

REPORT FROM: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MANAGER

TO: COLNE AND DISTRICT 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 Colne.

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

Local Nature Reserves (LNR's)

The Senior Park Keeper is the Council's Lead Officer and attends individual group meetings in addition to the quarterly LNR Steering group meeting.

Alkincoats Nature Reserve – The LNR Friends Group, with help from Neighbourhood Services staff and the Good Life Project, planted another 500 trees sourced from the Woodland Trust, Newchurch School and LCC in April 2017. These have been planted in the phase 2 woodland extension section.

The Council were also successful in securing £2,000 funding from the Postcode Lottery in March to pay for wildflower seed that will also be used in phase 2.

Neighbourhood Services are currently working with the LNR Group to update the LNR management plan which will incorporate the extended areas. A wildlife survey for the extension has now been completed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust. The survey (along with other information being gathered) will inform the new Management Plan for the Nature Reserve.

Once the above is completed and the requisite funding has been secured, work will start on the development of the second phase of the extension which will include a wetland area, wildflower meadow, circular path, upgrade of the concessionary bridleway that links Red Lane to the reserve and additional tree planting.

We organised a couple of volunteer working days in the reserve in April and August. Work included tree planting (in phase 2), cutting back shrubs and overhanging branches near to footpaths, litter picking, etc.

Ball Grove Nature Reserve – Further survey work of the remaining areas (9 & 10) of the extension have been completed by the Wildlife Trust. These could not be completed first time round due to time constraints. We are now awaiting the final report from the Wildlife Trust.

Unfortunately, due to a number of issues relating to public access, some small scale vandalism and disagreement over planting schemes, the piece of land within the nature reserve that Dr Bari, who resides at Brooklands off Keighley Road, had proposed to lease has fallen through and he has intimated to the Council that he will not be pursuing this in the near future. Consequently, the land will remain in its present state.

Path reinstatement works, caused by the flooding in late 2015, have been completed. The Environmental Action Group carried out the work with the paths being reinstated to their original condition prior to the floods. They have also undertaken remedial works on a small bridge within the reserve that had started to fall away in to the river below. The existing bridge has been reinforced to ensure the safety of users.

Greenfield Nature Reserve – Monthly conservation working days take place on the first Saturday of each month at the reserve. The group (which includes a member of the Park Keeper Team) concentrate on footpath improvement work including cutting back shrubs and overhanging branches near to footpaths, litter picking and minor tree works.

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 Alkincoats and Ball Grove Parks included) and the Philip Wright Crown Green Bowling Academy (who are also 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)

PSPO's are now in place and enforceable around dog control and smoking at the 10 play facilities in Colne (this includes Waterside MUGA which is still under PBC ownership at the moment).

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 Colne & District sites, Emmott Lane Playing Fields and Holt House Playing Fields (including Colne Football Club and Colne & Nelson Rugby Club) will be dogs on leads with no more than two dogs per person.

Trawden Recreation Ground is the anomaly in that only the relevant sports pitch related bye-laws that were transferred across from the old Parks & Recreation bye-laws will be in place. A 'Friends of Trawden Recreation Ground' group has been established and terms of reference drafted for the proactive management and monitoring of dog control and fouling at this site. The success of this arrangement will be reviewed after the first year.

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 Alkincoats and Ball Grove Parks and the King George V Playing Fields were taken to the June 2017 Colne & District 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 Awards in 2017 with two of these being in Colne. These are:

- Alkincoats Park (The Park has held the award for 9 years)
- Ball Grove Park (the Park has held the award for 4 years)

Applications for next year need to be submitted by the end of January 2018. As Alkincoats Park and Ball Grove Park were mystery shopped in 2017, they 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.

Alkincoats Park

The café re-opened in January 2017 after refurbishment of the existing café room and expansion in to the redundant old Bowls Room next door. The kitchen was moved to the middle room to create more space within the main café area. This has enabled them to have greater numbers in the café and put on one off events.

The refurbishment has been a real success with the café being extremely popular. The business has grown considerably over the last six months and has a real community vibe to it.

The owners are looking to take on a 10 year lease agreement for the café. The agreement will be similar to the one developed for the café owner at Ball Grove Park and terms are currently being negotiated.

The compost area at the bottom end of the Park behind the old Park lodge was completed in spring 2017. The work was mainly done by the EAG, Park Keeper Team and the Good Life Project and has consisted of clearing out dense vegetation, developing natural hedge rows and creating three large compost bays.

The compost bays are primarily being used for grass cuttings and green waste from the bowling green area as well storing and recycling some green waste from the Park. Once the green waste has rotted down to become compost, it will be re-used within the Park as mulch for beds, etc.

Two of the picnic benches that had been installed at the top end of the wildflower meadow and next to the existing one near the café have been vandalised in recent months. The one near the wildflower meadow had its top set alight and as such we have had to remove it due to it being badly charred and unsafe. The bench is in storage at the depot and we intend to move the bench to the café area where there would be three benches available for users.

One of the benches next to the café was badly vandalised at the end of May 2017. Fortunately the perpetrator was caught on CCTV bouncing deliberately up and down on the already fragile bench and breaking it (it had been vandalised a week before and minor repairs had been undertaken to stabilise the bench). This was undoubtedly a deliberate act of vandalism. The perpetrator was identified fairly quickly and it was decided by Council Officers, the Community Safety Partnership, the Café, the Friends Group and the Bowling Academy that due to the perpetrator's age that a restorative justice approach be pursued (similar to what we had done with the person who was caught gluing the locks on the pavilion last year).

Subsequently, a restorative justice meeting (Chaired by Margaret Foxley and attended by relevant organisations) took place in August 2017 with the perpetrator and his mum at Alkincoats Café. It was agreed that they would help the Bowling Academy maintain the greens and the surrounding area in the short term and would both become members of the Friends of Alkincoats Park group and attend meetings in the future.

Colne Town Council held a 'Picnic in the Park' event in the Park on the 21st May 2017.

At the end of May, we organised and ran a Bat Night in the Park. This was attended by a good mixture of adults and some children. We also ran a very successful Kite making and flying event at the start of the summer holidays in July.

We are aiming to make improvements to the tennis court perimeter fencing over the winter months specifically at the football pitch end. The straining wires have become loose and we are looking to upgrade this old style type of fencing for the more robust MUGA style fencing.

Ball Grove Park

Thankfully, a solution has been found to the predicament we found ourselves in six months ago regarding the barrier that stopped unauthorised vehicular access in to the Park and to the two private residences (Spring Grove Barn & the White House). A dispute involving the owners of Spring Grove Barn, who wanted the barrier to be left unlocked at all times, and the Council, Friends Group and White House who wanted the barrier to be locked due to concerns about anti-social behaviour (joyriding, drug dealing, etc.) and travellers accessing the site if it was left unlocked.

A number of meetings and email correspondence resulted in the owners of Spring Grove Barn eventually acquiescing to our concerns and a new lock was put on the barrier. In addition, we have affixed a small key coded box on to the wall at the side of the barrier that contains a key to the lock. This is primarily for the emergency services to gain access to the two properties but also in to the Park if the need arose.

The Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) carried out some repair works to the fish pass at the boundary of the Park and the LNR in July 2017. This has involved reinforcing the existing fish pass by providing a boulder in-fill downstream of the lowest groyne of the fish pass. The work took 5 days and following completion, the RRT and the Friends Group organised some seeding and turfing of the area directly next to the weir which had been churned up by some of the machinery used on the fish pass repairs.

The café continues to thrive and is proving to be a real asset to the Park. The opening of this year's Pendle Walking Festival took place at Ball Grove Park with the café being used for the launch. This was a resounding success with dignitaries, walkers and users of the Park all enjoying some delicious cakes and refreshments!

As part of 2017's Green Spaces Team's Events Programme, we have run monthly volunteer working days in the Park and Nature Reserve. These have consisted of environmental and conservation tasks such as replenishing woodland paths, shrub work, litter picking and cleaning of parks furniture. All these working days are organised in co-ordination with the Friends of Ball Grove Park & LNR Group and are advertised to volunteers from other organisations and the general public via email, social media and posters.

We have also had a couple of working days organised in co-ordination with Pendle Burnley & District Angler's Association who have an agreement with the Council to look after the fishing rights at the lake. This has been really successful and a good working relationship established. Work has included re-establishing the path network around the lake, clearing vegetation to allow

overgrown fishing pegs (and steps leading to the pegs) to be used again as well as regular litter picking around the periphery of the lake.

In addition, a Bug Hunt for children was run by the Park Keeper Team at the end of July (during the summer holidays) and a Bat Night is scheduled to take place in the Park/Nature Reserve on the 6th September.

Holt House Playing Fields

A new housing development is currently being built on the former White Grove Garage site. As part of this development, Cawder Construction has had a few issues in relation to taking the foul and surface water drainage away from the site. It was originally envisaged that they would tap in to the existing drains on Harrison Drive but this was not allowed by the County Council.

As such, it has been agreed that the foul and surface water will come out in to the Park from the top end of the housing site across the bridleway and beyond the line of trees and ditch on to the grassed area. This will all be piped. It will then run down the hill adjacent to the bridleway for approximately 40 metres then come back across the bridleway further down to tap in to existing public sewers/drains on White Grove.

The work is due to be completed in early September and they have assured us that the land will be made good once the work is done.

In addition to the above works, we have recently completed further drainage improvement works relating to the bridleway flooding issues that have been a problem for a number of years most recently when storm Doris hit.

Preparatory works including the cutting back of overgrown vegetation, cleaning out of two culvert areas and digging out the drainage channel and the drain cover on the Park side were undertaken in May 2017.

The drainage pipes that lead in to the park from the bridleway footpath were then jetted and cleaned out in June.

We have more recently installed additional drainage improvements on the bridleway path to the left of the Rugby pitch and at the intersection where the parkrun path crosses the bridleway. The work done has enabled us to divert water that collects on the new path (that was improved for the parkrun) and intersection in to the ditch between where the bridleway and new drainage will be going.

Cawder Construction has kindly agreed to clear out the ditch that runs alongside the bridleway down to where it stops near the barrier in the Park. They have also agreed to pay for a new trash screen to be installed at this point that will help with the water flow in to the main drain.

Once the surface water and foul water project has been completed, we will also look to replenish the stone on the bridleway that has been washed off in recent years to allow a more even and safer surface for users.

We have also carried out some drainage improvement works on two areas of the Rugby pitches in co-ordination with Colne & Nelson Rugby Club. They had previously approached us asking for help regarding two large sinkholes that had appeared on one of their match pitches and their training pitch. The sinkhole on the main pitch was close to an area of the ground where previous drainage issues had occurred and the land became extremely boggy in wet weather.

The problems have been identified with cleaning out of existing pipes taking place and some new drainage pipes installed. We are hopeful that this will go a long way to alleviating and/or providing a solution to both long standing problems.

A long standing drainage issue close to the Community Centre on Birtwistle Avenue has also been actioned over the last month. An area of Holt House close to the centre which backs on to the houses at Birtwistle Avenue has suffered from flooding issues for a while and in recent years had started to affect the footpath and highway on Birtwistle to a point where people were unable to use the footpaths due to flooding. This had particularly affected people visiting the community centre.

Water accumulates in the South East corner of Holt House from the fields above and run off from the Football pitch area to the left causes a huge amount of water to flow in to this area. As such, we have alleviated this by digging out strategic channels to direct the water in to a new drainage pipe that has been installed adjacent to the houses. The new drainage then connects in to the main sewer drain on Birtwistle Avenue. We have also installed a new headwall and trash screen to allow the water to flow freely in to the main drainage pipe.

We are very hopeful that this will provide a solution to the problem but will monitor the situation over the next six months to establish whether further work needs doing.

Pendle Parkrun continues to be successful attracting an average of 71.8 runners of all ages and abilities per week (this figure has increased by 4.3 runners per week since I last reported in January 2017). Provided below are some official statistics from the Pendle parkrun website:

Number of parkrun's: 175

Number of different runners who have completed Pendle parkrun: 2,084

Number of runs completed by the 2,084 runners: 12,568

Total hours run: 257 Days 3 Hrs 6 Min 8 Secs

Total distance run: 62,840km

The parkrun team continue to work closely with Pendle Leisure Trust and Trawden Athletic Club on the Couch to 5K programme. Subsequently, this has seen parkrun achieve its aim of attracting more beginner runners, increasing participants, increasing the amount of new Trawden AC members and ultimately contributing greatly to Pendle's Public Health agenda.

Fisher More

The development of a 3G pitch at Fisher More High School was initially scheduled to be completed by September 2016 but due to problems with drainage and some planning issues the construction work has been significantly delayed. The contractors are due to complete the works by mid-September 2017. The School is then looking to have the facility available for use from the end of September. They are also still pursuing further external funding avenues (Sport England and the Football Foundation) regarding the improvement of the grass pitches and the tennis/netball courts.

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