



Essex County Council

# Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

<b>15:00</b>	<b>Wednesday, 02 December 2020</b>	<b>Online Meeting</b>
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The meeting will be open to the public via telephone or online. Details about this are on the next page. Please do not attend County Hall as no one connected with this meeting will be present.

**For information about the meeting please ask for:**

Judith Dignum, Democratic Services Officer

**Telephone:** 033301 34579

**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.

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held via online video conferencing.

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to 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.

### How to take part in/watch the meeting:

**Participants:** (Officers and Members) will have received a personal email with their login details for the meeting. Contact the Democratic Services Officer if you have not received your login.

### Members of the public:

#### Online:

You will need to visit the ECC Democracy YouTube Channel

<https://tinyurl.com/yynr2tpd> where you will be able watch live or view the meeting at a later date.

## 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.

The agenda is also available on the Essex County Council website, [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk) From the Home Page, click on 'Running the council', then on 'How decisions are made', then 'council meetings calendar'. Finally, select the relevant committee from the calendar of meetings.

Please note that an audio recording may be made of the meeting – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded.

		<b>Pages</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest</b>	<b>4 - 4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes: 5 February 2020</b>	<b>5 - 7</b>
	To agree as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Partnership Board which took place on 5 February 2020.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Provision of an Allotment at Great Notley Country Park (GTP/03/20)</b>	<b>8 - 12</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Report (GTP/04/20)</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Artificial Grass Pitch and Multi-Use Games Area (GTP/05/20)</b>	<b>16 - 19</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
	To agree a date for the next meeting of the Joint Venture Partnership Board.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Urgent Business</b>	
	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.**

## **8 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.

**Committee:** Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board

**Enquiries to:** Judith Dignum, 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)

Councillor M Platt  
Councillor S Walsh  
Councillor G Butland  
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 11.00am on Wednesday 5 February 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:

Laura Boreham	Business Development Lead, Culture and Green Spaces
Samir Pandya	Strategy & Policy Manager, Braintree District Council
Paul Partridge	Head of Operations, Braintree District Council
Judith Dignum	Democratic Services Officer, Essex County Council

**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
3. There were no declarations of interest.
  1. Dee O'Rourke Head of Culture and Green Spaces

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board held on 31 May 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Site Report**

The Board received report (GTP/04/18) from Claire Bunn, Park Manager.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- It was likely that the new member of staff would be starting in January 2019.
- Maintaining the Play Equipment was an on-going task. Ideas for improvements to the Water Play area for next year were being considered as it was showing signs of wear and tear.
- Visitor numbers were slightly down across all of the country parks and this was consistent with the particularly hot weather during the summer and the limited shady areas at the Park.

- The Zip Wire would no longer be situated at Great Notley Country Park due to refusal of the planning application by the Planning Committee.
- There were a number of events held at the Park and there would be an Events team next year.
- Building Developments along the Flich Way were being monitored regarding any potential mitigating effects or incursions on the land.

During consideration of the report the following points were made:

- A question was raised regarding the litter collection policy at the Park, particularly at the Lake end of the Park. In response it was reported that the general policy across the country parks was to limit the number of bins, due to the issues caused by wasps and birds, and encourage people to take their litter home. Along the main play trail litter was collected daily, however at the Lake end this was done weekly, although collections were more frequent during peak periods. Concern was raised regarding the weekly collection and it was requested that this be considered further by the Chairman.
- With regard to possible land encroachments along the Flich Way due to developments, it was reported that this could be reported to the Land Registry and noted for future searches on those particular properties.

It was **Agreed** that:

1. The Chairman, as Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste, would give further consideration to the issue raised regarding bins and litter collection at Great Notley Country Park.
2. The contact details of the officer at the Land Registry would be provided to the Country Parks Team.

The Board noted the report and update.

#### **4. Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)**

The Board received report (GTP/05/18) from Steve Wilson, Street Scene and Parks Manager, Braintree District Council and an update from Samir Pandya, Strategy and Policy Manager, Braintree District Council.

The report provided 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 covering the period from 1 April to 30 October 2018.

The following issues were noted during the update:

- The total number of bookings was over 1,000 but down overall on this period last year by 13%.
- There had been 29 different organisations who had regularly booked the facilities however, Braintree Town Football Academy and Great Notley Youth Football Club accounted for around 40% of the total bookings. The facility was well used at peak times in the evenings and weekends.

- The income generation from the facilities remained in line with the same period last year (5% lower) and if this trend continued the facility would achieve breakeven point.
- The Artificial Grass Pitch requires replacement in 2019/20 as it will be 10 years old. There is funding for this in a reserve fund and the work would be subject to a tender exercise. The work would be undertaken in the quieter period to minimise disruption.

During consideration of this item the following points were raised:

- In response to a question regarding usage and engagement, it was reported that there were still some difficulties getting Great Notley Youth Football Club engaged in the Strategy and this was a key issue as they were technically the home team and therefore there was an expectation by the Football Association that they would be engaged. It was hoped that a meeting with the Chairman of the Club would open discussions.
- There had been some anti-social behaviour during some of the evening booking which had resulted in one person being banned from the facility. This was an issue that staff were mindful of.
- It was noted that Braintree Town Football Club were looking for a new home.
- Concern was raised regarding flooding of the under-pass in wet weather conditions. This was a particular concern when groups of youths were crossing the dual-carriageway to access the facilities due to the under-pass being flooded across the entire width. This issue had been raised via Member Enquiries and via the Parish Council. The Chairman agreed to escalate this issue to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure.

It was **Agreed** that:

1. The Chairman would raise the issue of flooding of the under-pass, blocking access to the Country Park and its facilities, with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure.

The report and update were noted.

## **5. 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.

There being no urgent business the meeting closed at 11.30am.

**Chairman**

<b>Report title:</b> Provision of an Allotment at Great Notley Country Park	
<b>Report to:</b> Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board	
<b>Report author:</b> Paul Partridge, Head of Operations, Braintree District Council	
<b>Date:</b> 2 December 2020	<b>For:</b> Consideration
<b>Enquiries to:</b> democratic.services@essex.gov.uk	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek the Board's approval to allocate two areas of uncultivated (unused) open space at the Country Park for allotments for the Parish of Great Notley, as set out in the report and appendix below.



**GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
2 DECEMBER 2020**

**Provision of an Allotment at Great Notley Country Park**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING NOTE**

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

**2. BACKGROUND**

Braintree District Council has been working with Great Notley Parish Council (GNPC) to identify suitable land within the parish boundary that could be allocated for use as allotments. This has proved somewhat challenging as the availability and location of land suitable for this purpose is very limited within the village envelope.

In recent times there has been an upsurge in the demand for allotments as they play a vital role in enabling people to grow fresh, cheap food, whilst reducing food miles. At the same time, they provide opportunities for people to remain healthy and active, meet other people and share knowledge, information and the produce they have grown, helping to develop more cohesive communities.

Within Great Notley there is currently a waiting list of 40 residents wanting an allotment and demand will continue to grow as more and more people recognise the considerable environmental benefits that having an allotment can provide.

**3. LEGAL CONTEXT**

Under the 'The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908' (SHAA) councils have a duty to provide allotments where there is a demand. The Local Government Act 1972 provides that the functions under the Allotments Acts 1908-1950 (including the SHAA) shall be provided by a Parish Council in a parished area.

Whilst Braintree District Council (BDC) does not have a legal duty to provide allotments within the Gt Notley Parish, it can allocate and let land acquired/designated for another purpose, commonly known as a non-statutory allotment site, of which the Council has a number across its District in addition to statutory sites. The main difference between the two is that statutory sites which are acquired for the purpose of allotments are legally protected, whilst non-statutory sites that have been acquired for other purposes and are being used as allotments are not.

**4. LAND AT GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK**

As part of the research into land that might be suitable for an allotment site, BDC in discussion with Essex County Council (ECC) has identified two areas of land within the boundary of the Country Park (see Appendix 1). These are currently uncultivated and unused and have the potential to be redeveloped. The location of the land is not ideal given the distance between the access, location of the car park and route through the Country Park, however, in the absence of any other suitable land, it is the best option currently available and one that ECC is happy to support. Following a site meeting with the Parish

**GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
2 DECEMBER 2020**

**Provision of an Allotment at Great Notley Country Park**

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Council representatives it has been decided that Site B is the preferred location for development.

The land forms part of the existing Country Park Lease with ECC and it will be necessary to surrender it with suitable access rights. In addition, a restrictive covenant not to use the land other than as open space will need to be put in place. Further legal advice and guidance will be sought on this issue as the project progresses including the option of entering into a long-term lease for the land or disposing of it to GNPC.

A planning application to change the use of the land will also be required. In addition, under the original Covenant for the Country Park with Countryside Properties plc, their consent will be required to change the landscaping scheme. Further discussions will take place with ECC as to whether any other consents/formalities are needed, given the land has been formally designated as part of the Country Park.

**5. THE WAY FORWARD**

Subject to the JVPB agreeing in principle to the land being allocated for use as allotments, it is proposed that detailed discussions take place with GNPC on moving the project forward including:

- I. Undertaking a soil survey to assess the suitability of the land.
- II. Commissioning a Feasibility Study to assess how the land can be developed as allotments including the cost of providing the infrastructure and full site preparation to enable the Parish Council to allocate plots to residents (tenants).
- III. Considering what funding opportunities there are from the Parish Council to support the overall delivery of the project.
- IV. Whether BDC wishes to contribute any funding to the project given that it would directly support and achieve a number of the Council's own aims and objectives within its Corporate Strategy. This is in line with similar projects it has supported in the past, especially where it has transferred rural facilities to parish councils to directly manage and maintain including allotments, car parks, public conveniences and village halls etc.

**6. CONCLUSION**

There is clearly a genuine and growing demand within the GNPC boundary for allotments. Whilst the statutory responsibility for providing these rests with the Parish Council, BDC does have the option of being able to allocate and let land for this purpose, along with a financial contribution to support the delivery of the project as outlined above. In the absence of any other suitable land being identified, it would seem sensible to explore the suitability, feasibility and costs as set out in Section 5 above.

**7. RECOMMENDATION**

Members of the Joint Venture Partnership Board are RECOMMENDED to:

- (1) Approve in principle that the land identified in Appendix 1 be allocated for the provision of allotments for the parish of Great Notley.

**GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
2 DECEMBER 2020**

**Provision of an Allotment at Great Notley Country Park**

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- (2) Support further discussions taking place between ECC/BDC and GNCPC as set out in Section 5 above.

**Paul Partridge  
Head of Operations**

**19 November 2020**

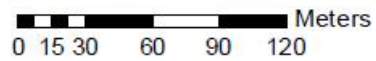
Provision of an Allotment at Great Notley Country Park

Title: Potential Allotment Sites at Discovery Centre



Date: 12 Nov 2020

Author: Web AppBuilder for ArcGIS



Scale: 1:2,717



<b>Report title:</b> Site Report	
<b>Report to:</b> Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board	
<b>Report author:</b> Claire Bunn, Park Development Manager	
<b>Date:</b> 2 December 2020	<b>For:</b> Information and Discussion
<b>Enquiries to:</b> democratic.services@essex.gov.uk	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To receive the latest update relating to Great Notley Country Park, as set out in the attached report.

## Site Report

### Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board Meeting November 2020

#### Staffing

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic we have restricted the numbers of staff on site, with staff rotating between working on site and working from home, in order to reduce numbers in the workplace.

Two staff members from the Sky Ropes team have also been assisting with the park's day to day duties – again on a rota basis - whilst Sky Ropes has remained closed due to Covid. They have become valuable members of the team over the last few months.

The roaming rangers have lost one of their members of staff, as they moved on to somewhere new, and we will monitor the situation to see whether this has an impact on the park.

#### Play Trail and the Park

During the first lockdown the roaming rangers continued to visit the site and complete all the essential grass cutting and strimming tasks. This is a huge task, as it involves cutting along all the rides and pathways and strimming around all the park furniture, such as signposts and benches etc. and needs to be done throughout the growing season.

We were very pleased to have received some capital funding to resurface sections of the bridleway. The work was completed towards the end of October and most of this path is now accessible through the wetter parts of the year. Ideally, we would like to resurface more sections of the bridleway and other areas of pathway, particularly the one in the mid-section of the play trail. However, this would be dependent on more funding.

Our ranger has been completing the autumnal cut back of the hedges and the meadows around the park. October has, again, been a very wet month, which has hindered the work, along with having to share equipment with other sites. There is still more hedge flailing to be done at the park and on areas of our other sites, including the Flich Way. Tree work is ongoing on site and we currently have several trees needing to be bat assessed before any work can be carried out on them. Hopefully, this will be done this weekend and we will take action on the trees depending on the results of the surveys. Any work will to be carried out will be completed by a mixture of on-site staff, the roaming rangers and contractors.

Several play equipment pieces are currently out of action, mainly due to maintenance issues. These include the climbing forest and climbing frame, the suspension bridge, the jack straws and the zip line. As the play equipment ages the maintenance costs increase with each piece, which is causing pressure on our budget. We are looking at sources of capital funding to help with these costs, as well exploring the feasibility of replacing the safety surfaces.

#### Visitor Numbers

The park was closed due to government regulations for a section of the first lockdown. Whilst the car park gates remained locked many people walked into the park via the underpass or the Tesco's entrance. Once the parks reopened at the start of summer our visitor numbers steadily increased.

## Site Report

We made the decision to keep the overflow carpark closed over the summer and autumn period in order to reduce the number of people on site at any one time and to reduce queues at the car parking machines and toilets open to the public. The number of toilets in use has been reduced to allow for social distancing. Although we were busy throughout the school holidays our numbers were lower than previous years, due to the fact that we kept the overflow car park closed.

During this second lockdown we have seen an increase in visitors during the week, as people use the park to meet a friend or family member, and to enjoy a coffee from the café!

### **Café**

The Skylark café has been opened and is now run by ECC staff. We have two part time staff to run the café, with casual staff to help in the busier periods. Currently the café is only offering a takeaway service but we hope to be able to offer a seated service once the pandemic eases.

### **Sky Ropes**

As mentioned, Sky Ropes has been closed in response to the pandemic; however, we plan to reopen it once the pandemic eases.

### **Events**

All third-party events have been cancelled either by ECC or by the third-party organisers themselves, although some - such as virtual 5k races - are being held as virtual events, so that their charities are still able to raise some much-needed income.

Over the October half term, the Sky Ropes team also ran a Halloween trail, which was very popular.

### **Flitch Way and Volunteers**

We haven't had many volunteer work parties this year due to Covid, but the volunteers have been as keen as ever to get out along the Flitch Way. The work parties started back up again, briefly, in Autumn where the volunteers carried out their annual cutting back along the Dunmow Cutting of the Flitch Way. The work parties had to be organised in a slightly different way to allow for social distancing and smaller groups to meet government guidelines and the cleaning of tools after each use. We expect the lower number of work parties this year may have an impact on the maintenance of the Flitch Way, as the volunteers do such a fantastic job in assisting the ranger to keep on top of ever-growing vegetation.



<b>Report title:</b> Artificial Grass Pitch and Multi-Use Games Area	
<b>Report to:</b> Great Notley Country Park Joint Venture Partnership Board	
<b>Report author:</b> Samir Pandya, Operations Strategy and Policy Manager, Braintree District Council	
<b>Date:</b> 2 December 2020	<b>For:</b> Consideration
<b>Enquiries to:</b> democratic.services@essex.gov.uk	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 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, as set out in the attached report and appendix covering the seven-month period from 1 April to 31 October 2020.



**GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK  
JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING - 2 DECEMBER 2020  
ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA**

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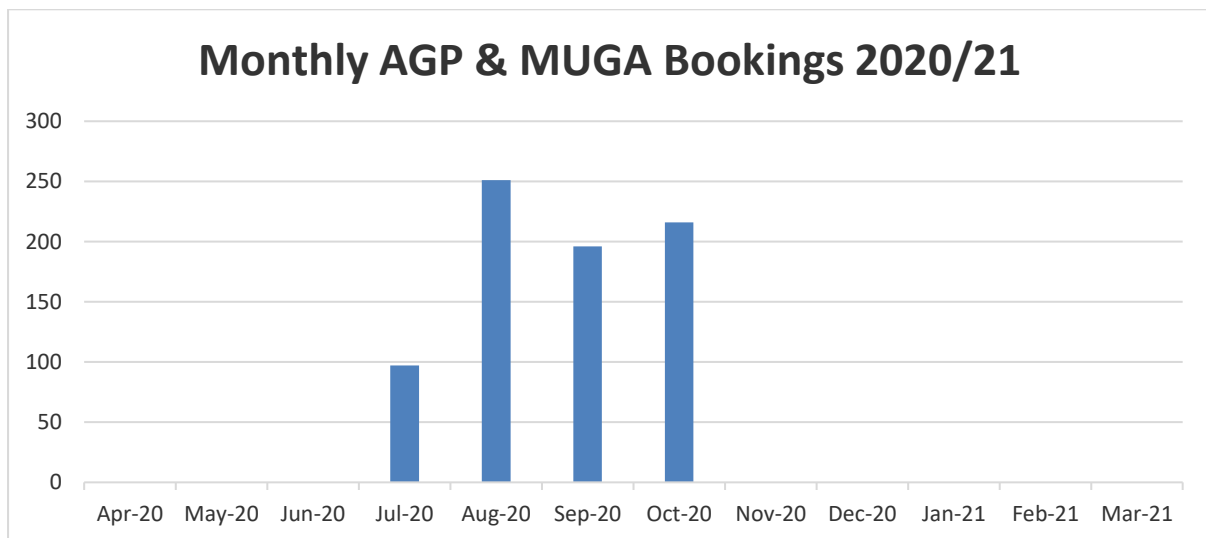
**1. INTRODUCTION**

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 2020 to 31 October 2020.

**2. USAGE AND BOOKINGS**

It will come as no surprise this year that the impact of the lockdown measures introduced by the Government in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic have impacted adversely on the usage of the facility and income generated. During the first three months of the new financial year the facility was closed, with bookings down by 24% and a reduction of gross income circa. £9k compared to the same period in the previous year.

The graph below shows the number of monthly bookings up to the end of October 2020. There were 760 bookings in total over the seven month period - an average of 108 per month; down by 218 bookings or an average of 31 per month compared to the same period in 2019-20.



The facility was used by 39 different organisations/individuals both in and outside of the Braintree District, ranging from adult and children’s football clubs including Braintree Town Football Academy and Great Notley Youth Football Club, and other sporting clubs – **see Appendix 1** for full list.

**3. ANNUAL INCOME**

At Quarter 2 the total annual income for the facility was projected to be £25k. However, the second national lockdown, implemented on 5 November, saw the facility close again resulting in further loss of income. Assuming the facility re-opens on 2 December (when the lockdown is due to end) and remains open until 31 March 2021, the total projected income is now expected to be £21.5k, which is £20.5k less than budgeted (£42k). However, there may be further national lockdowns which would obviously have a detrimental impact on income.

We recognise that the above is an exceptional situation and had it been a normal trading year, the projected income would have been under-achieved by approx. £7k as has been the case over the past 18 months. We have therefore sought to address this with a budget bid to reduce the actual income going forward from the current budget of £42k to £35k from 2021/22, subject to Cabinet and Council approval in February 2021.

#### **4. FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Last year we agreed a two year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Community Iron (CI), the community charity of Braintree Town Football Club, to help deliver the aims and objectives of the annual Football Development Plan (FDP) for BDC.

The FDP aims to provide additional opportunities for using the AGP. CI and BDC meet regularly to review the Plan. Despite all of the challenges of Covid-19, CI were able to organise and implement activities in July, August and September and these are detailed below.

- Walking Football for Senior Citizens (4 sessions with a total of 40 participants)
- Soccer and Activity Camps for Children (13 sessions with over 90 participants)

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

That Members note the report.

Samir Pandya  
Operations Strategy and Policy Manager

20 November 2020

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

1	A.Wright (Dunmow Utd)
2	Adam Roach (Silver End YFC)
3	Athleisure
4	Benjamin Bailey
5	Blackmore Rovers
6	Braintree Churches
7	Braintree Town FC Academy
8	Braintree Town YFC
9	Braintree Walking Football
10	Cameron Hope
11	Daniel Clyde
12	Gosfield Vets
13	Great Notley YFC
14	Gt Leighs AFC
15	Gt Leighs YFC
16	Howard Dodge
17	Joseph Reeve
18	Josh Pridmore
19	Kevin Storey
20	Lyons Ladies - MUGA
21	Mark Dempsey/Sporting 77
22	Matt Robinson
23	Micheal Goodman
24	Mike Tilsted
25	MRFA
26	Neil Chambers
27	Nick Eyre
28	Notley Green Lyons
29	P. Parsons
30	Polish Football
31	Rachael Demby
32	Rayne Youths
33	RDC
34	Ross Blackery
35	Russell Pryke
36	S.Panks
37	Silver End United
38	The Inflatables
39	Triconnex