

Report of the Assistant Director, Sport & Leisure Service to the meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee to be held on 26 June 2014.

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Subject:

Bowls Clubs in the Bradford South Area

Summary statement:

The Council's Executive has identified the Parks & Green Spaces Service to report to Area Committees through the devolution agenda.

This report highlights and details all the Bowls Clubs and their facilities within the Bradford South Area and also includes the level of maintenance provided by the Parks & Green Spaces Service.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Environment and Waste Management



1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council's Executive has identified the Parks & Green Spaces Service to report to Area Committees through the devolution agenda.

This report highlights and details all the Bowls Clubs within the Bradford South Area and also outlines the basis on which the Parks & Green Spaces service delivers its maintenance schedules in relation to all clubs.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Parks & Green Spaces section sits in the Sport and Leisure Service, which is part of the Environment & Sport Department. Its main function is the management of, and grounds maintenance to, the District's parks, open spaces and woodlands.

Within this remit the department is responsible for the maintenance of all council owned bowling greens and within the Bradford South Area there are seven clubs playing on a total of nine greens:-

- Oakenshaw Bowls Club, Victoria Park, Oakenshaw – Wyke (2 greens)
- Wyke Bowls Club, Wyke Recreation Ground – Wyke (1 green)
- Wibsey Bowls Club, Wibsey Park – Wibsey (2 greens)
- Harold Park Bowls Club, Harold Park – Royds (1 green)
- Asa Briggs Bowls Club, Asa Briggs Park – Queensbury (1 green)
- Russell Hall Bowls Club, Russell Hall Park – Queensbury (1 green)
- Brackenhill Bowls Club, Brackenhill Park – Great Horton (1 green)

Some clubs, such as Wibsey, have a very strong membership with over 100 people and run a number of teams whilst other clubs are less supported such as Brackenhill Park who have around 35 members.

Overall the Bradford South greens are highly rated within the crown green calendar, with two of its clubs, Asa Briggs and Wyke, playing in the Premier League and hosting fixtures against rival teams from neighbouring authorities such as Leeds, Kirklees and Calderdale.

There are many competitions throughout the season which clubs can enter as well as the normal league fixtures and there are also competitions that are run for teams or individual members.

In general the season commences during the first week of April and finishes at the end of October, although if the autumn is mild and dry some clubs do continue playing as long as the weather allows.

The Parks & Green Spaces Service always liaises with the clubs with a view to agreeing dates when the maintenance of the greens will commence in line with the planned fixtures and a 'final cut' date is always agreed, although, as mentioned above, some clubs do like to extend the season by playing if the weather allows.

2.2 Each bowling green has at least one pavilion for the use of its members, however, in some cases there are more than one facility, for example, Oakenshaw Park has both a bowls and veterans pavilion and Wibsey Park has a bowls, veteran and ladies pavilion.

During the winter season most of the facilities are still in use with the clubs meeting regularly to hold whist drives or domino games for their members. In addition to this, separate veterans clubs also use the facilities for similar activities.

The Parks & Green Spaces Service has the overall responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings and pavilions and this can become quite costly due to attacks of vandalism, although vandalism on bowls pavilions is fortunately rare in Bradford South. All of the clubs are key holders for each of their facilities and are responsible for the opening and securing of the premises and the reporting, to the area parks manager, of any damage or problems.

Some clubs are very pro-active and will undertake small areas of maintenance themselves such as small scale horticultural works including the planting of flowers/plants, general gardening of areas and the painting of benches and the installation of scoring shelters, all at their own expense.

2.3 Due to budget pressures the service has had to reduce its general maintenance specifications and a reduced mowing frequency has been in operation over the last few years. This has resulted in all greens receiving a reduced weekly frequency of 2 cuts, down from the previously specified 3. However, where possible, the service does try to offer extra assistance to clubs with green maintenance if there is a specific high profile game or cup fixture but this is subject to other operational demands at the time.

The reduced level of maintenance has created a high level of concern amongst some bowls clubs as they have received mixed comments from visiting teams in relation to the playing surface. To this end, a number of clubs have expressed an interest in carrying out a number of additional grass cuts themselves.

Wyke bowls club, who were recently promoted into the Premier League, have their own green mower and do carry out additional cuts in addition to the 2 cuts the parks teams provide and Asa Briggs recently purchased a mower to do the same. The extra works at both of these clubs is done in agreement with the area parks manager and is scheduled so as to provide benefit to the club and not to cause conflict with maintenance schedules.

Due to the resources available the Parks & Green Spaces Service do encourage clubs to carry out any small maintenance/development tasks that they can accommodate with their members so long as the scope of the works are in agreement with all parties and are covered under the H&S guidelines.

2.4 The staffing and fleet/plant allocation to maintain all the bowling greens within the Bradford South Area during the summer period is: -

2 x grounds maintenance operatives
1 x vehicle with trailer attachment
2 x Dennis fine turf mowers
Assorted peripheral small plant and hand tools

In addition to the above maintenance remit the staff also undertake all other fine turf works in the area along with the maintenance of Bradford Park Avenue football stadium at Horsfall playing fields.

The general seasonal maintenance schedules for bowling greens consists of the following:-

Spring – All greens scarified, edged, gullies cleaned, spring/summer feed applied, moss killer applied, general patching repairs and cutting.

Summer – Mowing twice weekly, edging greens, general repairs and selective weed killer applications.

Autumn – All greens scarified and spiked/hollow tined, over seeded and given autumn/winter feed.

Winter – scarified (although dependant upon weather conditions).

There are also other maintenance tasks that would be carried out throughout the year by the general maintenance teams which would consist of, weed killing, hand weeding and hedge cutting.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 A number of bowls clubs within the Bradford South Area have previously applied for grant funding (or have been awarded some 106 money) with a view to improving or enhancing their facility for the benefit of its users and the local community.

Some of the successful awards are:-

Asa Briggs
Section 106 - security fencing and benches
Community Chest – scoring shelter and improvements to pavilion facilities

Oakenshaw Park
Community Chest – paint for interior of pavilion

Russell Hall Park
Community Chest – litter bins, hand rail and 3 scoring shelters

Wibsey Park
Ward funding – painting of pavilions and new additional benches around greens

Wyke Recreation Ground
Ward funding – new hose pipe and scoring shelter

It is asked that future consideration should be given to other funding applications from all bowls clubs if the request is to enhance the facility and the scope of the application is outside of the normal maintenance service agreement that is presently provided by the Parks & Green Spaces service.

- 3.2 Each facility is very well used by the bowls clubs and the local veterans groups in both summer and winter alike. However, there is occasion when the facilities are used by the wider community, and, in some cases, the facilities can become a ‘hub’ of community activity.

In addition to the bowlers and veterans the facilities are used for Neighbourhood Forum’s, ‘Friends of Group’ meetings, public consultations, gala days and Police Contact Points.

Historically, bowls clubs have provided the local community with a central regular meeting point for both men and women long before community centres were developed, which has promoted community interaction and support to reduce areas of social isolation. In addition to this the activity of bowls has provided a moderate level of mobility and activity for the elder members of society promoting physical and mental health & wellbeing into their later years.

Some of the stronger clubs, such as Wibsey and Harold, now have a lot of ‘younger’ members which further promotes community cohesion and helps in promoting the sport to a new audience reducing the commonly held view that this activity is specifically for the elderly members of the community.

4. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 All the current grounds maintenance schedule is funded through the operational base budgets and includes all the detail as highlighted in 2.4. Should any club agree to carry out additional grass cuts or any additional improvements/works to the facility, this will be funded by the club.

At the present moment in time there are 8 agreed leases with bowls clubs in the Bradford South Area which bring in a revenue income of £1,196.50. This total is achieved through each club paying an annual lease fee of £78.50 with an additional utility levy of £35.00. If clubs have a veteran’s association who use the facility they also pay an additional £35.00 utility fee.

The base budget cost for the maintenance of the 9 green areas is in the region of £45k. This is based upon an annual cost of £5k to maintain each green with the maintenance schedules (as mentioned in 2.3 and 2.4) being applied. There are instances where some greens will cost more to maintain and some slightly less and this is subject to the ‘periphery works’ that are involved, such as hedge pruning and shrub maintenance, and some surfaces may require more weed/fungal treatment than others. Therefore, the £5k annual cost is based upon an average figure and when applied to the bowls areas it is as follows:

Oakenshaw Bowls Club	£10,000
Wyke Bowls Club	£ 5,000
Wibsey Bowls Club	£10,000
Harold Park Bowls Club	£ 5,000
Asa Briggs Bowls Club	£ 5,000
Russell Hall Bowls Club	£ 5,000
Brackenhill Bowls Club	£ 5,000

In order for committee members to understand the general provision for this maintenance of the bowls greens, officer have estimated the time spent on each activity and applied costs accordingly.

Grass cutting (2 x per week)	£2,800
Edging and weeding the bowls green (1 x per week)	£ 700
Gully cleaning (1 x per week)	£ 400
Dressing treatments (1 x per year to include top dressing, weed and feed, herbicides and scarifying)	£1,100
Total	£5,000

In addition to the above maintenance costs there are also the costs incurred for the utility services and general maintenance of the pavilions that are associated with each facility which are:

Oakenshaw Bowls Club	£ 980.00
Wyke Bowls Club	£1,456.00
Wibsey Bowls Club	£1,856.00
Harold Park Bowls Club	£ 956.00
Asa Briggs Bowls Club	£1,508.00
Russell Hall Bowls Club	£1,588.00
Brackenbank Bowls Club	£ 884.00

The above costs are based upon an annual average but can fluctuate greatly depending on seasonal weather variations.

The general maintenance costs included are for small items such as boiler servicing/repairs, small plumbing works, broken windows and fire extinguisher checks etc.

During the last financial year some extra costs were added to Wibsey Park and Russell Hall Park (£300 and £600) for some roof repairs.

Options

The area committee may wish to consider options for the delivery of the bowling green service to clubs in the future and examples of the options could include:

- To continue the service as it is currently delivered as detailed in this report with the resources that are made available in future years.
- Continue with the current service and increase the annual charges that clubs pay each year
- Consider entering into negotiations with clubs, with a view to them taking

on certain elements of the maintenance regime of the green/pavilion or both, which would reduce the financial net position for the provision of the service.

- Continue the existing service and move fees and charges from a club based payment to a per member based payment, which is a route that some other local authorities have followed. This would allow the council to maintain the facilities and would be a more sustainable approach for smaller clubs, while it must be noted that larger clubs would see an increase in their overall charge.

These options are points for consideration and have been prepared as requested by the committee, they could be seen as individual options or they could be combined to form a unique option that the committee wish to progress, but are presented at this time for committee consideration.

If any of the options were to be pursued it would be recommended to consider a period for consultation with clubs to understand any concerns prior to implementation.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 The financial risks posed are limited by the nature of the expenditure delegated.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An increased level devolution of the services will allow the Area Committee to further address local priorities for those services.

7.2 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Area Committee decisions will need to be made in line with Equal Rights legislation. This will require Area Committees to assess the potential equality impact of any decisions they make.

7.3 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Increased local decision making has the potential to create more sustainable solutions to local issues.

Contact the Sustainability Co-ordinator (Policy), on Bradford 434123 or e-mail jamie.saunders@bradford.gov.uk for further guidance.

7.4 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

The Parks and Green Spaces service provides a pro-active approach in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the local deployment of its maintenance teams. Teams are based in areas in an effort to reduce travelling times with its fleet/plant resulting in reduced fuel consumption. In addition to this parks and recreation grounds/trees/woodlands provide communities with 'green lungs' which can naturally assist with the filtering of polluted air.

7.5 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Community Safety Implications arising from this report.

7.6 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

7.7 TRADE UNION

There are no Trade Union implications.

7.8 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The information in this report is relevant to all wards within the Bradford South Area.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

There are no not for publication documents.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Bradford South Area Committee notes the operational content and considers the future draft options as detailed in this report.

10. APPENDICES

None

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None