



Essex County Council

Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

14:00	Thursday, 01 September 2022	Conference Room, Great Notley Country Park, Braintree, CM77 7FS
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For information about the meeting please ask for:

Judith Dignum, Democratic Services Officer

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Essex County Council and Committees Information

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members of the public will be able to view any items on the agenda unless the Committee has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as a result of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Attendance at meetings

This meeting will be held in the Conference Room at Great Notley Country Park, CM77 7FS. [Further information about the location, including a map and directions, is available on the Explore Essex website](#)

Access to the meeting and reasonable adjustments

Full information about access to Great Notley Country Park is available on [the AccessAble website \(formerly Disabled Go\)](#).

Accessing Documents

If you have a need for documents in, large print, Braille, on disk or in alternative languages and easy read please contact the Democratic Services Officer before the meeting takes place. For further information about how you can access this meeting, contact the Democratic Services Officer.

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Livestreaming of meetings

We regret that this meeting will not be livestreamed.

Should you wish to record the meeting, please contact the officer shown on the agenda front page.

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1 Election of Chairman	
To elect a Chairman of the Partnership Board for the Municipal Year 2022-23	
2 Election of Vice-Chairman	
To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Partnership Board for the Municipal Year 2022-23	
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4 Minutes: 2 December 2020	5 - 8
To agree as a correct record the minutes of the previous Partnership Board held on 2 December 2020	
5 Site Report - Great Notley Country Park (GNCP/01/22)	9 - 11
6 Artificial Grass Pitch and Multi-Use Games Area (GNCP/02/22)	12 - 16
7 Fishing at Great Notley Country Park	
To receive a verbal report	
8 Date of Next Meeting	
To agree a date for the next meeting of the Partnership Board (if required).	

9 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)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

10 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.

Agenda Item 1

Committee: Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

Enquiries to: Judith Dignum, Democratic Services Officer
(democratic.services@essex.gov.uk)

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. The membership of the Board as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions (if any)
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership

(Quorum: One Member from each Council)

Councillor G Butland
Councillor M Durham
Councillor F Ricci
Councillor W Schmitt

Representing

Essex County Council
Essex County Council
Braintree District Council
Braintree District Council

Minutes of the meeting of Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held at Great Notley Country Park, Braintree at 3.00pm on Wednesday 2 December 2020.

Present:

Councillors:

S Walsh (Chairman)	Essex County Council
G Butland	Braintree District Council
M Platt	Essex County Council
W Schmitt	Braintree District Council

The following officers and advisors were also present in support:

Claire Bunn	Park Development Manager, ECC
Dee O'Rourke	Head of Essex Culture and Green Spaces, ECC
Paul Partridge	Head of Operations, BDC
Mark Rowley	Commercial Operations Manager, ECC
Paul Stokes	Operations Manager, ECC
Judith Dignum	Democratic Services Officer, ECC

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The Board received the report on Membership, Apologies and Declarations and it was noted that:

1. The membership of the Board was as shown in the report.
2. Apologies had been received from Sam Kennedy (Director, Environment and Climate Action, Essex County Council) and Samir Pandya (Head of Operations, Braintree District Council).
3. Councillor Butland declared a Code interest in agenda item 3 (Provision of an allotment at Great Notley Country Park) in that he was a member of Great Notley Parish Council. He remained present during consideration of the item but took no part in the discussion or voting thereon (Minute 3 below refers).

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held on 5 February 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Updates in relation to actions agreed at that meeting were provided during presentation of the other items on the agenda.

3. **Provision of an allotment at Great Notley Country Park (GTP/03/20)**

Councillor G Butland declared a Code interest in this item (Minute 1 above refers). He remained present during its consideration but took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Partnership Board's approval was sought to allocate two areas of uncultivated (unused) open space at the Country Park for allotments for the Parish of Great Notley.

The following information was provided in response to Members' questions:

- Given that the Parish Council would be contributing to the funding, it was likely that the allotments would be primarily intended for use by residents of Great Notley. There was a high demand for allotments in the area, with some 40 residents already on the waiting list for a plot, and it had proved difficult to identify a suitable location within the Parish boundary.
- Ease of providing a water supply to the site would be one of the issues considered as part of the feasibility study to be undertaken if the allocation of the land was approved. The hope was that it would be possible to achieve this through onsite rainwater collection.

It was **Agreed**:

1. To approve in principle the allocation of the land identified in Appendix 1 to report GTP/03/20 for the provision of allotments for the parish of Great Notley.
2. To support the proposal for further discussions to take place between Essex County Council, Braintree District Council and Great Notley Parish Council.

4. **Site Report (GTP/04/20)**

The Board received the latest update on issues at the Country Park.

Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- Covid-19 had affected various aspects of the Park's operation, including reduced staffing, lack of volunteer activity and cancellation of events. However, visitor numbers had been high and the Park was currently very busy in comparison to this time in previous years.
- The café was now being managed in-house by Essex County Council. Although to date it had only been possible to offer a takeaway service, this was proving popular.
- Although most events had been cancelled, a successful play trail had been organised for October half-term, with a further one planned for Christmas.

- In response to a question, it was agreed to investigate the possibility of improving the surface at the non-vehicle entrance to the Park adjacent to the Pegasus crossing.

The Board was advised that a number of maintenance issues had arisen with regard to the play equipment and Essex County Council was currently in the process of agreeing funding for the necessary remedial work and renewal of safety resurfacing. This would help to bring facilities up to standard in the short-term while establishing a funded rolling programme of maintenance for the future, necessary especially as a proportion of the equipment was reaching end of life. The absence of such a programme was a concern and had only been recently identified.

A discussion took place regarding the current arrangements for managing fishing in the Park and whether they may require revision, particularly in view of the diversity of wildlife present in the lake area. It was agreed that a report should be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership Board.

The report and update were noted.

It was **Agreed** that:

1. A report on the current arrangements in place for managing fishing in the Country Park and potential options for the future be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership Board.

5. Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) (GTP/05/20)

The Board received an update on usage and income from the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park for the period from 1 April to 31 October 2020.

The following issues were noted during the update:

- Resurfacing of the Artificial Grass Pitch, as noted at the Board's last meeting, had now been completed.
- In common with other similar facilities, usage and income had declined sharply as a result of closure during Covid, meaning that the annual income target would not be met. As this had been the case for a number of years, Braintree District Council was considering a reduction, to be implemented as part of the 2021/22 budget.
- Engagement with Community Iron (the community charity of Braintree Town Football Club) was ongoing and activities had continued despite Covid-19. The possibility of promoting the available activities to schools, as proposed at the Board's last meeting, would be taken forward as part of the regular review of the Football Development Plan

The report and update were noted.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be agreed in due course, with availability to be canvassed by the Democratic Services Officer.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 15.35pm.

Chairman

Report title: Site Report – Great Notley Country Park	
Report to: Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board	
Report author: Mark Rowley, Commercial Operations Manager (Essex County Council)	
Date: 1 September 2022	For: Information
Enquiries to: mark.rowley@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an update on activity at Great Notley Country Park. Members are asked to note the report.

2. Staffing

We are currently down to a skeleton staffing crew at the Country Park, with staff currently off sick, on maternity leave, or roles currently still out for recruitment. New roles were created during the last restructure, these being a new 0.3 FTE caretaker and two 0.25 FTE Park Operations Assistants (POA). We have filled one of the POA positions, and Barbara is a much-welcomed member of the team. We also now have help from the Ranger based at Cudmore Grove Country Park, as he works at Great Notley CP every Wednesday.

The Roaming Rangers will be losing one of their members of staff, Laura, as she moves on to a new opportunity. We wish her all the luck with her new role near Manchester.

3. Play Trail and the Park

We have now had many of our play trail elements surfaced with tiger mulch, which is a bonded rubber material. It was decided that this is more economic in the long term than woodchip, as it requires little maintenance and does not need topping up every year. After some much needed repairs we also have most of our play equipment open, after ECC reserves funding was sought to complete the work. We have redesigned the climbing forest, making it into an imaginative toddler play area. Work will continue on this after the summer holidays. Unfortunately, due to budget restraints the water play remains closed.

The Ranger will be completing the autumnal cut back of the hedges and the meadows around the Country Park soon after the summer holidays, and along the Flitch Way and Blackwater Rail Trail towards the end of the year too. Strimming many of the wildflowers around the park will continue in September once they have 'gone over'. The seeds are currently a valuable food source for birds. Work has been carried out on the trees along the Flitch Way, the Country Park and Blackwater Rail trail in accordance with the tree reports.

4. Visitor Numbers

We are now well into the summer holidays and the building and car parks are now fully open after Covid. We are finding the summer holidays to be quiet so far. We think this is mainly due to the extreme heat we have been having as Great Notley CP has little shade and the fact that many people want to get away for summer holidays without restrictions.

5. Café

Skylark Café is now fully open and allowing people to sit in to enjoy food and drinks. We have welcomed three new part time Café Assistants and a new Food and Beverage Manager (Kelly), who manages the cafés across Essex Country Parks. The new Food and Beverage Manager has only just started her role with ECC and it will be exciting to see the changes to the cafes that she puts in place.

6. Sky Ropes

Sky Ropes is now fully open with many of the timeslots being fully booked over the summer period. The Sky Ropes team are now made up of our one Sky Ropes member based at the Country Park and others based over at Essex Outdoors Danbury.

7. Events

All third-party events are now back on track, and we have welcomed many of our regular events back, including Parkrun, Junior Parkrun, Born2Tri, the Greyhound Walks and North Essex Astronomy Group. We've had several races along the Flitch Way too. We are working with the events team to attract more third-party events to the park.

The events team have produced a summer trail, to encourage families to visit our parks and enjoy some exercise in the fresh air.

8. Flitch Way and Volunteers

We have welcomed the Friends of the Flitch Way volunteer group back and they have recommenced their twice weekly work parties, which mainly involves cutting back and clearance work along the Flitch Way. They have also completed some maintenance work at one of the Halts along the Flitch and completed one clearance project at the lakes at the park. They are currently on a break for the summer holidays, but work will continue next week or so, at the Country Park, where they continue with another lake project of clearing some the reeds from the main lake. We continue to thank them for all the hard work and effort they put in.

Report title: Artificial Grass Pitch and Multi-Use Games Area	
Report to: Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board	
Report author: Samir Pandya, Operations Strategy and Policy Manager (Braintree District Council)	
Date: 1 September 2022	For: Information
Enquiries to: Samir.pandya@braintree.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on usage and income from the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park for the financial year 2021-22 and the 4-month period from April – July 2022.

Members are asked to note the report.

GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD 1 SEPTEMBER 2022

ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA

1. INTRODUCTION

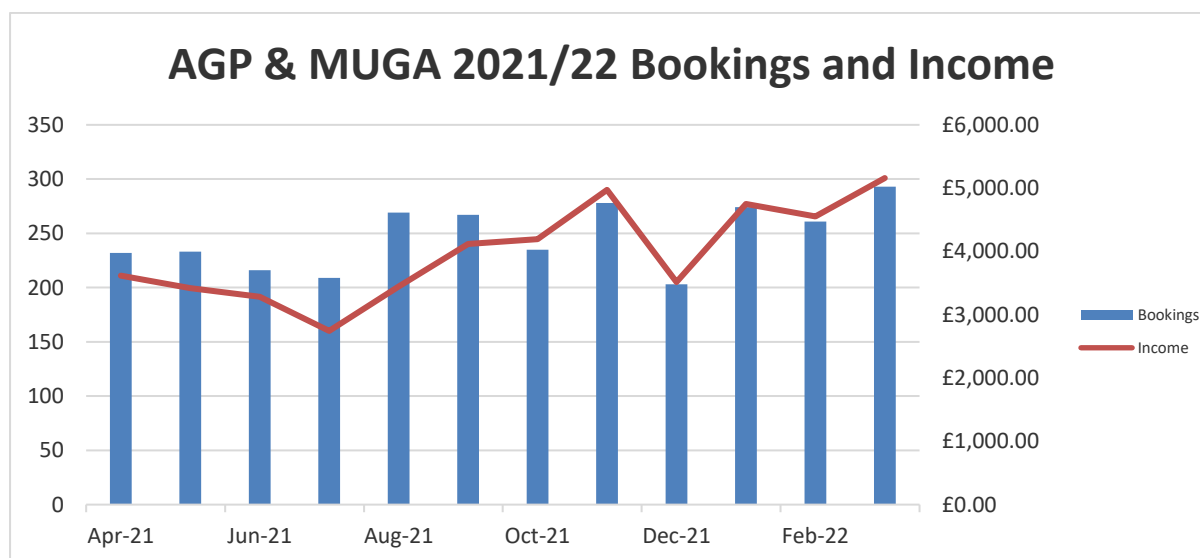
This report provides Members with an update on usage and income from the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park. It covers the financial year 2021/22 and the 4-month period from April 2022 – July 2022.

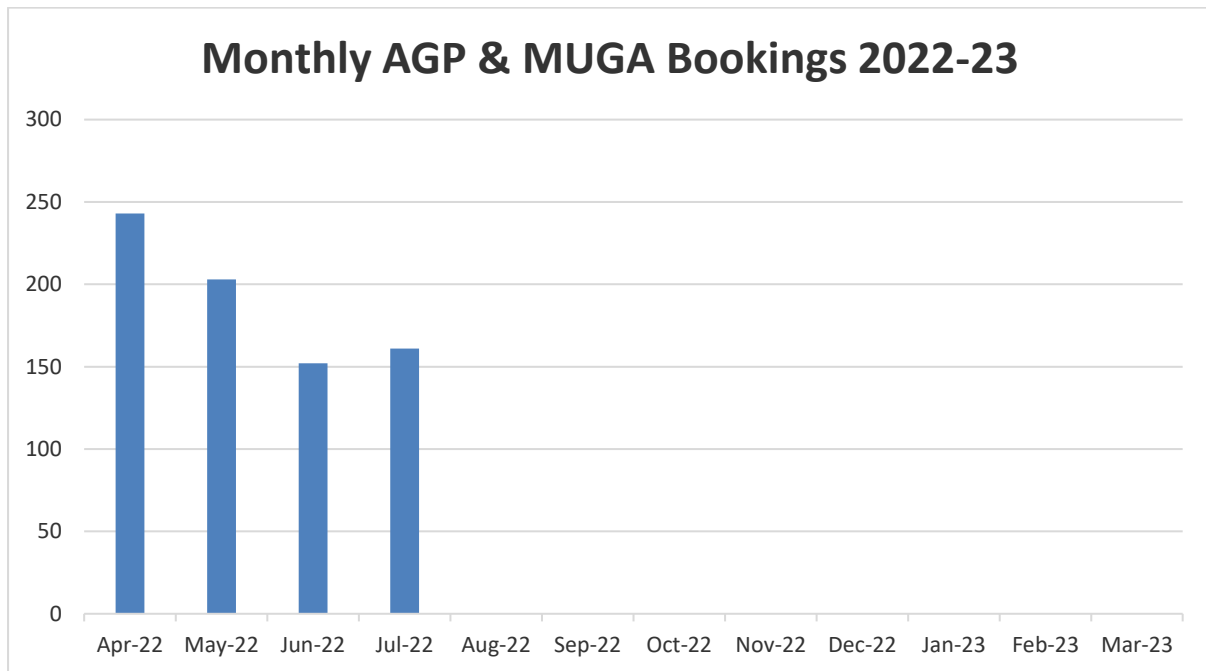
2. USAGE AND BOOKINGS

The graphs below show the number of bookings in each month for 2021/22 and up to the end of July 2022. There were 2,960 bookings in total over 2021/22 – an average of 247 per month and 759 bookings April to July 22 – an average of 63 per month.

There have been 25 different organisations/individuals both in and outside of the Braintree District who have regularly booked the facility, ranging from adult and children's football clubs, including Great Notley Youth Football Club, and other sporting clubs – see Appendix 1 for full list. Great Notley Youth Football Club account for some 25% of the total bookings.

The facility continues to be well used during peak periods (evenings and weekends) when it is virtually full to capacity. This equates to 93% of all bookings, the remainder being made during the off-peak period (daytime Monday to Friday). Off-peak usage has and will continue to be a challenge in terms of the number of bookings, this is at least in part due to the accessibility of the location.

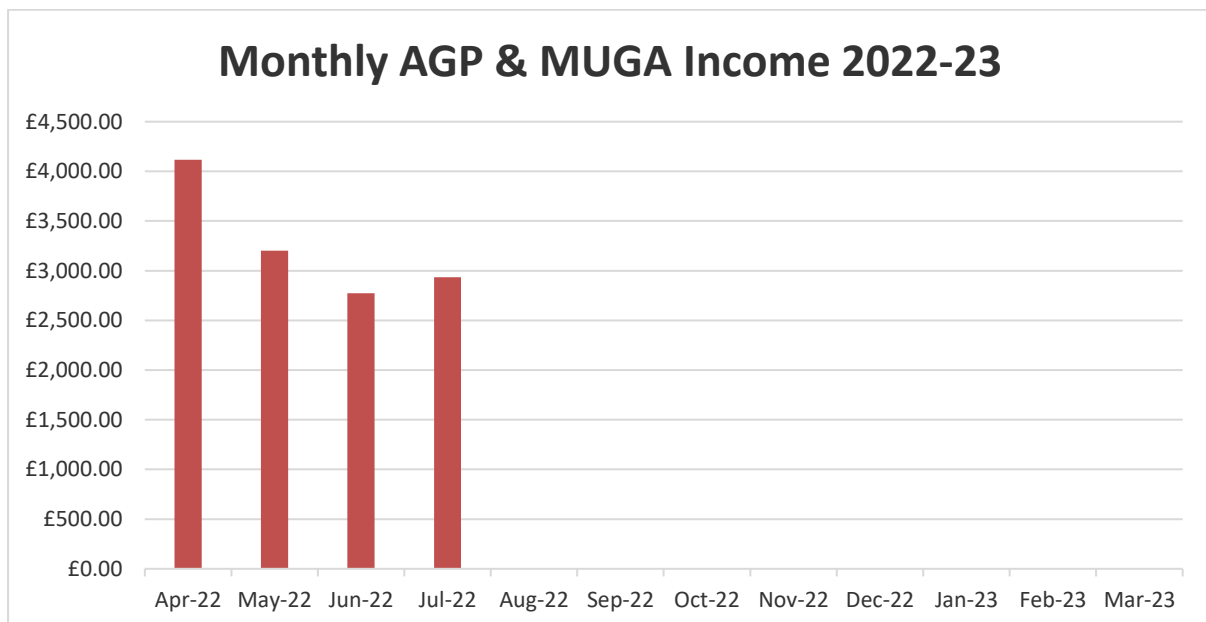




3. INCOME GENERATION

The income generated from the AGP and MUGA has remained in line with the budget projection for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and follows a similar trend to the previous year. In 2021/22 the total income was circa £48,000. This year, by the end of July, we had received £13,000 which is on a par with the same period in 2021/22.

The graph below shows the monthly income received:



4. BRAINTREE COMMUNITY IRON

Sadly, the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Community Iron (CI); the community charity of Braintree Town FC managed via a Trust, terminated in February 2022 at their request as the Trust disbanded. The CI provided an action plan for the use of facilities by a wide range of demographics, disabled groups and youth football (girls and boys). This was required by the Football Association when we got the original grant for the AGP over 15years ago. Many of the groups are well established and we continue to provide good, high-quality sports facilities to the community.

5. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the report.

Samir Pandya
Operations Strategy and Policy Manager

Appendix 1 – List of Organisations and Clubs using the AGP and MUGA

Andy Layzell (Rayne Youth) (Affiliated) (J)
A.Wright (Dunmow Utd) (Affiliated)
Benjamin Bailey
Ben Crow (Felsted Rovers) (Affiliated)
Bocking Vets (Affiliated)
Braintree Churches (Affiliated)
Coggeshall Town Under 16's (Affiliated) (J)
Community Iron Group (Affiliated)
Fritch Sixes
Great Notley YFC (Affiliated) (J)
Gt Leighs YFC (Affiliated) (J)
Josh Pridmore
Dunmow United Lions ((Affiliated)
Michael Goodman (Old Gits Football)
Steve Tilsed
MNF (Daniel Clyde)
MRFA (Affiliated)
Neil Chambers (GNFC) (Affiliated)
Great Notley Lions (Affiliated)
Rayne Youths (Affiliated) (J)
RDC
Ross Blackery
Silver End United
Szymon Roda
Braintree FC