

**REPORT FROM:** Neighbourhood Services Manager

**TO:** Brierfield and Reedley Committee

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## Taylor Street Multi Use Games Area

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report back on a petition received at the June meeting of the Committee requesting action be taken with regard to anti-social behaviour at the multi-use games area at Woodville Road/Taylor Street, Brierfield.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report is noted and options for engaging with users of the MUGA and restricting times of access which may, if necessary, include making a Public Spaces Protection Order and funding for signage, are considered.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the concerns of local residents that the Taylor Street MUGA attracts anti social behaviour.

### ISSUE

The Taylor Street MUGA was previously a hardcourt recreation facility for the former Mansfield School before it moved to Marsden Heights. As part of the land transfer arrangements for the new school Pendle Council took it over and created a MUGA.

In common with MUGAs across Pendle there are no lockable gates restricting access and no signage restricting use. It is available for use by any age at any time and for a variety of sports.

Over a number of years residents have raised concerns about the MUGA and the way it is used. Attempts by the Police and the Council to manage these concerns by engaging with users provide some respite but no long term solution.

Prior to the clocks going forward this year some work was done with one group that regularly uses the MUGA to agree how it could be used. This has achieved some improvement but not complete success and has raised issues regarding other groups using the MUGA.

There are three main groups of users:

- Volleyball
  - An organised group of adults
  - Not all local
  - Swearing; racist language and shouting
  - Urinating (they are there for long periods)
  - Play until dark and can be there until after 11pm talking and smoking
  - Rumours there may be gambling involved
- Cricket group
  - Teenagers and youths meeting randomly rather than as an organised group
  - Can be louder than the volleyball group
  - Aggressive when approached
  - Can be there until 10.30pm
- Football group
  - A younger age group meeting randomly rather than as an organised group
  - Tend to be better behaved and leave earlier
  - Their play can be aggressive and the ball can escape the fencing of the MUGA

Since the petition was received residents have been consulted about the issues affecting them. This includes direct consultation with residents and some of these residents doing their own consultation with other residents. The area covered includes Woodville Road; Elland Road and Rothesay Road.

The issues raised by residents include:

- The Taylor Street MUGA is like three MUGAs in one and can have volleyball, cricket and football all going on at the same time
- The sheer size of the facility is intimidating
- It is used late into the evening – it was designed for daytime use by the school, which was residents accepted, not evening use by a number of groups
- It is significantly higher than and overlooks Woodville Road resulting in:
  - Lack of privacy
  - Intimidation
  - Accentuated noise levels
  - Balls coming over the fence and down into gardens and against windows
- The football nets face the residential properties so residents feel the most aggressive play is aimed at them although the group is younger and less aggressive than the other two
- The majority of residents on either side of the MUGA either have young children; are elderly or have health issues – they all find it a nuisance and there is no division by ethnicity

Residents have put forward these options:

- Close the facility and encourage the use of Heyhead Park; Sackville Street and Marsden Heights
- Restrict user age
- Apply a time limit of 7pm on weeknights and 8pm at weekends and lock gates
- Raise the height of the fences
- Re-orientate the pitches and reduce the number

Members are asked to agree a period of informal consultation with residents and groups using the MUGA with a view to introducing the following actions and restrictions:

1. A 9pm curfew on use of the MUGA including any parking up and social activity in the area surrounding the MUGA
2. Limit any use by any organised group to a maximum of two hours including any parking up and social activity in the area surrounding the MUGA
3. Improving behaviour and respect for residents; in particular shouting; swearing; urinating anywhere in the locality and any unruly behaviour
4. Temporary high visibility signage reminding users of these measures and the rules

The impact of these measures will be monitored jointly by the Police; Parks and the Community Protection and Localities Team in consultation with residents and users of the MUGA.

Should the monitoring show the measures have failed to achieve the desired result for residents and users of the MUGA a further report will be made with options to support the measures with a Public Spaces Protection Order.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** MUGAs are provided on an essentially open access basis other than for organised groups.

**Financial:** The cost of signage for the entrances to the MUGA is estimated at £240.

**Legal:** The restrictions are consistent with existing by-laws for MUGAs in Pendle. Public Spaces Protection Orders were introduced under the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

**Risk Management:** Reducing crime and anti social behaviour is included in the Council's Risk Management Plan

**Health and Safety:** None

**Sustainability:** None

**Community Safety:** Reducing crime and ASB is fundamental to the Community Safety Partnership's Partnership Plan

**Equality and Diversity:** None