



**REPORT FROM:** Neighbourhood Services Manager

**TO:** Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee

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**For information**

**Parks, Recreation and Green Spaces Update**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform Members of current Parks, Recreation and Green Spaces work and upcoming plans/developments for Barrowford & Western Parishes.

**ISSUE**

To keep members up to date on what is going on in terms of Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Green Spaces, we endeavour to provide six monthly reports to all Area Committee's detailing current work in addition to outlining future plans and proposed developments.

The Green Spaces section of Neighbourhood Services provides strategic, outreach and developmental work in relation to Parks, Playing Fields, Local Nature Reserves, Play Facilities, Countryside Access and Open Spaces. We continue to work closely with Environmental Services, in particular the Landscape Maintenance section to ensure that the above sites/areas are managed and maintained proactively and in line with strategic aims and objectives in general.

The report provides detail on generic Parks, Recreation and Green Spaces related work that impacts all area committees across Pendle in addition to Barrowford & Western Parishes specific developments/issues. This list is not exhaustive of all work ongoing but highlights the most significant ones at this present time.

**Mayoress' Charity – Friends of Parks Groups**

The new Mayoress of Pendle, Barbara Whalley, has chosen the Friends of Pendle's Parks as her charity for the current mayoral year (May 2017 – May 2018).

Funds will be raised throughout the mayoral year for improvement projects the individual groups want to undertake.

This is a real coup for our Parks and a recognition of all the great work the Friends Groups and volunteers do to help keep our Parks looking as good as they can be.

A number of events have already taken place where collection buckets have been passed around and donations made to the charity. At the end of the year the total amount raised will be divided equally amongst the eight Parks Friends Groups (with Barrowford Park and Victoria Park included) and the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy (who are based in Alkincoats Park) for them to make improvements in their respective parks.

In addition, Pendle Movie Makers were asked to produce a short film by the Mayoress highlighting the good work that the Councils Park Keeper Team, their partner organisations, e.g. The Good Life Project, the Friends Groups and volunteers do through our regular volunteer working days. This resulted in a 12 minute film being made that will be shown at any charity events the Mayoress has during the year. The film has also been forwarded to Council Officers and the respective Friends Group for them to watch and use at their discretion.

### **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's)**

The PSPO's for sports grounds have been agreed by all Area Committee's and are currently with legal. These should be in place and enforceable before the end of 2017. These include rules around dog control and include relevant sports pitch bye-laws that have been transferred from the old Parks and Recreation bye-laws.

In terms of Barrowford & Western Parishes sites, Bullholme Playing Fields will be dogs on leads with no more than two dogs per person.

The Bike Trail on land between Bullholme and Swinden that falls within the Barrowford ward will be dog free.

Work is also ongoing in relation to the development of PSPO's for Parks across the borough. Proposals and options for PSPO's in relation to Barrowford Park were taken to the June 2017 Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee meeting for discussion.

It is the Council's intention to consult with the general public and relevant organisations/groups that use the Parks via an online survey and detailed correspondence with partners, including the Town and Parish Councils in the coming months.

### **Green Flag Awards**

The Council attained 8 Green Flag Parks in 2017 with two of these being in Barrowford & Western Parishes. These are:

- Barrowford Park (The Park has held the award for 10 years)
- Victoria Park (The Park has held the award for 9 years)

Applications for next year will need to be submitted by the end of January 2018. As Barrowford Park was formally judged in 2017, it will be mystery shopped next year. Victoria Park was mystery shopped in 2017 so it will be formally judged next year.

### **Steven Burke Sports Hub - Phase Two**

So far, we have been successful in securing approximately £60,000 towards phase 2 of the Steven Burke Sports Hub (the development of a Pump Track and junior training area/car parking).

In the last 6 months we have secured funding from the following sources:

£30,000 – Lancashire Environmental Fund

£10,000 – Newground

The Newground funding is £5,000 capital with £5,000 worth of officer time to help with community engagement in the locality.

The total cost of the project is circa £130,000 but we have broken the larger scheme down in to smaller chunks to enable us to progress with the development of the pump track first. We have the requisite funding available to complete this element of the project and as such a tender is currently out for the design and build of the track.

Dependent upon the tenders coming back within the budget and the working group being happy with the design, we are aiming to get the track work completed by the end of October 2017. This will tie in with the removal of the temporary pump track that is currently located within the Steven Burke Cycle (as per an agreement we have with British Cycling). The new BMX arm of Cycle Sport Pendle will then transfer its training sessions from the temporary track to the purpose built one.

Planning permission has also now been approved for the whole scheme.

### **Barrowford Park**

Due to a number of break-ins and repeated acts of vandalism, it was agreed that the coin operated toilet at the Bowls Pavilion would be closed. The repair works had cost circa £4,000 since its opening which was being paid for from Pendle Council revenue budgets. Although the public toilet was a good asset for the Park and welcomed by families with children, due to the vandalism, it was not cost effective to keep it open.

As such, it was agreed between the Council, the Parish Council and the Friends Group that we would cease to operate the toilet and re-direct Parks users to the coin operated public toilets on the main road.

Progress on the lake improvement scheme has been frustratingly slow. Initially, it was agreed with the Friends Group, that we would look to pursue a bespoke scheme and that this would cost in the region of £25,000 - £30,000. This would be based on building shelves in certain parts of the outer lake using gabion baskets (wire cages filled with stones) and then shifting the silt in the centre of the lake to behind the gabion walls. In addition, we would look to reduce the amount of silt in the lake as this was proving problematic in terms of the impact on the health and look of the water.

To be able to dispose of the silt from the lake, we need to establish whether the silt is contaminated as this dictates whether the silt can be re-used or is classed as hazardous waste which will mean that it will have to be disposed of at a landfill site at a high cost.

Subsequently, a consultant was commissioned to carry out silt sampling of the lake. The results of the silt samples were received in July 2017. Unfortunately, the results of the sampling are not good. In simple terms the sediment is not that contaminated and we could re-use on other PBC land with a 5mg (silt) to 1kg (soil) ratio. Due to the amount of silt we would be looking to dispose of and the ratios we need to adhere to this would prove problematic and be extremely onerous in reality.

With regards to waste disposal however, due to the high organics the Waste Acceptance Criteria limit has been exceeded in one of the samples. As such, it is likely that any landfill would classify it as hazardous waste. The cost of disposal of hazardous waste is very expensive and we also have

the added problem of access for heavy vehicles being difficult due to the restricted size of the entrance by the Heritage Centre.

This was reported back to the August 2017 Friends Group meeting. It was agreed that we would speak to the consultants to see whether the silt could be used by local agricultural businesses and other options available to us. We will also be obtaining costs from local landfill sites as to the cost of them disposing the contaminated silt from the lake. Once these avenues have been explored, a decision will be made on the best way forward.

Of the three original picnic tables installed at the top elevation of the Park (close to the Cemetery), two had been damaged beyond repair by vandalism. As such, it was agreed with the Friends Group to take out the last remaining bench and re-locate it to the old putting green area on the lower level of the Park close to the Heritage Centre car park. In addition, we have purchased a new picnic bench to go alongside the existing one and installed a new litter bin close by. The benches have both been installed with a small concrete area provided next to each bench for BBQ's to be set on. We are hoping to promote this area as a picnic area and designated place where you can have a BBQ.

Some old play area fencing has been re-used as railings at the top of the steep banking close to the cemetery to try to stop children/youths running/biking/jumping down the slope. This has been an issue for many years and is not something that we can stop fully but we feel that we must do something to reduce the risk of someone getting hurt doing this. We have also increased the amount of dead hedging at the bottom of the slope off Coronation walk. We may also look at increasing the planting on the slope in the future to put another natural barrier in the way of this activity.

Back boards have been strategically installed at three sections of the banking close to the path that leads from Bullholme to the Cemetery. The path is eroding in some parts with areas of the path becoming quite narrow. This improvement work will reinforce the remaining path and provide some stability to the parts of the banking below.

The Kingfisher sculpture was installed in July 2017 on the side of the lake (opposite side to the shelter/bowling green near the wood chip path). Unfortunately, a couple of weeks after it had been installed, a small part of its beak was snapped off. We are looking to get this repaired in the short term.

As part of 2017's Green Spaces Team's Events Programme, we have organised two volunteer working days in the Park in February and June. Work included dead hedging, cutting back shrubs and overhanging branches near to footpaths, replenishing the woodland path with wood chip, weeding and litter picking. A further working day will be held in the Park before the end of the year.

The Barrowford Lifestyle Festival took place in the Park on the 1st July. On the whole, the weather was good and much better than the previous year with the event being deemed a great success and attendance numbers high. There were a few minor issues that will need ironing out before next year's event if the organiser's decide to go ahead in 2018.

A 'Paws in the Park' charitable dog walking event will take place in the Park in early October again. This is the second time this event will have taken place and is in aid of Pendleside Hospice. Last year's event went really well and without any glitches.

## **Victoria Park**

The bandstand and its surrounding area continues to flourish with it being used on a more regular basis with the following free events/activity taking place over the last 6 months:

- Make Music Day UK event on the 21<sup>st</sup> June. This was our second Music Day event and although it was kept fairly small in scale again because of the great weather it attracted a decent turnout and we received lots of positive feedback.
- The Pendle Youth Orchestra also performed in the Park's bandstand on the 5<sup>th</sup> July as part of a practice session. Again we were extremely lucky with the weather which made for a pleasant night for the people who came along to listen.
- Stage Door Youth Theatre performed the final night of their run of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream on the 16<sup>th</sup> July.
- Mission Outdoor Service on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

We are looking to have similar events in 2018 and are actively encouraging local people to use the bandstand and its surrounding area on a casual informal basis as well as for more formal events/activities.

Victoria Park Pavilion Community Interest Company (CIC) continues to work closely with us on the Vicky Witch Trail and other events/activities. It is a huge asset to the Park and has gone from strength to strength in terms of attracting customers to the café but also as a community hub where a number of different users/groups meet and/or utilise the building.

They will be working in partnership with Whitefield Community Association again to hold the second annual Whitefield Tea in the Park event on the 9<sup>th</sup> September. This event was very successful last year and will involve use of the bandstand area for live performances and the majority of the attractions including a Bouncy Castle, Birds of Prey, Dogs in Need, Archery, Arts & Crafts, etc.

We have made further security improvements to the building including reinforcing the existing grilles, replacement of an old door with a more robust one and the installation of new electronic roller shutter on the store room door at the back of the building.

We successfully organised a Circus Skills event at the Park on the 11<sup>th</sup> June. This took place on the Bowling Green area behind the Pavilion and was run by Circus Sensible. It gave families the opportunity to try out a variety of Circus skills in an interactive and fun style workshop. The event was free and due to the dry weather attracted a good attendance.

At the end of August, we also organised and ran a successful Bat Night in the Park. This was attended by a good mixture of adults and some children.

As part of 2017's Green Spaces Team's Events Programme, we organised three volunteer working days in the Park in March, May and July. Work included litter picking, cleaning of parks furniture, weeding of the car park flower bed, cutting back shrubs and overhanging branches near to footpaths, etc.

Lighthouse Tai Chi has run 4 Summer Tai Chi in the Park sessions on the old bowling green area behind the pavilion. These started on the 1<sup>st</sup> August and ran until the 22<sup>nd</sup> August. These were free to attend and were hugely successful attracting lots of interest with the sessions attracting an average of 96 people per session!

We have a number of projects to progress in the Park over the next 6 months including improvement works to the old Bowling Green area behind the pavilion and improving the Surrey Road/Cricket Ground entrance to the Park to make it more attractive and welcoming.

We are also aiming to demolish the two 1970's Eastern Bloc style concrete shelters in Victoria Park. The shelters are not in keeping with the rest of the Park and attract anti-social behaviour as a result of their design. The shelter closest to the Cricket Ground/Seedhill would be removed

along with the plinth it sits on and the land made good, e.g. the area made grass and blended in with the surrounding environment.

The other shelter closest to the more contemporary bridge would be demolished and made good with a view to replacing with something more modern and which would be designed to enable good sightlines from all angles thus reducing the opportunity for anti-social behaviour to take place in the shelter.

In relation to the Vicky Witch Trail, we are looking to refresh this during the Autumn/Winter by installing two more feature benches within the storytelling area with longer term ambitions to develop a magical fairy style garden in the Sunken Garden area in 2018.

## **Bullholme Playing Fields**

Funding has now been secured for the electrical supply to be reinstated that feeds the Cricket Club from the main Bullholme Pavilion and as such we have been working with the Parish Council and the Cricket Club to get the necessary works organised.

The works will start on the 4<sup>th</sup> September and should take two weeks in total to complete. LITE Installations, who will be doing the work, have stated that they will be digging the trenches and laying the cable section by section as opposed to there being a long trench right across the playing field for a number of days. After each section is completed they will back fill the hole and ensure it is turfed over before starting the next section.

We wanted to get the work done before the start of the main Football season at Bullholme (matches are due to start from the 16<sup>th</sup> September) to ensure minimum disruption.

There will be some disruption to casual informal users but we are hopeful that most of the organised Cricket, Football and Rounders fixtures/sessions played on site will not be affected.

The flooring throughout the main corridor and changing rooms of the pavilion has been painted with a more durable anti-slip paint. Due to the original paint being sub-standard and the damage done to the flooring in the corridor, the plant room and two changing rooms as a result of the water burst we had in December 2016, the floors were in a particularly poor state (both aesthetically and from a health & safety point of view).

As such, the contractor, who successfully treated the flooring at Holt House Pavilion last year, was asked to do the same at Bullholme. We are extremely happy with the end product and all users have fed back to us in the positive.

The main user of the building, Barrowford Celtic, have recently had their licence agreement reviewed and now have a new three year licence for use of the clubroom (and adjoining kitchen area), two changing rooms and access to the public toilets.

The Council are also working with the Club to upgrade the three current floodlights that are positioned around the perimeter of Bullholme. The lights are fairly old and the light emitted from them is weak. As such, we are looking to change the existing lights for LED ones (which will provide greater light emittance and reduce ongoing bills) and potentially install a further lighting column between the second and third existing lights to increase the area of light. This will allow them to use a greater area of Bullholme for training purposes during the winter months.

We are looking to secure funding towards this project in the short term with a view to having this completed by early 2018.

The resurfacing of the tarmac surface on the bridge from Wilton Street on to Bullholme Playing Fields car park was completed in February 2017.

Burnley FC in the Community have been using the MUGA at Bullholme to provide free football coaching sessions to children aged between 8 and 19 years old as part of the their Premier League Kicks scheme. The sessions started in April 2017 and finished in July. We are hopeful that they will run some more sessions in the autumn.

Bullholme has also been facilitating some Women's Rounders sessions on Thursday evenings between 7pm and 8pm since late June 2017. We were approached by the Women's Rounders Group who already successfully run a Women's League in Burnley about putting on some 'Just Play' Rounders sessions in Pendle.

These are primarily fun and informal sessions that are aimed at female (ages 8+) who want to play Rounders. They are held to encourage women of all ages and abilities to come and play the game in a relaxed, fun and friendly environment. The sessions have been put on with a view to developing participation further next year through the establishment of a Pendle Rounders League similar to what they have developed in Burnley.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** None

**Financial:** None

**Legal:** None

**Risk Management:** None

**Health and Safety:** None

**Sustainability:** None

**Community Safety:** None

**Equality and Diversity:** None

## **APPENDICES**

None

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None