

Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

10:00	Wednesday, 12 March 2014	Discovery Centre, Great Notley,
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Quorum: One Member from each Council

Membership

Councillor J Jowers (Chairman),	Essex County Council
Councillor S Walsh	Essex County Council
Councillor G Butland	Braintree District Council
Councillor W Schmitt	Braintree District Council

For information about the meeting please ask for:

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Essex County Council

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Part 1

(During consideration of these items the meeting is likely to be open to the press and public)

		Pages
1	Apologies and Substitution Notices The Committee Officer to report receipt (if any)	
2	Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held on 31 July 2013.	5 - 8
3	Declarations of Interest To note any declarations of interest to be made by Members	
4	Proposal regarding a new adventure course at Great Notley Country Park - TO FOLLOW To consider report (GTP/01/14) from Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, Essex County Council.	
5	Sports Update To consider report (GTP/02/14) from Paul Partridge, Head of Operations, Braintree District Council, updating the Board on progress and performance with the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park.	9 - 14
6	Stakeholder Feedback To receive the views and feedback of stakeholders on any of the issues raised.	
7	Date of Next Meeting To agree a date for the next meeting of the Board.	
8	Urgent Business To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.	

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely

disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

9

Urgent Exempt Business

To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK
JOINT VENTURE BOARD HELD AT THE DISCOVERY CENTRE, GREAT
NOTLEY ON 31 JULY 2013**

Attendance:

Councillors:

John Jowers	- Essex County Council (ECC)
Simon Walsh	- Essex County Council (ECC)
Graham Butland	- Braintree District Council (BDC)
Mrs Wendy Schmitt	- Braintree District Council (BDC)

Officers in attendance:

Steve Bunn	- ECC/Northern Area Manager, Country Parks,
Nick Day	- Braintree District Council/Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Tim Dixon	- ECC/Head of Country Parks
Paul Partridge	- Braintree District Council/Head of Operations
Sophie Campion	- Committee Officer (ECC)

1. Appointment of Chairman

The Committee Officer invited nominations for Chairman of the Board. Councillor Mrs Schmitt proposed Councillor Jowers as Chairman and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Walsh. There were no other nominations and Councillor Jowers was duly elected as Chairman until the next annual meeting in July 2014.

2. Apologies and Substitution Notices

There were no apologies reported.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

5. Site Report from Great Notley Country Park

The Board received and noted the site report January - July 2013 (GTP/03/13) from Steve Bunn, Northern Area Manager Country Parks.

Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, introduced the report to the Board and advised that the visitor numbers were doing well this year due to the good weather and were on target for reaching the income target. However it was noted that wet weekends later in the year could be an issue.

It was noted that due to the investment in the play equipment, along with the café and cycle hire, the Country Park had become a destination and visitors were travelling from across the County and London to the Park. The Green Flag status had been awarded for the fifth year.

Activities

There were varied third party enquiries to use the site and a commission to the Country Park was received for these. The cycle hire had also proved popular with access to the Flitch Way from the Country Park.

Café

The catering provider had changed to 'The Wooden Spoon' which was a local family run business with good ideas for promotion. So far the café had received very good feedback. Country Parks received £50,000 from the café at Great Notley Country Park and a further £13,000 for the café at Rayne Station along the Flitch Way.

Maintenance

In the last six months grass cutting had taken place along with hedgerow work and a Hazel Coppice had been planted.

In the overflow car park field trees had been planted to distinguish the parking rows and create some shade in response to feedback which had been received.

Repairs and works on the play trail had also been carried out.

Volunteers

There were two volunteer days a week mainly on the Flitch Way through the 'Friends of the Flitch Way' carrying out various tasks.

Members discussed the following issues:

- A Member commented that the dog fouling campaign carried out in the Braintree District seemed to have been successful.
- The Chairman was pleased to note that the partnership between the County Council and Braintree District Council was working well and was reflected in the success of the Country Park.
- It was noted that on a busy day at the Park there were around 700 cars on-site.
- A question was raised regarding the on-going issue of horse-riders leaving the bridleway and using other parts of the Park. In response it was explained that despite discussions with the local horse-riders this was still an issue, particularly in the winter. Various options for addressing this problem were discussed and it was **Agreed** that ECC and BDC officers would look at possible resolutions for consensual agreement.

6. Sports Update

The Board received report (GTP/04/13) providing an update on the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park. Paul Partridge, Head of Operations, BDC and Nick Day, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, BDC were in attendance for this item.

Progress

On the 1 June 2013 Braintree District Council signed a Service Level Agreement with Braintree Town Football Club (BTFC) Youth Academy to deliver the Football Development Plan. As part of this work a programme of soccer camps were being run which had proved successful to date. The facilities were being promoted on the BTFC website along with other promotional activities.

Budget Update

During the period December 2012 to June 2013 the income was up by 14% on the same period the previous year. The total income for 2012-13 was £44.5k compared with the full operating costs of 49.5k, which was a significant improvement from the previous year and close to breaking even.

Conclusion

Great Notley Football Club remains the single biggest user but they had been unable to commit resources to help deliver the Football Development Plan. There remained difficulties with attracting usage during the day during term-time and BTFC Youth Academy programme will help address this.

BDC's new leisure contract with Fusion was now well established and discussion had commenced with them on the merits of working together. A future discussion would explore opportunities for the AGP and MUGA.

An annual report was submitted to the Football Foundation and showed an upward trend.

During the discussion the following issues were discussed:

- The County Football Association have a standard invite to monthly operational meetings and attend on a quarterly basis and their support is sought and suggested amendments are implemented.
- The hiring of the facilities is managed by BDC, however any walk-in custom is administered by the ECC staff on-site, so for the customer the service is seamless.

It was also noted that the First Great Notley Scouts were looking to have a Scout Hut on the Country Park site with the land being leased to them. However they needed to raise funds to achieve this.

7. Stakeholder Feedback

No issues have been raised by the Stakeholder Groups. It was **Agreed** that this standing agenda item would be removed from future agendas as any feedback

would be picked up through the Flitch Way Liaison Group meeting and would be reported back to the Board as necessary.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was **Agreed** that the next meeting of the Board would be arranged for January 2013.

9. Urgent Business

The Board was invited to discuss and consider options for car parking charges for sports teams hiring the MUGA. Currently each player has to pay car parking charges in addition to hiring the facility. There had been feedback regarding this issue which needed to be addressed. Currently players were required to pay the car parking charges in addition to hire of the facility, however the hire rate had been discounted to compensate for this.

Two options were presented for consideration:

- A 50% discounted car park charge added to the hire charges for long term bookings
- To build the car park charges into the hire charges based on a discounted rate per vehicle per hire session.

There were a number of considerations discussed by the Board including:

- Ensuring that any parking passes issued for the use of the facility could not be used at any other time for free parking at the Country Park.
- The need to keep the hire charges competitive for the area.
- Managing users expectations that parking should be free when a facility has been hired in line with other leisure facilities in the area.

It was **Agreed** that the Board would delegate authority to officers of Essex County Council and Braintree District Council to discuss the options, decide on a mutually acceptable and appropriate solution and provide the Board with an update at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.05pm.

Chairman

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		GTP/02/14
Committee:	Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board	
Date:	12 March 2014	
ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA		
Enquiries to:	Paul Partridge, Head of Operations Email: paul.partridge@braintree.gov.uk Telephone: 01376 552525 ext 3331	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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 2013 to 31 January 2014.

2. PERFORMANCE UPDATE

At the last meeting of the Board, it was reported that Braintree District Council (BDC) had formally agreed a new Service Level Agreement with Braintree Town Football Club (BTFC) Youth Academy to help deliver the objectives of the Football Development Plan.

The Agreement has now been in operation for over 6 months and it is considered that excellent progress has been made with a number of activities/events held using the facilities. Attached is a summary that BTFC has prepared (Appendix A) showing how their day-to-day involvement has led to an increase in off-peak usage by local clubs and the promotion of a number of football events at the County Park.

Key achievements to date have been:

- Seven one-day soccer camps held for over 140 boys & girls aged 7 to 11.
- Up to 60 local boys attending the Academy full-time increasing the off-peak use of the facility by over 70 hours each month.
- 60 students trained for qualification as Football Association Level 1 coaches.
- 15 of the Academy students qualified as FA Level 2 coaches.

This clearly demonstrates to the Football Foundation and the Football Association that we are making excellent progress in delivering the key components of the Football Development Plan. Issie Collins, the Football Foundation's Activity and Sustainability Advisor, recently said:

"The new partnership between Braintree District Council and Braintree Football Club is progressing well. To date, the programme has significantly increased the day-time usage of the pitch and the figures submitted to the Football Foundation for 2012/13 show a 16.4% increase in participation. I look forward to continuing to work with both organisations over the coming months."

3. BUDGET UPDATE

Income received during the 10 month period from April 2013 – January 2014 was £42k compared to £30k for the same period in the previous year (an increase of just over 40%).

Total annual income for 2013-14 is projected to be around £46.5k, with the full year's operating costs projected to be around £49k. The facility is therefore expected to make a small loss this year, however, it is not far off reaching break-even point, which is a significant improvement from that previously reported to the Board.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Following recent discussions between BTFC and Gt Notley Football Club (GNFC), both clubs are now fully engaged in a proactive and positive way and have agreed in principle on the following areas of partnership working:-

- BTFC Academy to supply coaches for GNFC players who are not yet in formal teams.
- BTFC Academy to offer support/cover for existing GNFC team coaches when required.
- BTFC Academy to offer places for existing GNFC coaches on their courses to become qualified to FA Level 2.
- GNFC and BTFC Academy to combine to run a World Cup-themed Football Tournament at Gt Notley Country Park just before the real World Cup starts.
- GNFC to investigate any of their sides wanting to come to BTFC home games as Guard of Honour.
- GNFC & BTFC to investigate what funding might be available to improve the facilities at Gt Notley Country Park such as the Football Conference's Football Facilities Fund.
- Complimentary usage of BTFC's Social Club for GNFC's fund-raising events.

All parties involved are confident that there will be plenty of opportunities to work together on initiatives that will be of mutual benefit - not only to BTFC and GNFC but to local communities as well.

Another recent development has been the sponsorship by the Council's vehicle procurement and maintenance contractor, Riverside Truck Rental Ltd, of BTFC's 17-seater minibus which is used to transport the Academy footballers between the Amlin Stadium and the facilities at Gt Notley Country Park.

5. CONCLUSION

Excellent progress has already been made in the short time that BTFC has been involved with the facility. In addition to increased use of the off-peak sessions by local clubs and community groups, Gt. Notley Football Club (which is the single largest user) has now agreed to commit resources to help develop and deliver the Football Development Plan, a development which can be attributed directly to the success of the new Service Level Agreement with BTFC.

Looking ahead, we are confident that our partnership with BTFC will result in greater promotion and increased use of the facility during the off-peak periods over the coming year. Furthermore, with the Council's new Leisure Services Contract with Fusion now well established, we have commenced discussions with them to consider whether there is any merit in a joint approach to share learning, knowledge and experience in order to ensure the continued growth and development of the facility at Great Notley Country Park.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the report.

Nick Day

Parks & Open Spaces Manager
Braintree District Council
26 February 2014



DEVELOPING FOOTBALL AT THE GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK – A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH:



THE FIRST 6 MONTHS: AUG 2013 – JAN 2014

Braintree District Council (BDC) has some excellent football facilities at **The Great Notley Country Park (GNCP)** including 2 grass pitches, a 3rd generation synthetic surface pitch and a games multi-use area. Discussions between BDC, and **Braintree Town Football Club (BTFC)** began in July 2013 with the initial aim of increasing the off-peak (weekday daytime) football usage at the GNCP. A 2 year agreement came into place on 1st August whereby BTFC would increase the off-peak usage by around 600 hours per year.

Great Notley Country Park Football Centre - Achievements in the first 6 Months:



7 one-day Soccer Camps for boys and girls aged 7 to 11 based on the synthetic pitches at Great Notley for over 140 children. Councillor Jo Beavis attended the October half term camp and helped Braintree Town goalkeeper Nathan McDonald present mementos and prizes.



The **BTFC Academy** has made GNCP their base for all coaching activities on 4 days each week amounting to over 70 hours of new off-peak usage of the centre each month. There are 60 local boys aged 16 to 18 attending the Academy **full time**.



A new **web presence for community football related activities** supervised by Braintree Town FC (and supported by BDC) has been created. This is www.communityiron.co.uk



- **John Ray School Day** – On hearing the news about the fire at John Ray School BTFC organised a free day of football fun for John Ray pupils at Gt Notley. Academy coaches and students supervised the children. BDC & BTFC provided this free.
- Weekly **Specialist Goalkeeper coaching** sessions open to any local aspiring goalkeepers started in October 2013. These are continuing and are supervised by **BTFC and England goalkeeper Nathan McDonald**, together with qualified goalkeeping Academy coaches.
- BTFC Academy has now trained **60 students** to be qualified as **Football Association Level 1 coaches**. They in turn are now qualified to promote football in the area.
- BTFC has applied for & received recognition and support from **The Football Conference Trust** for Community activities such as the Soccer Camps run in conjunction with BDC.

- BTFC has employed an **apprentice** from another Community partner, **The College at Braintree** to help in the administration of Community schemes.
- BTFC Academy has purchased a 17 seat **Minibus** for transporting Academy boys between The Amlin Stadium (where academic studies take place) and GNCP where training takes place. The bus will also be available for future Community sessions involving local schools and other youth groups in sessions at Great Notley. BDC has arranged servicing of the bus with the Council's vehicle maintenance contractor.
- Academy staff and students supported **Tabor Science College** to run a **charity** football-themed day to raise money for Hurrican Haiyan victims .



- Academy coaches and 2nd year students have started a partnership with **John Bunyan school** where the students supervise sports & wellness sessions up to 4 times each week. We plan to extend these partnerships to other schools.
- BTFC has drafted a **Football Development Plan** for the next 5 years and has discussed this with the partners involved in the strategic development football at GNCP (BDC, Essex Football Association, The Football Foundation). While the increase in usage of the facilities and development of community activities was welcomed by these partners, the plan now awaits input from the current youth football partner club before it can be adopted.
- **15** of the BTFC Academy students have become qualified as **FA Level 2 coaches**.

The next 6 months.

- Encourage involvement by the current youth football partner to work to full adoption of **BTFC's Football Development Plan for GNCP** by BDC, Essex FA & Football Foundation.
- Usage of GNCP is still light on Wednesday daytimes as BTFC Academy does not use it. Look to bring new users to the centre on Wednesdays.
- BTFC will continue talks with **schools and other local youth groups**
- Talks have begun **with Braintree Job Centre** to discuss provision of wellness & fitness sessions at GNCP
- Further **Soccer Camps and Specialist Courses** are being planned for Easter and Summer 2014.
- Discussions have begun to identify a full time **Community Coach** as part of the Braintree Town FC Academy staff. This will require BTFC to identify funding to support these activities.
- BTFC will investigate the feasibility of moving all its Academy operations – including the academic teaching and matches – to GNCP.

Alan Stuckey, Director, BTFC

Jan 2014

