



Essex County Council

Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

15:00	Tuesday, 04 December 2018	Martin Room, Cressing Temple CM77 8PD,
--------------	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 033301 34587

Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

		Pages
1	Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	4 - 4
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 May 2018.	5 - 8
3	Site Report To receive the Site Report (GTP/04/18)	9 - 11
4	Artificial Grass Pitches and Multi-Use Games Area To consider a report (GTP/05/18) from Steve Wilson, Street Scene and Parks Manager, Braintree District Council	12 - 14
5	Date of Next Meeting To agree a date for the next meeting of the Board.	
6	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.	

7 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.

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.

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. If there is exempted business, it will be clearly marked as an Exempt Item on the agenda and members of the public and any representatives of the media will be asked to leave the meeting room for that item.

The agenda is available on the Essex County Council website, <https://www.essex.gov.uk>. From the Home Page, click on 'Your Council', then on 'Meetings and Agendas'. Finally, select the relevant committee from the calendar of meetings.

Attendance at meetings

Most meetings are held at County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX. A map and directions to County Hall can be found at the following address on the Council's website: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Local-Government-Essex/Pages/Visit-County-Hall.aspx>

Access to the meeting and reasonable adjustments

County Hall is accessible via ramped access to the building for people with physical disabilities.

The Council Chamber and Committee Rooms are accessible by lift and are located on the first and second floors of County Hall.

Induction loop facilities are available in most Meeting Rooms. Specialist headsets are available from Reception.

With sufficient notice, documents can be made available in alternative formats, for further information about this or about the meeting in general please contact the named officer on the agenda pack or email democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

Audio recording of meetings

Please note that in the interests of improving access to the Council's meetings, a sound recording is made of the public parts of many of the Council's Committees. The Chairman will make an announcement at the start of the meeting if it is being recorded.

If you are unable to attend and wish to see if the recording is available you can visit this link <https://cmis.essexcc.gov.uk/Essexcmis5/CalendarofMeetings> any time after the meeting starts. Any audio available can be accessed via the 'On air now!' box in the centre of the page, or the links immediately below it.

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

Agenda item 1

Committee: Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

Enquiries to: Sophie Campion, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership

(Quorum: One Member from each Council)

Representing

Councillor M Steptoe
Councillor S Walsh
Councillor G Butland
Councillor W Schmitt

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

Minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held at Cressing Temple, on Thursday 31 May 2018.

Present:

Councillors:

S Walsh (Chairman)	Essex County Council
W Schmitt (Vice-Chairman)	Braintree District Council

The following officers and advisors were also present in support:

Laura Boreham	Development Manager, Country Parks
Claire Bunn	Senior Ranger
Dee O'Rourke	Head of Culture and Green Spaces
Paul Partridge	Head of Operations, Braintree District Council
Cherie Root	Corporate Director and Head of Business Solutions
Sophie Campion	Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.

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

1. The membership of the Board was noted.
2. Apologies had been received from Cllr Mike Steptoe, Essex County Council and Cllr Graham Butland, Braintree District Council. Apologies had also been received from the following officers; Dominic Collins, Director, Economic Growth & Localities, Essex County Council and Steve Wilson, Street Scene & Parks Manager, Braintree District Council

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held on 6 November 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

Minute 10 – Car Parking Charges – Members asked if there had been any feedback regarding the revised car parking charges which came into effect in April 2018. It was confirmed that no feedback had been received. Braintree District Council considered the changes to be sensible.

4. Site Report

The Board received report (GTP/01/18) from Claire Bunn, Senior Ranger.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- The resurfacing works had meant a temporary closure to the cable way but this was now complete and had been well received.
- There had been an increase in car park income and payment by card had increased significantly with fewer people paying by cash now.
- Progress on the Zip Line continued however there had been some delays with the planning process which meant that work was unlikely to start until after the summer holidays.
- More opportunities for outdoor events and activities were being considered, particularly incorporating the lake. Feasibility was being looked at. A temporary Archery site was also being considered.

During consideration of the report the following points were made:

- Members commented that it was unfortunate that the Zip Line would not be in place for the school holidays.
- A question was raised regarding what could be done to prevent dogs from chewing the swing seats. It was reported that a more robust material was being sought. Previously a spray had been tried on a different piece of play equipment but had not worked particularly well.
- A query was raised regarding previous problems with an area bordering a farmer's field. It was confirmed that following a discussion with one of the Friends of the Flitch Way, an agreement had been reached with the farmer that the Country Park would put signage in place to prevent people from going through the field.
- Concern was raised regarding possible encroachment on the land, in response it was confirmed that encroachment was closely monitored and dealt with.
- Some concerns were raised regarding the Archery site with regard to wildlife. It was confirmed that if this went ahead it would be a temporary site.
- In response to a question regarding car parking capacity during busy periods, it was confirmed that there had been some days over Easter where the use of the over-flow car park was limited due to being too wet. There had been a couple of occasions where a system of one in one out had to be used. However it was reported that people had accepted these instances when the situation was explained.

The Board noted the report and update.

5. Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)

The Board received report (GTP/02/18) from Steve Wilson, Street Scene and Parks Manager, Braintree District Council and an update from Paul Partridge, Head of Operation, Braintree District Council.

The report provided Members with an end of year update on the delivery of the Football Development Plan (FDP). The Board was reminded that it was a condition of the Football Foundation grant that the Plan was updated annually.

The following issues were highlighted during the update:

- The usage figures had decreased as two local companies had stopped using the facilities. Usage during off-peak periods was still an issue.
- It had been a challenge to engage Great Notley Youth Football Club throughout the year.
- The Artificial Grass Pitch was coming to the end of its 10 year life expectancy and was due to be renewed in 2019/20 which would cost in the region of £125k. Funds had been put aside for this.

During consideration of this item the following points were raised:

- In response to concerns regarding the engagement of Great Notley Youth Football Club, it was clarified that it was a condition of the grant for the home team to be involved in the development plan. Recent discussions with the new chairman of the club had been positive for future engagement and strategic input. The home team continued to be very active and regularly used the facility.
- It was noted that the replacement of the AGP would be done during a period of lower usage to minimise disruption as much as possible.

The report and update were noted.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The Board agreed to meet on a six monthly basis. The date of the next meeting would be agreed in due course.

7. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

That, having reached the view that, in each case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Proposed Adventure Facility Update

The Board considered report (GTP/03/18) from Paul Partridge, Head of Operations.

Resolved

The Board noted the report and the decision not to pursue the proposal at this time.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.30am.

Chairman

		AGENDA ITEM 3
		GTP/04/18
Committee:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD	
Meeting Date:	04 December 2018	
Report:	SITE REPORT	
Enquiries to:	Claire Bunn, Park Manager	

Staffing

The new part time ranger has been appointed and is expected to start in December or January. He will be covering the weekend (Friday to Monday) when there is currently no site-based ranger on site. This is currently one weekend a month. He will also be assisting with park tasks and carrying out some of the Friends of the Flitch Way volunteer days too.

Play Trail and the Park

Further resurfacing works has been completed along the play trail. The roaming rangers used tiger mulch to patch up some of the bridges where play equipment used to be. Contractors were also brought in the redo the surfacing work of the cable way and the chain path. This work has now been complete, but the equipment remains closed during the quiet season to allow for grass seed and turf to take.

As winter approaches the ranger has taken the water play out of action to avoid any damage to the pipe work over the colder weather. The newly painted ducks and whirligigs have also been reinstalled in toddler play and sand play.

The ranger has been completing the autumnal cut back of the hedges and the meadows around the park, but this work had to be cut short due to an issue with the tractor and flail at another site. Two new bridges are due to be installed next week and health and safety checks have shown there is signs on rot in these two existing bridges.

Most of the trim trail has now been removed around the park due to the wooden equipment deteriorating. The play equipment is also continually undergoing maintenance, which involves surfacing work and purchasing new parts.

Visitor Numbers

The summer holidays saw a steady number of visitors visiting the park – just under 60,000 between August to October. The park remains a popular destination for families during the summer holidays. Between August to October there were slight decreases as well as increases in the visitor numbers at the park. Overall this meant the decreases ranged from 1%-4% fall in visitor numbers for these three months. However, due to the increase in the car parking charges the overall car parking income was up by between 9%-37% over the last three months.

When compared with figures from our other country parks. The visitor's numbers are in line with other parks over the same period, although, overall the income figures were better than the other country parks.

Sky Ropes and Zip Line

The visitor numbers for Sky Ropes have decreased over the last few months compared to last year. Last year saw, on average throughout the year, 15% of park visitors using Sky Ropes, this year we are seeing 13% of park visitors using Sky Ropes. During August, September and October Sky Ropes and Sky Ropes Junior has seen nearly 7,000 visitors using the facility.

The number of school bookings that Sky Ropes has received has doubled from last year. This year there was 17 school bookings, which meant just under 500 pupils got to experience Sky Ropes.

The Zip Wire planning application was recommended to be refused at officer level and was then confirmed refused at the planning committee in October. Therefore, the project will not go ahead at the park.

Events

At this time of year, we see a lot of cross-country school races and running events at the park and along the Flitch Way. These continue up until Christmas and in to the New Year. We even have a race on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The site hosted the annual Grey Hound Dog show in August and was well received by members of the public. The solar observing and astronomy events continue to be led by the North Essex Astronomical Society. In October the annual Born 2 Tri duathlon was held in the park.

Welly Wednesdays has now stopped for the winter period, although Messy Mondays continues in the cafes throughout winter.

School visits have now slowed down for the winter period but should start to pick up again once the warmer weather returns.

Flitch Way

Tom, the ranger, has been continuing the volunteer work parties on Tuesdays and Thursdays, mainly along the Flitch Way, but also some work parties at Great Notley Country Park. Work parties have mainly involved clearance work at Start Hill and Dunmow Cutting, along the Flitch Way. The work at the Dunmow Cutting is particularly important due to the important plant species, including Common Spotted Orchids and the occasional Bee Orchid growing along the path sides and the embankments. The volunteers have also completed work at the park involving ditch clearance and their annual maintenance of the willow tunnel near the lakes. The work completed by the volunteers has been up to their usual high standard and we thank them all for their hard work and effort.

	AGENDA ITEM 4
	GTP/05/18
Committee:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD
Meeting Date:	04 December 2018
Report:	ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA
Enquiries to:	Steve Wilson Street Scene & Parks Manager, Braintree District Council

1. INTRODUCTION

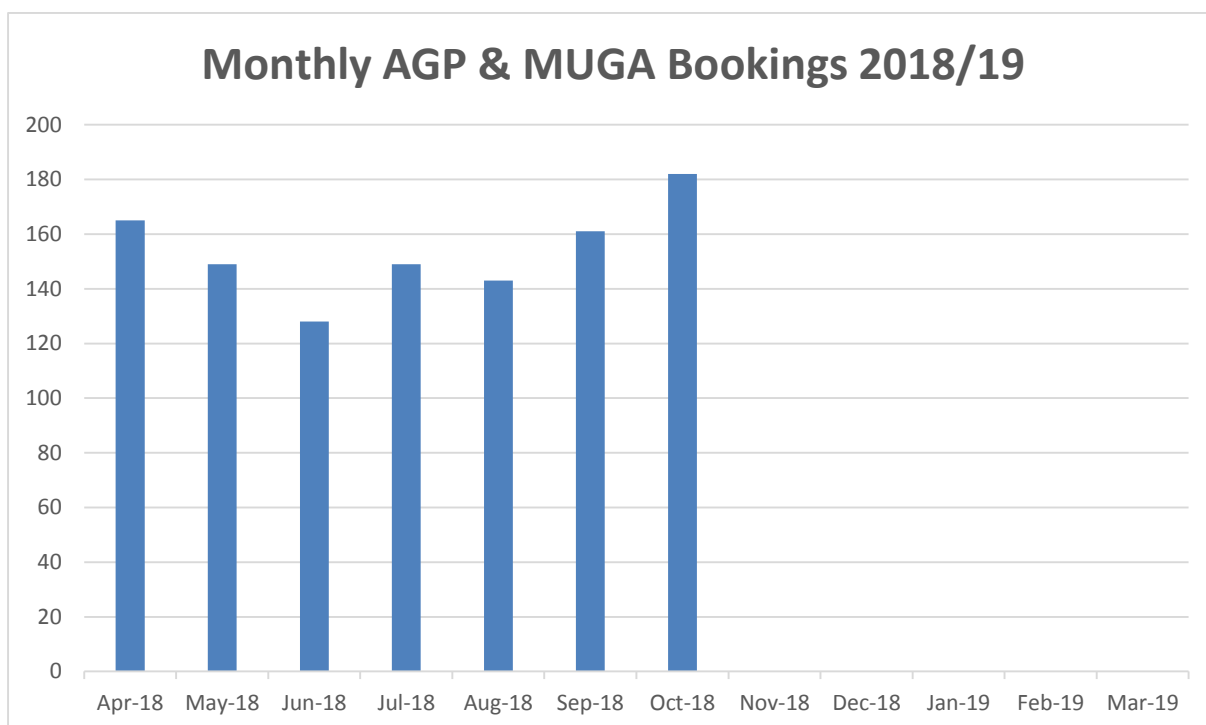
This report provides Members with an update on usage and income from the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park. It covers a 7-month period from 1 April to 30 October 2018.

2. USAGE AND BOOKINGS

The table below shows the number of bookings taken in the first 7 months of the current financial year. There were 1,077 bookings in total - an average of 154 per month; this is down by 140 bookings (13%) or an average of 20 per month compared to the same period last year.

There have been 29 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 Braintree Town Football Academy and Great Notley Youth Football Club), other sporting clubs, a veterinary practice and a public house. Braintree Town Football Academy and Great Notley Youth Football Club account for some 40% of the total bookings.

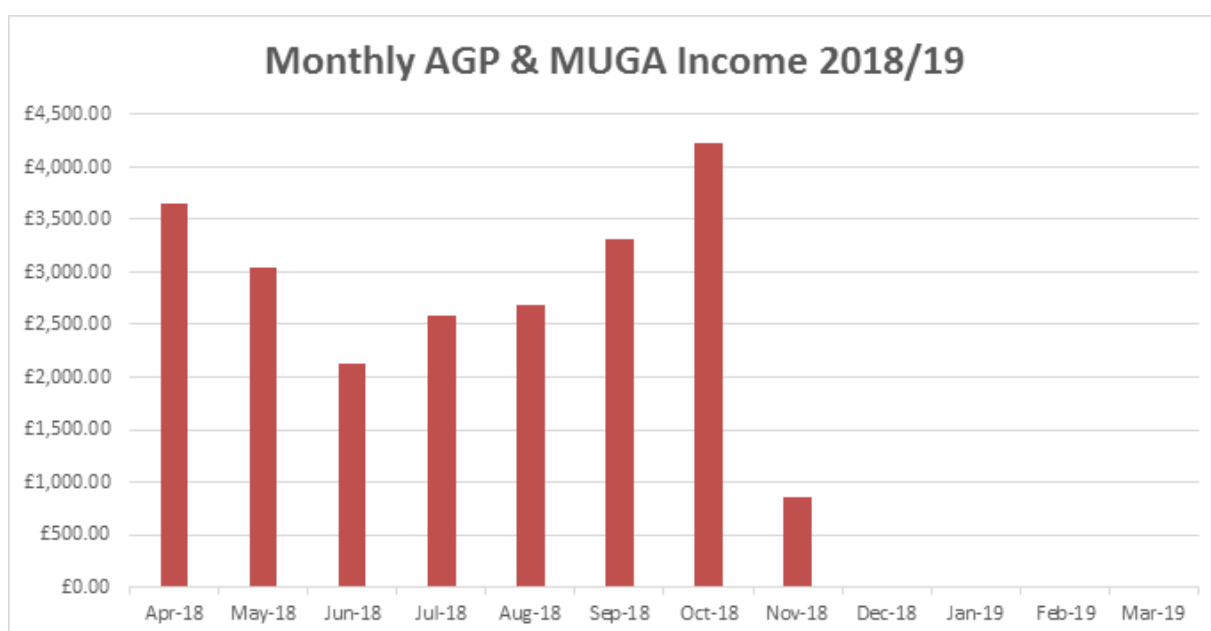
The facility continues to be well used during peak periods (evenings and weekends) when it is virtually full to capacity. This equates to 75% of all bookings, the remainder being made during the off-peak period (daytime Monday to Friday). Off-peak usage has and will continue to be a challenge in terms of the number of bookings.



3. INCOME GENERATION

The income generated from the AGP and MUGA has more or less remained in line with the budget projection for 2018/19 and follows a similar trend to last year. To date we have received £21,700 which compares to £22,850 for the same period last year (5% lower). If this trend continues, we anticipate total income will be in the region of £40,000 which is the breakeven point for the facility.

The table below shows the monthly income received. As expected, there was an income drop during the Summer months compared to that achieved during the Autumn/Winter which is the actual football season.



4. RENEWAL OF THE ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH

As mentioned at the last Board Meeting, the artificial grass pitch (carpet) is due to be replaced in 2019/20, as it will be 10 years old. Since the facility was opened back in 2009, BDC has received £1.5k p.a. from Great Notley Football Club and has itself contributed £18k p.a. to a reserve (sinking) fund. As at March 2019, the value of the reserve will be £155k which can be used to replace the carpet and refurbish the facility. This work will be subject to a competitive tender exercise and will be undertaken during the quieter season (June/July) to minimise disruption to hirers and loss of income from bookings.

5. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the report.

Samir Pandya
Strategy and Policy Manager

20 November 2018