



REPORT FROM: Neighbourhood Services Manager

TO: Brierfield & Reedley 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 Brierfield & Reedley.

ISSUE

To keep members up to date on what is going on in terms of Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Green Spaces, we 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 Brierfield & Reedley specific developments/issues. This list is not exhaustive of all work ongoing but highlights the most significant ones at this present time.

Park Keeper Service

Unfortunately, one of the Park Keeper's, John Harper, left the authority in mid-January and as such we have been down to only the Senior Park Keeper and one Park Keeper. This has made life difficult in terms of having a presence in our Parks from the Service.

We have recently advertised for a new Park Keeper and successfully appointed Marcus Orrell who started work in early May. We are extremely happy with him and feel that he will be a fantastic

addition to the team in terms of bringing in new ideas and continuing to work alongside the many volunteer groups we work with across our green space sites.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR's), Environmental Action Group (EAG) and Japanese Knotweed

LNR's come under the remit of Neighbourhood Services and as such we are endeavouring to take a more proactive approach in terms of supporting the LNR's and their respective Friends Groups and strategically managing and maintaining the LNR's in co-ordination with these groups.

We have met with all the individual LNR Friends Groups/representatives and have established a good working relationship with them over the last 12 months. The Senior Park Keeper attends individual group meetings in addition to the quarterly LNR Steering group meeting.

Annual budgets (be it fairly minimal) have been put in place for each LNR (starting from April 2016). These have been taken out of existing overall Parks budgets and are not new budgets.

The treatment and monitoring of Japanese Knotweed is undertaken by the EAG. A map has now been produced highlighting all known cases of knotweed (Public and privately owned) in Pendle. We have written to all private landowners informing them of their legal requirement to deal with knotweed on their land. A number of these have replied asking us to treat the knotweed on their land. We are still waiting on a few to come back to us.

We are also dealing with knotweed that needs to be treated in Burnley located on the border of Burnley and Pendle. The water course crosses over in to Burnley then meanders back in to Pendle. This will need treating as untreated areas can affect the effectiveness of land further downstream (in Pendle) that have been treated. We are working in co-ordination with Burnley Council to treat these areas with a view to producing a comprehensive list of knotweed treatments for 2016/17. The treatment of new and existing sites will start in earnest in May and will continue through to October.

Pennine Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy (Pendle PPS)

Three Pennine Lancashire Authorities (Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale) have come together to develop a joint Playing Pitch Strategy. The primary purpose of the Playing Pitch Strategy is to provide a strategic framework which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meet the local needs of existing and future residents within the three Local Authorities areas.

The Strategy document, associated assessment report and GIS Map have now been completed. The Strategy is scheduled to go out to public consultation soon and will last approximately 6 weeks.

Once the consultation has been done and any necessary changes made, we are hopeful that the Strategy will be approved and ratified by September 2016.

Since our meeting in late September 2015 with Barnfield Construction regarding the new sports facilities to be built at the former Lucas Sports ground site, there has been no further correspondence with them and subsequently no further progress made. The site has been identified as an important facility in the new PPS and as such we are hopeful that we will see some movement at this site in the next 12 months.

Green Flag Awards

The Council has 8 Green Flag Parks in Pendle with one of these being in Brierfield. This is:

- Heyhead Park (The Park has held the award for 8 years)

Applications for this year were submitted at the end of January 2016. As Heyhead Park was mystery shopped in 2015, it will be formally judged this year. The judging will take place between May and July – as yet we have not been informed of the date for judging.

Steven Burke Sports Hub - Phase Two

We continue to work with Cycle Sport Pendle (CSP) and representatives of a local BMX Group on a potential phase two for the Steven Burke Sports Hub. Revised draft plans for phase two will include the development of a BMX Pump Track through the refurbishment of the existing off-road track, a multi-purpose tarmac area that can be used as car parking for the Cycle track and/or the new Pump track, for events and as a safe bike skills learning area for toddlers and young children. In addition, some access/traffic movement improvements have been included, e.g. passing places.

The estimated costings for phase 2 currently come in at circa £125,000.

Reports containing information on phase 2 and asking for member's approval/support of the scheme in addition to a £2,000 contribution towards the Council's match funding pot have been taken to Nelson and Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee's. Nelson Committee resolved that the proposed plans be approved and supported and that subject to match funding from Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee £2000 be allocated from their 2015/16 Capital Programme.

Initially, Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee approved the proposals in principle but could not commit £2000 towards the match funding pot as they only had £300 left in their Capital Programme but a further report was taken to the March 2016 Barrowford & Western Parishes Committee where they agreed to commit £2,000 towards the project from their 2016/17 Capital Programme. As such, we are hopeful that Nelson Committee will allocate the promised (albeit from last year's budget) £2,000 from this year's budget.

We were aware that although some consultation had been undertaken with local people this had been mainly with the local cycling fraternity (who are obviously keen on this proposed facility). As such, we carried out some further public consultation during January and February 2016 in the form of hard copy surveys and online questionnaires. This was for anyone to comment on and put forward their views but in order to ensure that local people who would be directly affected by this development were consulted, we also produced, printed and delivered approx. 350 paper based questionnaires to residents in Barrowford and the Bradley Ward in Nelson (who live within close proximity to the proposed facility).

Approximately 1,500 A5 leaflets were also delivered to a significant number of properties in Barrowford and Nelson. We obtained a very good response with 192 people completing surveys. The majority of people (178) who responded were in favour of the proposals with only a small number (13) against it. A short analysis report was produced and has been used to hone the plan/scheme in addition to it being used as evidence for funding bids in the future that appropriate consultation has taken place.

We are now looking to submit a number of funding bids over the next 6-9 months to potential funders such as:

- Lancashire Environmental Fund
- BIFFA
- Sport England
- Big Local (Bradley)
- British Cycling

In view of the transfer of services (which may include Parks and Sports facilities in future years) to Town/Parish Councils and the fact that the Council is trying to reduce costs, senior management have intimated that the future governance of the proposed facility (and indeed the existing cycle track) by an 'independent group' should be considered.

Subsequently, we will endeavour to start looking at potential options, e.g. Social Enterprise, Cycle Development Pendle Partnership (CDPP) taking on the whole facility, etc. that could be pursued in terms of the future management of Phase 2 and the existing cycle track at Swinden.

Heyhead Park

There have been a number of improvements made in the Park over the last 6 months. These include:

- The shrubs, bushes and trees that surround the bowling green on the Wilton Street side have been tidied up and thinned out.
- The play area surfacing has been totally refurbished. The old style square black tiles have been replaced with more modern wet pour surfacing. The play equipment has also been re-painted.
- Sefton Street entrance/lower park improvements including the removal of the untidy snowberry bushes that attracted litter blown in from the streets, tidying up of existing shrubs, and the refurbishment of the large circular bed. We have taken out the perennials and replaced them with a more ornamental/traditional bed that consists of turf around the outer edge and summer bedding flowers in the centre. This will provide a more colourful and attractive entrance to the Park during the summer months.

Although the Park is continuing to thrive, it needs to be highlighted that the Friends of Brierfield Parks are really struggling for membership. We only have one active member on the group at the moment (who is very old) although we have a number of people on our Friends list. We have tried to increase membership numbers in recent years but this has not been successful. We really need members to push the Friends Group and try and get local people active in supporting their local Park.

Fortunately, we do have the Bowling Club who are situated within the Park and have good membership numbers. During the summer they are present in the Parks 3-4 times a week and report any issues to us not just about the green and associated buildings but in relation to the Park as a whole.

John Bradley Playing Fields

A new defibrillator has been installed at John Bradley Playing Fields. The code accessible cabinet is located on the external façade of the pump house building next to the changing rooms. The Council worked in partnership with Brierfield Celtic, the British Heart Foundation and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to provide this valuable life-saving resource.

The NWAS kindly delivered a how to use a defibrillator/general CPR training session to local Sports Clubs/Teams and other people that were interested at Brierfield Community Centre on the 18th April. Approximately 20 people attended this session.

There was also an article, including a photo of representatives from Brierfield Celtic and the Council, in the Leader Times Series on the 22nd April about the new defibrillator at the Playing Fields in addition to the new one at Victory Park in Barnoldswick.

Neighbourhood Services will manage and monitor the defibrillator in the long term to ensure that it is working to full capacity and ready to use if needed.

Taylor Street MUGA Car Park

As a result of issues relating to travelers accessing the locked car park next to the MUGA before Christmas, a number of additional wooden bollards have been installed on periphery areas to ensure that caravans are not able to access the car park in the future. We have also repaired four of the existing metal hoop barriers that border the car park as part of the work. A contribution was made from the Community Safety Partnership towards this work in addition to existing play facility revenue budgets.

There are still some anti-social behavior concerns regarding parking on surrounding streets and noise nuisance late at night on and in the vicinity of the MUGA which the local PCSO's and Anti-Social Behavior Co-ordinator are aware of. These issues may come to the fore over the next couple of months as the nights get lighter and the weather improves.

Transfer of Services to Parish/Town Councils & Dog Issues Working Group

Work is ongoing in terms of the transferring of services and facilities to Town and Parish Councils and the implementation of recommendations from the Dog Issues Working Group, specifically the implementation of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) at the Council's Cemeteries and the 47 play facilities that have recently been transferred to Town/Parish Councils.

Neighbourhood Services Officers are involved in both Member/Officer Working Groups.

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