
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.