

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