation to parks tennis and the presentation undertaken by the Lawn Tennis Association, and comments made by Members as stated above, be noted.

- (2) That a further detailed report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration or emailed to Members should information become available beforehand.
 - (3) That a report on the licensing scheme in operation in some parks in the Borough be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.
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44 **Funding for Bernard Oakley Open Space**

A report of the Interim Director of Public Realm was submitted on the options for grant expenditure at Bernard Oakley Open Space.

The Parks Development Manager presented the report, and in doing so, advised that as a result of discussions held at previous meetings, he had recently received three new quotes from play area manufacturers to supply play equipment. The equipment would be steel based as it was believed that steel equipment would be more robust and more suitable for the location, due to previous bouts of anti-social behaviour.

It was noted that a company had been chosen as it was considered that they offered a more varied selection of durable equipment, however, they would be requested to provide a new quote as they had misunderstood the requirements of the tender with regard to servicing.

It was noted that a meeting would be held with Councillor S Phipps to discuss the options that the Development Team had produced which centred around a refurbishment of the existing play area and the inclusion of new equipment, for toddlers and younger children, and would provide several items of trim trail equipment along the pathways within the site for older children.

The Parks Development Manager advised that as the refurbishment and painting of the exterior fencing, to bring it up to a suitable standard, would not be covered by the £17,200 funding, it was suggested that additional funding be sought, such as a Community Forum grant, which would be discussed with the Ward Members.

Arising from the presentation of the report, Councillor S Phipps thanked the officer for the update and stated that the project was now long overdue and acknowledged the pressure on the finance available for equipment due to the rise in steel prices. He agreed with the suggestion to apply for Community Funding to enhance the refurbishment project to also include replacing the existing signage on site and updating the rockery area. In addition to what could be undertaken with local stakeholders, it was suggested that additional funding be investigated to enhance the project even further. As it was acknowledged that the park was enjoyed by many residents from other Wards, it was proposed that cross-Ward plans be investigated. In response the Parks Development Manager referred to the cost of play equipment and confirmed that the play contractor that had been chosen had provided the authority with a heavy discount.

In response to suggestions to apply for grant funding from the Committee which were limited to £5000, the Chair requested an update on the accounts.

The Finance Manager advised that the accounts were about to be finalised however, information related to inflation for the last year and the value of investments were awaited. Income generated over the year and money that had already been spent and money that was already committed to rebuild the Walled Garden at Stevens Park, Wollescote was noted, and this would result in approximately £5000 being available for grant funding. A potential enquiry with regard to a grant from the Committee was noted, however final figures and an application had not yet been received.

The Chair requested that an update on the accounts be presented to the next meeting for consideration. In response, the Finance Manger advised that Dave McNaney would present the update at the next meeting as she would no longer be responsible for the Trust accounts, and this would be the last Committee meeting she would be attending. In response, the Chair expressed his gratitude to the Finance Manager for her assistance over the years.

Councillor T Crumpton advised that residents from Cradley and Wollescote also used the park and acknowledged the problems that had been experienced with the park historically partly due to its location and welcomed the proposed refurbishment of the open space. Acknowledging that residents from all three local Wards used the park, it was suggested that funding be investigated from the relevant Community Forums, and it was noted that requests for funding from Community Forums were not limited to £5000. It was also suggested that the three Wards in question, investigate setting up a Friends of Bernard Oakley group to increase interest in the area. A lack of match funding available from the Council resulting in the dependence of grant funding for such projects, was also raised.

In response, Councillor S Phipps advised that the creation of a Friends Group had previously been investigated but to no avail and agreed to pursue this issue again. It was requested that a discussion be held with the Parks Development Manager to discuss next steps, finalise the designs and discuss other options for the open space should additional funding become available.

Resolved

- (1) That the information presented on funding for Bernard Oakley Open Space and comments made by Members, as stated above, be noted.
- (2) That an up-to-date position with regard to the accounts be presented at the next meeting for consideration.
- (3) That the Parks Development Manager and Councillor S Phipps discuss the next steps to the proposed project, finalise the designs and discuss other options should additional funding be identified.
- (4) That the relevant Ward Members investigate additional funding streams to enhance the proposed project and investigate the establishment of a Friends of Bernard Oakley Group.

45 **Verbal progress update on the Walled Garden, Stevens Park, Wollescote**

The Chair presented a verbal update on the work being undertaken on the Walled Garden, Stevens Park, Wollescote. It was noted that meetings had been held with the Facilities Team Manager to discuss progress and it was noted that the contractor who had completed the previous two phases of the wall was no longer available. Therefore, a new contractor had been approached and confirmed their capability and availability to complete the work. Funding for £100,000 would be submitted to the Enover Trust and potential funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was also noted. It was anticipated that if successful, the funding would be available early Summer 2022.

Should the funding be awarded in Summer 2022, it was anticipated that the work would commence on site July/August.

46 **Chairman's remarks**

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year, the Chair expressed his thanks to Members and Officers for their enthusiasm and attendance at the meetings.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm

CHAIR

Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee – 18th July, 2021

Report of the Interim Director of Public Realm

Wollescote Hall Bowls Club

Purpose

1. To inform the Management Committee of the proposed plans and aspirations of the Wollescote Hall Bowls Club (WHBC) to develop the bowls green and their pavilion within the walled area of Wollescote Park.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:-
 - The Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee note the content of the report.

Background

3. The game of outdoor bowls can be played on crown green and flat green bowls greens, with the techniques for each being completely different.
4. Within Dudley, there are 28 crown green and one flat green bowls greens, eight of which are situated in Council parks, including Wollescote and Mary Stevens Park
5. Flat green bowls, governed by Bowls England, has been played at Wollescote Park since the early 1990's when two former tennis courts were converted to a flat bowling green. Since this date the green has been used by a number of clubs, however, the predominant users have been the Black Country Bowls Club and Crystal Bowls Club.

6. Over the last 30 years, the Black Country Bowls Club and Crystal Bowls Club have worked together to enhance the facility, including the installation of an irrigation system, and in 2003 the two clubs installed a timber pavilion on the site. This pavilion has provided the clubs with basic facilities including an area to change, a small kitchen and an area to eat refreshments and more recently a storage area. The pavilion does not have its own toilets and bowlers utilise the facilities within the park.
7. Throughout their life both clubs have maintained a reasonably healthy membership and financial viability. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic both clubs were successful in recruiting new members, but it became obvious that the continued future and development of bowling in the area would be best served by merging the two clubs together to create WHBC. This was formally achieved and recognised by Worcestershire Bowling Association in December 2021. Building on members enthusiasm generated from the merger of the two clubs and interest expressed in the game the club has set out a development plan, which is attached as Appendix 1.
8. Seven key objectives are set out within the development plan, as below:
 - Attract new members
 - Support the national trend of attracting younger people into the sport.
 - Attract players from the working population.
 - Make greater use of the site outside of the summer season.
 - Respond positively to requests from Schools & Special Needs Children's Groups.
 - Participate in more league games.
 - Increase Participation in the Community
9. As set out in their plan, WHBC have aspirations to improve the quality of the green, which has presented challenges due to its previous use as a tennis court. Despite the effort and expense applied over the years, the club struggles to have sufficient rinks that pass county inspections to allow competitive play and as such the club propose to dig up the green and relay the surface.
10. WHBC also aspire to build a larger pavilion, which would include toilets, a kitchen facility, plus space to entertain visiting clubs and hold meetings. It will also accommodate equipment storage and have heating so it can be used during the winter months. It is also proposed to provide provision for short mat bowls.

Finance

11. The responsibility for delivery and funding of the WHBC development plan would fall to the club, and they are currently looking at detailed costs in preparation, but it is expected to cost in the region of £350,000. The club is not in a financial position to fund this themselves and they are currently working to identify areas of grant funding, whether this is via Sport England or the National Governing Bodies for bowls. However, it has become evident that granting bodies would require the club to be in possession of a long-term lease, or licence to occupy the site, which will need to be negotiated with the Council.

Law

12. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides Councils with the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to Sections 2 to 4, and Section 105, 117-123 of the Charities Act 2011 gives power to authorise dealings with charity property (as amended by the Charities Act 2022).

Risk Management

13. There are no material risks presented by this project.

Equality Impact

14. The proposals contained in this report are consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

15. None applicable to this report.

Commercial/Procurement

16. Any procurement of goods or services made by the Council will comply with the Councils Contract Standing Orders and governance arrangements in place which could include submission of options to Procurement Management Group (PMG).

Council Priorities and Projects

17. This decision will improve the quality of the green spaces.

Developing Green Space: Providing a framework of good quality and accessible community space, parks & nature reserves with interconnecting green networks.

18. This proposal is not anticipated to have any implications for current activity.



Andy Vaughan
Interim Director of Public Realm

Report Author: Daniel Fildes
Telephone: 01384 815589
Email: daniel.fildes@dudley.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

List of Background Documents

None.

Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee – 18th July, 2021

Report of the Interim Director of Public Realm

Update on future investment by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) in tennis facilities across the Borough

Purpose

1. To inform the Management Committee of progress of regarding future investment by the LTA in tennis facilities across the Borough.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:-
 - The Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee note the content of the report.

Background

3. Following the Committee meeting held on the 4th April, the Parks Development Team are continuing to work with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) regarding future investment in tennis facilities across the Borough.
4. The LTA were grateful for their invitation to the last meeting and were delighted that the Committee supported the project not just for the sites, which are held in trust, but for the positive comments to the programme as a borough wide aspiration.
5. Since the 4th April Committee meeting, the LTA have shared information from technical surveys that they have undertaken, which have identified the following sites as being viable for facility investment:

- Buffery Park – court re-binding, painting, fencing works and gate access
- Huntingtree Park – court resurfacing, fencing works and gate access
- King George V Park – court resurfacing, fencing and gate access
- Mary Stevens Park – gate access
- Priory Park – court re-binding/reconstruction, painting and gate access
- Silver Jubilee Park – court re-binding, painting and gate access

6. Since 4th April, discussions have been ongoing with the LTA to better understand the viable operating models for each of the above sites. Officers have been using a feasibility tool developed by the LTA to forecast potential usage and income levels, taking into account the local deprivation index and market penetration rates.
7. This work is still ongoing and will be the subject of a future report, but in return for the LTA investment there is an understanding that the Council will introduce a viable operating model that will ensure sufficient funding is generated to create a sinking fund to finance future maintenance of the courts. However, this needs to be balanced against ensuring affordable access to local users to encourage increased participation. Consideration also needs to be given for those sites, which are covered by the deed of gift.

Finance

8. Although the funding from LTA does not require any match funding apart from Officer time, there is an understanding that the Council will introduce a viable operating model that will ensure sufficient funding is generated to create a sinking fund to finance future maintenance of the courts.

Law

9. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides Councils with the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to Sections 2 to 4, and Section 105, 117-123 of the Charities Act 2011 gives power to authorise dealings with charity property (as amended by the Charities Act 2022).

Risk Management

10. There are no material risks presented by this project.



Equality Impact

11. The proposals contained in this report are consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

12. None applicable to this report.

Commercial/Procurement

13. Any procurement of goods or services made by the Council will comply with the Councils Contract Standing Orders and governance arrangements in place which could include submission of options to Procurement Management Group (PMG).

Council Priorities and Projects

14. This decision will improve the quality of the green spaces.

Developing Green Space: Providing a framework of good quality and accessible community space, parks & nature reserves with interconnecting green networks.

15. This proposal is not anticipated to have any implications for current activity.



Andy Vaughan
Interim Director of Public Realm

Report Author: Daniel Fildes
Telephone: 01384 815589
Email: daniel.fildes@dudley.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

List of background documents

None.

Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee – 18th July, 2021

Report of the Interim Director of Public Realm

Bernard Oakley Memorial Garden Project

Purpose

1. To inform the Management Committee of progress relating to the Bernard Oakley Memorial Garden Project.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:-
 - The Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee note the content of the report.

Background

3. Following the Committee meeting held on the 4th April, the Parks Development Team have worked with Cllr Phipps to organise a community meeting. The initial meeting was held on 10th May 2022 and there has also been a subsequent meeting on the 7th June 2022. These meetings have been well attended by members of the community and there is a desire to form a Friends of Bernard Oakley Memorial Gardens.
4. At the first community meeting the play area improvement scheme was presented and discussed. It was felt that the current play area is adequate for the community's needs and only requires refreshing with a coat of paint and a clean. The group were happy to volunteer and assist the Council with this task.

5. Following the two initial meetings the newly formed group are now looking to become constituted to put themselves on a more formal footing and they will be working with DCVS to develop their constitution.
6. The group feel that funding would be better allocated towards improving the bins within the site, installing new benches, notice boards, improving the entrance off Highfield Crescent and creating a circular tarmacked path around the site.
7. The Parks Development Team are working with the group to develop a plan and a costed wish list for the site. The plan will be progressed once the group become fully constituted, as the group will need to apply for external grant funding to support their aspirations.
8. Once the group have been constituted and they have formally agreed their plan and wish list, a further report will be presented at a future committee meeting.

Finance

9. The current available amount of funding is £17,219, which is made up of £12,311.44 from the Bernard Oakley Trust Fund (Charity No. 226493) and £4907.57 from the Bernard Oakley Gardens Memorial Fund (Charity No. 509354).

Law

10. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides Councils with the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to Sections 2 to 4, and Section 105, 117-123 of the Charities Act 2011 gives power to authorise dealings with charity property (as amended by the Charities Act 2022).

Risk Management

11. There are no material risks presented by this project.

Equality Impact

12. The proposals contained in this report are consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

13. None applicable to this report.

Commercial/Procurement

14. Any procurement of goods or services made by the Council will comply with the Councils Contract Standing Orders and governance arrangements in place which could include submission of options to Procurement Management Group (PMG).

Council Priorities and Projects

15. This decision will improve the quality of the green spaces.

Developing Green Space: Providing a framework of good quality and accessible community space, parks & nature reserves with interconnecting green networks.

16. This proposal is not anticipated to have any implications for current activity.



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Interim Director of Public Realm

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Telephone: 01384 815589
Email: daniel.fildes@dudley.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

List of Background Documents

None.



Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee

Report of the Interim Director of Public Realm

Parks Licensing Scheme

Purpose

1. To inform the Management Committee of the established normal operating procedures, which allows profit making organisations to operate in the Council's Parks and Open Spaces to run physical activities as a business for the local community.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:-
 - The Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee note the content of the report.

Background

3. For over ten years the Parks Development Team have been overseeing the management of boot camps and personal fitness instructors using the parks and open spaces as a venue for them to operate and run their businesses. This activity provides a source of income for both the Council and the Trust, as a number of the businesses operate at Quarry Bank and Wollescote Park.
4. The following documents are required before any organisation is given the approval to operate on our sites:
 - An application form.
 - Copies of relevant qualifications to deliver the fitness activity.
 - An appropriate Risk Assessment, including emergency plans

- Public Liability Insurance covering the activity with an indemnity of not less than £5 million.
 - An emergency first aid certificate.
 - If they are running classes for children under the age of 18, we request to see a copy of a safeguarding policy, as well as ensuring all relevant staff and volunteers have the appropriate DBS disclosure at an appropriate level.
5. During COVID, we saw an increase of Personal Trainers wishing to operate on our sites as many indoor facilities were closed. Whilst a large number of Personal Trainers have returned to operate at indoor facilities, a small number have remained.
 6. Our current operator at Wollescote park is 'Coopers Troopers', who has operated on the site for a number of years. They operate most evenings Monday to Friday and run a Saturday morning class.
 7. Our current operator at Stevens Park Quarry Bank is 'Vakkas Kor training' who has been operating on the park since 2021. Vakkas is permitted to operate Monday – Saturday. In addition, Vakkas is assisting with the Council's Community Development Officer on the site to deliver a number of football coaching sessions.
 8. A second operator is in existence at Stevens Park Quarry Bank, 'The Parent PT', who has just started to run sessions on a Tuesday and Thursday evening
 9. Our current operator at South Road is Velocity Life and Fitness who generally operates through the summer months.
 10. Each of the operators are permitted to use the facilities within the parks including the hard surface area, however, consideration must be given to other users of the park. For example, anyone wishing to play tennis has priority to use the tennis court and the instructor should remain aware that not everyone will feel able to approach them to ask to use the space.
 11. It is the view of Officers that a lot of people who join classes may not normally feel comfortable with joining a gym or using indoor facilities. Having this activity on our parks increases the positive use of our sites and helps to reduce levels of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Finance

12. The Council has a set fee and charge, which is administered. The operator can choose between two options depending upon their individual business requirements. An hourly rate of £15.92, or a quarterly charge £424.48 per quarter.

Law

13. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides Councils with the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to Sections 2 to 4, and Section 105, 117-123 of the Charities Act 2011 gives power to authorise dealings with charity property (as amended by the Charities Act 2022).

Risk Management

14. There are no material risks presented by this project.

Equality Impact

15. The proposals contained in this report are consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

16. None applicable to this report.

Commercial/Procurement

17. Any procurement of goods or services made by the Council will comply with the Councils Contract Standing Orders and governance arrangements in place which could include submission of options to Procurement Management Group (PMG).

Council Priorities and Projects

18. This decision will improve the quality of the green spaces.

Developing Green Space: Providing a framework of good quality and accessible community space, parks & nature reserves with interconnecting green networks.



19. This proposal is not anticipated to have any implications for current activity.



Andy Vaughan
Interim Director of Public Realm

Report Author: Daniel Fildes
Telephone: 01384 815589
Email: daniel.fildes@dudley.gov.uk

Appendices

None.

List of Background Documents

None.