



**REPORT FROM: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MANAGER**

**TO: WEST CRAVEN 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 West Craven.

#### **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 West Craven specific developments/issues. This list is not exhaustive of all work ongoing but highlights the most significant ones at this present time.

#### **Japanese Knotweed**

The treatment and monitoring of Japanese Knotweed (JK) is undertaken by the Environmental Action Group (EAG).

In 2013, the EAG in conjunction with Ribble Rivers Trust started to compile a list of all sites throughout Pendle that had Japanese Knotweed. During the past 3 years we have identified and treated 163 sites throughout Pendle including some sites in Burnley where the watercourse crosses the Burnley and Pendle border.

Of those 163 sites:

- 26 are clear of JK
- 29 have produced 5 or less shoots
- 57 have produced 10 or less shoots
- 51 have more than 10 shoots

Overall, the original list of sites is now showing 90-95% reduction in JK.

A comprehensive list of knotweed treatments for 2017 has been produced with associated costs. The treatment of all existing sites (including the monitoring of clear sites – these have to be monitored for 3 years once they are classified as clear!) will start in earnest in May and will continue through to October.

The EAG are doing an excellent job of keeping this invasive weed at bay and year on year the annual budget set aside to deal with JK reduces.

### **Pennine Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)**

The PPS is now complete and was approved at the Council's 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016 Executive Committee meeting. The PPS will provide a strategic framework for maintaining and improving outdoor sports pitches and their associated facilities across Pendle over the next 10 years.

The full 'Supply and demand assessment of Pendle Council pitches' under the guise of the **Assessment Report** and the **Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan** are now on the Council's website. You can access both from the following weblink:

[www.pendle.gov.uk/pps](http://www.pendle.gov.uk/pps)

### **Transfer of Services to Parish/Town Councils**

Work is ongoing in terms of the transferring of services and facilities to Town and Parish Councils. Thus far, 6 play facilities have been transferred to Barnoldswick Town Council from Pendle Borough Council. In addition, a service and maintenance agreement whereby Pendle Council continue to maintain and inspect all 6 of the play facilities over the next 2 years has also been completed.

The Council has agreed in principle to the transfer of Victory Park, Letcliffe Park and Valley Gardens to Barnoldswick Town Council and a meeting will be sought in the near future with Earby Town Council and Kelbrook & Sough Parish Council regarding the transfer of Sough Park.

Neighbourhood Services Officers are involved in the Member/Officer Working Group.

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

PSPO's are now in place and enforceable around dog control and smoking at the 6 play facilities transferred to Barnoldswick Town Council last year. In addition, the dog control policies pertinent to Ghyll, Earby and Salterforth Cemeteries have also been transferred to new PSPO's for all Borough of Pendle Cemeteries.

Consultation is now ongoing regarding PSPO's for sports grounds that are due to come in to force from April 2017. These include rules around dog control and include relevant sports pitch bye-laws that will be transferred from the old Parks and Recreation bye-laws.

## **Green Flag Awards**

The Council attained 8 Green Flag Awards in 2016 with one of these being in Barnoldswick. This is:

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

Applications for this year will be submitted by the end of January 2017. As Valley Gardens was mystery shopped in 2016, it will be formally judged this year.

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

Since May 2016, we have been successful in securing approximately £20,000 towards phase 2 of the Steven Burke Sports Hub (the development of a Pump Track and junior training area/car parking). In addition to Barrowford and Nelson Committee's Capital Programme contributions of £2,000 each, £10,000 has been provisionally allocated from Bradley Big Local. The remaining £6,000 is made up of PBC and Cycle Sport Pendle (CSP) contributions.

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 apply for funding for smaller amounts. We are concentrating on securing funding for the Pump Track element first with a couple of funding applications for different amounts submitted recently to:

- Lancashire Environmental Fund (£30,000)
- Newground (£10,000)

CSP have recently been successful in securing £9,595 from East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group's Prescription for Well-being programme. Although this will not fund the building of the Pump Track, it enables CSP to run a BMX section and hold regular sessions on the hub. The funding has been used to make a small BMX track loop within the velodrome area of the hub, the purchase of a stock of BMX bikes (approximately 10) and will pay for coaching recruitment and training of new and old club volunteers.

We intend to submit a further funding application to Sport England's Community Asset Fund in early 2017.

The Hub has been recognised as a 'Centre of Excellence' in the joint bid to the Department of Transport's Access Fund between LCC and Blackburn with Darwen for East Lancashire. Pendle is a partner local authority within this bid which potentially could bring significant active and public transport investment in to East Lancashire.

## **Victory Park**

A new locked barrier was installed in mid-December for the overflow car park behind Barnoldswick Town's ground. This has been installed as result of problems with anti-social behavior in this part of the car park, including littering, cars wheel spinning and people hanging out in cars generally up to no good.

Following on from the new Wheelchair Walk and Family Friendly Cycle Route that was completed approximately two years ago, a new interpretation board is due to be installed in early 2017. As with the path works, the board and associated promotional leaflets will be paid for by monies secured from the Lancashire Environmental Fund and West Craven Committee's Capital Programme.

A separate report pertaining to the long term management and maintenance of the Wheels Park in Victory Park will be discussed at the January 2017 West Craven Committee.

## **Valley Gardens**

As a result of a resolution by the Council's Executive in 2016, the Council signed up to Keep Britain Tidy's 'We're Watching You' dog fouling campaign.

Due to the on-going problems we have had with dog fouling at Valley Gardens, we chose it as one of our pilot sites. The scheme started on the 21<sup>st</sup> November for a period of 5 weeks initially (up to and including Christmas week). The signs are really clever and have slogans that are designed to play with people's conscience. They glow in the dark and have some fairly scary eyes which are very disconcerting along with three different messages. We used approximately 11 signs around the Valley Gardens site in addition to some bin stickers.

The success of the scheme will be reported to Senior Officers and members in January 2017. We are hopeful that the same reduction experienced elsewhere will happen in Pendle. We may extend the time we use the signs in Valley Gardens for another 5 weeks as the Park does have a real problem with dog fouling.

Ten new bird and bat boxes have been put up around the Park. This work was funded by Valley Gardens Working Group in co-ordination with the Park Keeper Team who helped install them.

Additional funding was also secured for the installation of two new recycled plastic benches which will be positioned near to the former Mission Gospel Hall site. We hope to have these in situ by the end of January 2017.

The annual Summer Fayre took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016. This was organised by the Working Group and Barnoldswick in Bloom with some support from the Council's Park Keeper Team. Although the weather was a mixed bag, there was a decent turn out from local people.

The Park Keeper Team will be running a Big Garden Bird Watch event in the Park on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

As part of 2017's Green Spaces Team's Events Programme, we will also be running two working days in the Park. These are yet to be scheduled in but will consist of environmental and conservation tasks such as litter picking, shrub work and cleaning of parks furniture. These working days will be organised in co-ordination with the Valley Gardens Working Group and will be advertised to volunteers from other organisations and the general public via email, social media and posters.

## **Sough Park**

In late 2015, Pendle Council received an email from Fields in Trust (FIT) identifying Sough Park in Earby as a historic Carnegie Field. Earby Town Council (with the assistance of the Local History Society) had previously submitted information to FIT with a view to getting the Park protected. From the information provided, FIT were able to verify Sough Park as the Earby Carnegie Field that was previously lost to them.

Subsequently, Earby Town Council was informed of this news and as such resolved:

**to seek the immediate registering of Sough Park and the recreational facilities with the Carnegie Trust and that it also enter in to a deed of dedication with Fields in Trust.**

The application form and associated paperwork was submitted to FIT in October 2016. In mid-November, Pendle Council received an email from FIT stating that as the site is listed under two separate land registry titles (LAN58577 – Memorial Park section & LAN58588 – Holme Playing Fields section), the possibility of dedicating the Holme Playing Field site as a Carnegie Field and the Memorial Park as a Centenary Field, due to its war memorial.

The Centenary Field dedication would tie in perfectly with FIT's World War One commemoration project.

This proposal was put to Earby and Kelbrook and Sough Councillors and they were in agreement that the above approach be pursued. This would in effect mean that both areas of the Park are uniquely protected in perpetuity and potentially doubling the funding opportunities as and when they arise in the future.

As they are two different projects, we will have to submit two separate applications. In the meantime, Council Officers and Councillors are due to meet a FIT representative in early January to discuss the way forward.

### **Earby Recreation Ground (Hill Top)**

West Craven Committee allocated £2,000 in July 2016 towards the development of a dog exercise area at the top of Hill Top from 2016/17's Capital Programme budget. The money has helped pay for a new timber post and rail fence with mesh fixed across the bottom two rails, a stile (this is located behind the top Football goalposts for footballers to access the dog area if the ball goes over) and maintenance gate. We have transferred a dog fouling bin from another site in to the dog area thus there are now two bins within the new area.

Appropriate signage has also been erected at the two entrance points to the dog area.

In addition, a new litter bin for the Recreation Ground has been installed near the changing rooms.

We have also put up three signs on the access road to Hill Top Farm and the Dog Kennels asking users of the site, particularly footballers, to park responsibly and not block access to the two private properties either side of Hill Top.

As a result of some concern by the farmer who owns the field above Hill Top, some stock fencing has been rolled out and affixed to the existing metal railings to plug the gaps at the top end of the dog area. The farmer was worried that dogs using the new dog area may get in to the field and attack his sheep.

When the new PSPO's for sports pitches comes in to force hopefully from April 2017, we will also erect 'No Dogs Allowed' signage around the edge of the Football field.

### **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