



Essex County Council

Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

13:00	Monday, 03 April 2023	Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB
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For information about the meeting please ask for:

Judith Dignum, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 03330 134579

Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

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

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Livestreaming of meetings

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

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3	Artificial Grass Pitch and Multi-Use Games Area (GNCP/01/23)	9 - 12
4	ECC Operations Update (GNCP/02/23)	13 - 15
5	Date of next meeting To agree a date for the next meeting of the Partnership Board (if required).	
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)

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.

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 2.00pm on Thursday 1 September 2022

Present:

Councillors:

G Butland (Chairman)	Essex County Council
M Durham	Essex County Council
W Schmitt	Braintree District Council

The following officers and advisors were also present in support:

Samir Pandya	Operations Strategy and Policy Manager, Braintree District Council (BDC)
Cherie Root	Corporate Director, BDC
Mark Rowley	Commercial Operations Manager, Essex County Council (ECC)
Lisa Smart	Country Parks Manager, ECC
Judith Dignum	Democratic Services Officer, ECC

1. Election of Chairman

Upon the motion of Councillor Butland, seconded by Councillor Durham and duly carried, it was

Resolved

That Councillor Wendy Schmitt be elected Chairman of the Joint Venture Partnership Board for the Municipal Year to May 2023.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Upon the motion of Councillor Schmitt, seconded by Councillor Durham and duly carried, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Graham Butland be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Joint Venture Partnership Board for the Municipal Year to May 2023.

3. 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 Councillor F Ricci (Braintree District Council, Claire Bunn (Park Manager, Essex County Council) and Paul Partridge (Head of Operations, Braintree District Council).

3. Councillor Butland declared an interest in agenda item 9 (Urgent Business), in that he is a member of Great Notley Parish Council. Minute 9 below refers.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held on 2 December 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Updates on matters arising from that meeting were provided during presentation of the other items on the agenda.

5. Site Report – Great Notley Country Park (GNCP/01/22)

The Board received an update on activity at the Country Park.

The following issues arose from consideration of the report:

- Staff shortages had led to challenges during the year and thanks were expressed to colleagues at Braintree District Council for their help and support during these times. Cover had also been provided by Country Parks team staff drafted in from other sites. Efforts were in hand to increase the level of volunteer activity at Great Notley and all country park sites
- A large-scale project was currently underway to apply for a Countryside Stewardship agreement for all country parks within a five-year timescale.
- Drainage improvements were being considered in order to resolve instances of winter flooding in certain areas of the Park. This was considered preferable to other potential solutions which would incur ongoing maintenance costs. Officers agreed to address the poor condition of the surface at the public footpath entrance to the park from the Pegasus crossing.
- Visitor numbers during the summer appeared to have been lower than in previous years, possibly due to the extremely hot weather. The Sky Ropes attraction (of which management had been transferred to Essex Outdoors) was beginning to recover from its closure during Covid and was now operating on a cost neutral basis.
- An events programme was being built up gradually, with advice being provided from elsewhere in Essex County Council regarding potential areas for success and development.

In response to an issue raised by the Chairman, the Country Parks Manager agreed to investigate the possible replanting of an area where recently planted trees had died due to their unsuitability for the soil. The Chairman

undertook to advise of native species available from a stock held by Braintree District Council.

The report and update were noted.

6. Artificial Grass Pitch and Multi-Use Games Area (GNCP/02/22)

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 to July 2022.

In presenting the report, the Operations Policy and Strategy Manager (BDC) commended the work of the Country Parks Team managed by Lisa Smart and requested that his thanks be conveyed to them.

The following issues were noted during the update:

- Members suggested contacting Councillor Ricci regarding community safety issues, and also concerning the loss of groups using the MUGA following the collapse of Community Iron. It was important to continue the successful work with disabled young people and girls in view of the popularity of women's football.
- There was nothing to report regarding the future of the building formerly used by PARC.

The report and update were noted.

7. Fishing at Great Notley Country Park

The Board received a verbal report on proposals for the future of management of fishing at the country park through the creation of a fishing club. Members expressed their support for the proposal, which they considered a proactive way of addressing issues of illegal fishing,

The Board agreed that work to establish a fishing club at the country park should be progressed, with an update to be given at the next meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold a further meeting of the Board towards the end of 2022/ beginning of 2023, availability to be canvassed by the Democratic Services Officer.

9. Urgent Business

The Chairman agreed to consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that there was a need to update on an issue that could not wait until the next meeting.

Provision of Allotments at Great Notley Country Park

(Councillor Butland declared an interest in this item – minute 3 above refers).

The Operations Policy and Strategy Manager (BDC) updated the Board on the latest position regarding the provision of allotments for the parish of Great Notley on land within the Country Park (as supported by the Board at its previous meeting in December 2020). Although the land originally earmarked for the allotments had proved unsuitable, a new site near the football pitches had now been identified and was being progressed. The result of a soil survey was awaited and would determine whether or not it would be possible to proceed to the pre-planning stage. Legal input would eventually be required from ECC, BDC and the Parish Council to facilitate transfer of the land to the Parish Council.

In response to a question, it was noted that there was a good water supply to the site.

The update was noted.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.10pm.

**Chairman
3 April 2023**

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: 3 April 2023	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 from 1 April – July 2022.

Members are asked to note the report.

**GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING
3 APRIL 2023 AT CAUSEWAY HOUSE, BRAINTREE
ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA**

1. INTRODUCTION

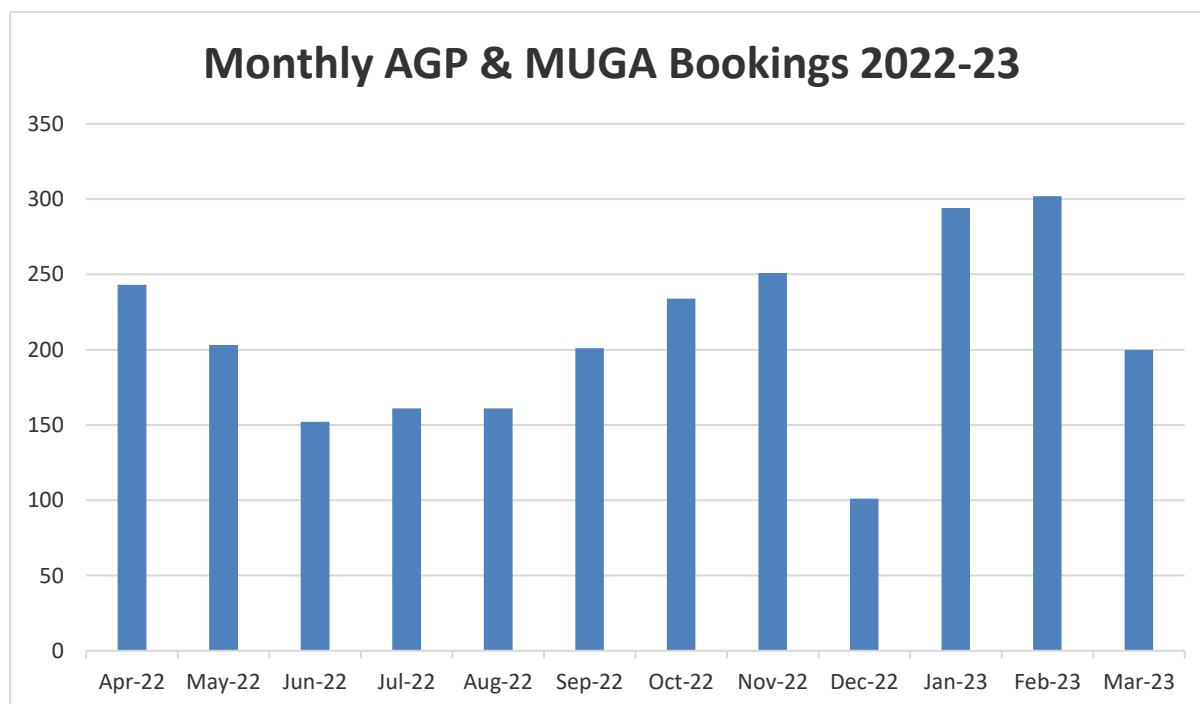
This report provides Members with an update on usage and income from the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park. It covers from 1 April 2022 – 17th March 2023.

2. USAGE AND BOOKINGS

The graphs below show the number of bookings in each month from 1 April 22 – 17th March 2023. There were 2,480 bookings in total an average of 206 per month.

There have been 27 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 36.77% of the total bookings.

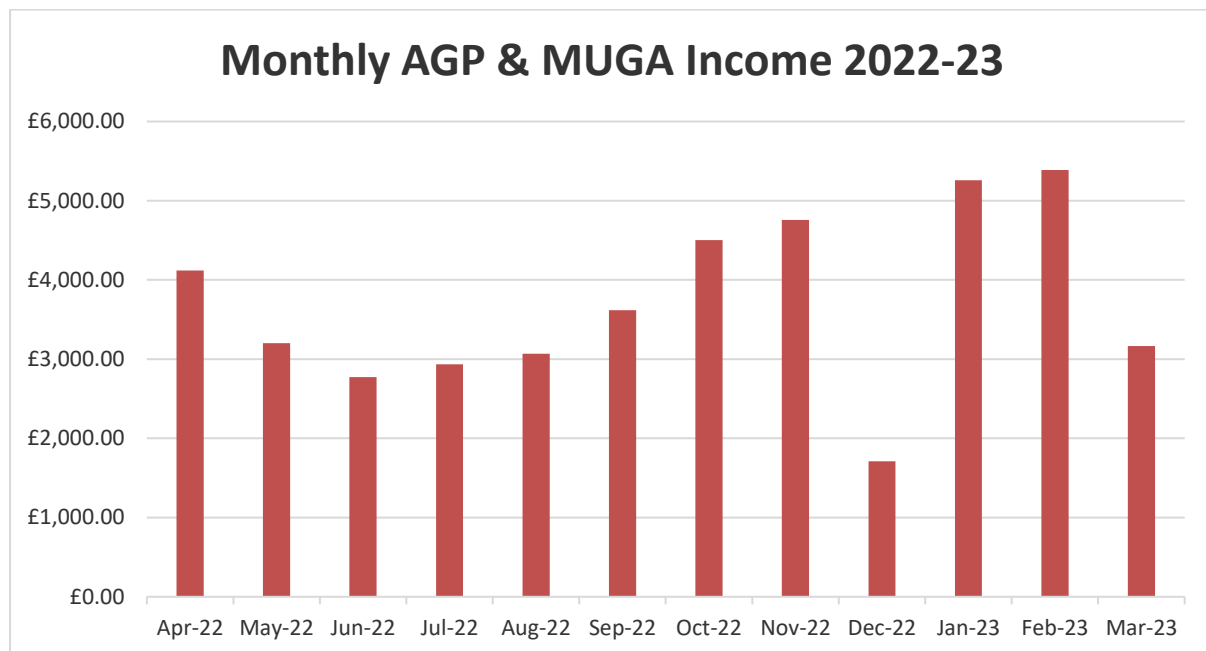
The facility continues to be well used during peak periods (evenings and weekends) when it is virtually full to capacity. This equates to 94.31% of all bookings, the remainder being made during the off-peak period (daytime Monday to Friday). Off-peak usage has and will continue to be a challenge in terms 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 17th March 2023, we had received £44,498.

The graph below shows the monthly income received:



4. UPDATE ON OTHER ISSUES

Site for Allotments

In September 2022, a detailed soil survey was commissioned with Genco to assess the suitability of a piece of unused land adjacent to the football pitches for allotments. In October 2022 Genco submitted a report which concluded that the land was contaminated (mainly building rubble), and 0.75m depth of soil throughout the site would have to be removed and replaced if the land was going to be used for allotments.

The cost of removal of the soil and replacement with imported topsoil was prohibitive so both BDC and the Gt Notley Parish Council decided to abandon the site as a potential for allotments. Both parties are now investigating another piece of land in the parish which owned by BDC which may be suitable for allotments.

5. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the report.

Samir Pandya
Operations Strategy and Policy Manager

20 March 2023

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

Phil Muire (Rayne Youth)
A Wright Dunmow Utd
Benjamin Bailey
Ben Crow (Flitch Utd)
Bocking Vets
Braintree Churches
Community Iron Group
Flitch Sixes
Great Notley YFC
Gt Leighs YFC
Dunmow United Lions
Steve Tilsed
MNF
MRFA
Neil Chambers (GNFC)
Great Notley Lions
Rayne Youths
RDC
Ross Blackery
Silver End United
Szymon Roda
Braintree FC
Adam Paris
Flitch United
Ipswich Town Foundation
Witham Town
Wayne Edwards

Agenda Item 4
GNCP/02/22

Report title: ECC Operations update – 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: 3 April 2023	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

There have been a few additions to the team, including 2 x new Park Operations Assistants (POAs). Jenny started at the beginning of this year, and we will be welcoming Spencer in a few weeks' time, after he had a successful interview last week. Our Park Manager job-share, Steff, also returns to work this week after being off on maternity leave.

3. The Country Park

We have been able to complete a variety of clearance work tasks around the park, with the help of a variety of volunteer groups. Our Ranger, Tom, has completed the annual meadow and hedgerow cut back, both at Great Notley Country Park and at some of ECC's other sites. Car park, fencing and footpath repairs have also been carried out throughout the winter period.

Repairs have been completed on the play equipment in a timely manner in order to reduce the number of pieces that are closed down at any one time. The decision has been made to remove one of the waterplay pieces, and we plan to do this when the ground has become harder but before the six-week summer holidays.

4. Sky Ropes

Sky Ropes will be open over the Easter holidays and will continue to be open at the weekends and during the school holidays after Easter. As updated previously, this facility is managed by ECC colleagues in 'Essex Outdoors', ECC's outdoor education service.

5. Events

Our third-party events continue with Parkrun, Junior Parkrun, the Greyhound Walks and North Essex Astronomy Group having regular bookings at the park. We've also had several races along the Flitch Way.

We are working with the Events team to attract more third-party events to the park, including a regular family fun day over the summer period. The Events team have produced Christmas and Easter trails for younger children and their families to enjoy during the school holidays.

6. Flitch Way

Clearance work has continued along the Flitch Way with the help of the Friends of the Flitch Way group. Recently, our Ranger has been trained to use a MEWP (mobile elevated work platform), mainly for tree work. Our Ranger has been working along the Flitch Way with the wider service's Roaming Ranger to complete tree health and safety work using the MEWP over the last four weeks, with one more week to go next week (w/c 27/03).

7. Volunteers

The Friends of the Flitch Way volunteer group have continued with their twice weekly meet up with one of our Rangers along the Flitch Way, although this did have to be reduced to once a week during the weeks whilst the tree safety works were completed. They have mainly been cutting back and clearing large amounts of vegetation along the Flitch Way, clearing vegetation at and in the lakes at Great Notley Country Park to re-establish views across the lake, and working on the willow tunnel at the park.

We have welcomed Abberton Rural Training (ART) apprenticeships for the first time this year. They will complete their six-month training programme at the end of March and have completed several projects whilst on the site twice a week with their team leaders. These tasks have involved clearing a ditch line, clearing vegetation around the lakes and the bowl area of the park, planting spring bulbs for next year, wildflower seed spreading, coppicing work, hedge gapping up, and managing the wildflower banks, amongst other tasks.

We have also had a few ad-hoc volunteer groups including MITIE (ECC's FM contractor), ECC's Emergency Planning and Resilience Team, ECC's Legal

Services and Gridserve. Tasks have including raking the wildflower banks, litter picking, and pond and ditch clearance. We will be welcoming the ECC Emergency Planning and Resilience Team back for another volunteer task later this week (w/c 20/03).

We thank them all for their commitment and hard work over the last few months.