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|                      |  | <b>AGENDA ITEM 5</b> |
|                      |  | <b>GTP/02/17</b>     |
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| <b>Committee:</b>    | <b>GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD</b>     |                      |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b> | <b>1 March 2017</b>  |                      |
| <b>Report:</b>       | <b>ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA</b>               |                      |
| <b>Enquiries to:</b> | Nick Day, Street Scene & Parks Manager<br>Braintree District Council |                      |

## **SPORTS FACILITIES UPDATE**

This report provides Members with an update on progress and performance with the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park from 1 July 2016 to 31 January 2017.

The main partner organisation using the facilities is Great Notley Youth Football Club, but over the last 7 months a total of 35 different football teams representing 16 sports organisations have used the facility on a regular basis. These include Gt. Notley Youth FC, Braintree Town Youth FC, Silver End Utd FC, Rayne FC and Gt. Leighs Youth FC. This equates to around 1,651 hours of bookings being made either through the football clubs or by casual users of the facility during this period.

Income received so far this financial year comes to £31k. The projected income for the full year is £42k which is in line with the budget figure for 2016/17.

## **EXTERNAL MONITORING OF THE FACILITY**

The annual Monitoring and Evaluation form (a condition of the grant) has been completed and returned to the Football Foundation.

The information required for the survey includes the number, type and size of the organisations using the facility, the number of bookings each one makes over the year and their pattern of use, i.e. peak, off-peak, weekend or week day.

The survey was completed in October 2016 and submitted to the Football Foundation on 1 November and we are currently awaiting their response.

## **FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE**

We have continued to work with Braintree Town Football Academy who are now part of the registered charity, Community Iron (CI), which has been set up to encourage sport and community cohesion across the Braintree District.

CI runs a traditional (free to students) Further Education College programme offering BTEC vocational qualifications in Sports Management. There are sixty 16 -18 year old boys and girls on the programme which lasts 2 years. This is NOT an “elite players only” programme, but is an alternative to more traditional school and college based programmes.

The academic programme receives some Further Education funding and is delivered by an external provider, Virtual Learning UK. Community Iron supervises all the practical work (coaching) associated with the course. This is primarily based around football, and all coaching takes place at The Discovery Centre.

In association with Essex FA, CI also runs 3 Soccability Festivals each year, providing football opportunities for people with disabilities by inviting schools from Essex to send teams to participate in skills sessions and tournaments at The Discovery Centre. Academy coaches and students take an active part in these sessions which have been attended by over 50 students per festival. This has been extended to offer regular weekly disabled sport coaching - initially in Colchester - but with the aim of developing this in Braintree in the future.

CI also continues to run the holiday Soccer Camps weekly during half terms and the Easter and Summer school holidays. Typically 30 children attend from 10am to 3pm each session and they receive mementos and 'challenge' trophies. BDC supplies the pitch and CI supplies the coaches and equipment.

The next event being run by CI at the Country Park is a Schools 6 a-side football competition taking place on Thursday, 2 March 2017, where the winners get a chance to play at Wembley!

CI also provide pre-academy coaching sessions in the evening when local youngsters from any club (or no club) are welcome to come along and get specialist football coaching from CI's Braintree Town Academy coaches. There are 2 sessions held each week: one for 7-11 and one for 12 -15 yr olds.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Looking ahead over the longer term, we will be carrying out a condition survey of the playing surface of the AGP to ascertain when it will require replacing, as it is nearing its 10 year anniversary and is showing signs of wear and may need replacing sooner than originally expected. A sinking fund is being maintained to pay for this replacement which currently stands at £116k.

The future of the AGP and MUGA and the other sports facilities at the Park are being considered as part of the strategic review in order to inform the future vision for the Country Park over the next 10-15 years, taking into account future growth and development e.g. Garden City Developments and the opportunities (including funding) this might bring.

We are currently in discussion with colleagues in Environment and Leisure over the future management and operation of the sports facilities and how this can be encompassed in the Council's overall Leisure Contract with Fusion Lifestyle, with particular emphasis on how we can make use of an integrated online booking system covering all of the Council's sports facilities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Members note the report.

13 February 2017