

Noble's Park 5-Year Development Plan 2012-2017

Approved by the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee -15th May 2012

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Foreword

Douglas Borough Council's Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee has always been forward-thinking in providing facilities for residents and visitors to the Island's capital, and Noble's Park provides a multi-functional green space in the heart of Douglas.

In presenting this 5-year development plan for Noble's Park, we are aware of the financial constraints with which we are all faced, and during the preparation of this 5-year development plan, some of the original proposals have had to be deleted. However, the plan will be reviewed annually and this will provide an opportunity to focus on priorities and demand.

I believe that the Council must move with the times and strive to deliver a quality service within the Park which matches ratepayers' expectations. To do so we need the support of the ratepayers of Douglas to take forward long-term plans for the benefit of the whole community. As well as providing a tangible statement of future strategy, this plan demonstrates the scope and wide range of amenities in Noble's Park and outlines how this has been achieved to date.

With this plan as our framework, I am confident that we can ensure that Noble's Park continues to develop as a centre of excellence for recreation, sports, and a diversity of events and attractions.

Mr Councillor S R Pitts
Chair of Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee

Introduction

Douglas Borough Council is the largest local authority in the Isle of Man and provides services for the 27,000 residents in the Island's capital. Including the Mayor, the Council comprises eighteen elected Members. Further information on the Council and its services can be viewed by visiting www.douglas.gov.im.

Since 1909 when Noble's Park became the responsibility of Douglas Borough Council, the Park has played an integral role in the lives of Island residents and visitors. As well as providing the starting venue for the historic TT races at the TT Grandstand, the Park has developed into a diverse open space, providing a number of facilities and hosting a variety of sports and events. A location plan of Noble's Park is attached at Appendix A.

Covenants which protect the use of certain areas of the Park as playing fields and which restrict development, remain in place, and this Plan recognises those constraints.

The Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee, recognising the challenges of balancing its resources in a prioritised and structured manner, and also recognising that the previous improvement plan for the Park had long since expired, decided to produce this 5-year plan for Noble's Park.

The Council has contributed to consultation in respect of the Chief Minister's Young Persons Working Group and is particularly aware of the need to provide formal and informal facilities for the young people on the Island, especially those in the 14-23 age range.

This plan is presented in two parts:-

- Part 1 - Corporate Aims - the purpose of which is to provide a background to the existing structure and overall vision for the Park.
- Part 2 - Strategic Objectives – which covers the specific functions, areas, and activities within the Park and the future objectives for those elements. The strategic objectives are summarised in Appendix E and will form the basis of an action plan to be devolved through the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee to officers.

This Plan is also intended to help the Council share its aims and objectives with its internal and external partners, as agreed by the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee.

Part 1 – Corporate Aims

Vision for Noble's Park

To provide a welcoming, accessible open space which maximises opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a wide variety of leisure and sporting activities in a safe and sustainable environment, with a particular emphasis on young people.

Corporate Plan

As contained in the Council's Corporate Plan, the Council's Corporate Aims include:-

- > To preserve and improve the environment of the town for the benefit of all residents, workers, businesses and visitors;

The Council's corporate objectives in respect of the Park are:-

- > The continuation of high standards offered to all sections of the general public by the provision of public open spaces, parks and parklands, sports facilities and the Douglas Golf Course.
- > Review and update the 5-year improvement plan for Noble's Park involving consultation with Park users.

Where Noble's Park fits within the Council

Noble's Park falls within the remit of the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee of the Council. An exception to this position is that the main car park area and rear of the TT Grandstand falls within the remit of the Policy & Resources Committee.

The Parks' Section lies with the Chief Executive's Department, under the remit of the Assistant Chief Executive, with the Head of Parks leading the Parks' Section operation. The Borough Engineer & Surveyor's Department, under the remit of the Borough Engineer & Surveyor, holds the budget for the rear of the Grandstand, and maintenance of playgrounds falls within that Department.

Noble's Park Annual Operational Budget

Noble's Park falls within the overall budget for the Parks' Section of the Council, and operates as a separate cost centre. Further financial information can be obtained from the Council's website www.douglas.gov.im.

Part 2 – Strategic Objectives

Recreation and Leisure

The following recommendations for the existing individual facilities and new attractions are proposed:-

> Skatepark

The skatepark continues to be well used by young people, from the ages of 7-8 through to adult. Although the equipment is robust it has suffered from vandalism in the past and it is intended to extend the CCTV to this area. Through the Department of Education and Children's Youth Services, and representation from youngsters and parents, liaison has been established with users. This has resulted in investment of £11,600 in new skatepark equipment which is scheduled to be on site during 2012.

It is proposed that different grades of equipment for younger and older skaters be incorporated into the skatepark, and a phased replacement programme is envisaged.

Recommendation

It is recommended that one new major piece of skatepark equipment is purchased in 2014/15 and 2016/17 and that £20,000 (a total of £40,000) be included in the capital programme for this purpose.

> BMX track

BMX is an Olympic sport, popular with a range of ages, and high profile in terms of numbers of participants and media coverage. The redesigned BMX track was formally opened to the public on 24th July 2011. In addition to casual public use, BMX Isle of Man (formerly Ramsey BMX Club) plan to hold competitions and training sessions on the track with a view to eventually hosting national and international events.

Recommendation

It is recommended that liaison with the BMX Isle of Man promotes competitive use of the BMX track, with a target of 3 club events annually and one national BMX event by 2013.

> Kickabout area

The new kickabout area, which is aimed at informal ball games, was completed in 2011. It is envisaged, following consultation with police and youth groups that the kickabout area will assist with the ongoing need to provide informal recreational facilities for young people, particularly the 13-19 age group.

> Tot Lot

Popular with mums and tots, financial constraints meant that the popular 'Tot Lot' area was not manned in 2010 or 2011 and this in turn meant that the bicycles and larger mobile toys were not available.

Recommendation

That options for reinstating the mobile toys, such as bikes, in the Tot Lot be brought to Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee prior to the 2012 season.

Recommendation

That incremental additions to the large play equipment within the Tot Lot are made from playground revenue budget, within existing resources, and that an amount of £10,000 is included in the Council's 2012/13 capital programme for improvements to the Tot Lot.

> Playground

The main Noble's Park playground contains a variety of safe yet robust equipment designed to stimulate physical activity and imaginative play in children from 2 – 12. Significant investment has been made to the playground equipment in 2011 and, other than repair and maintenance; it is not intended to undertake a further full-scale refurbishment of the playground during the life of this plan. The perimeter fence of the playground is in poor condition and options considered led to approval for replacement of the bow –top railings scheduled during 2012.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the main playground is maintained and repaired during the lifespan of this plan.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the perimeter fence of the main playground is replaced during 2012 at a cost of approximately £19,000.

> Dog walking area

In 2008, in response to demand from dog owners and a curtailment of dog exercising within a number of areas across Douglas, a dog walking area was created in 2009 on the area formerly used for pitch and putt. The area comprises a variety of foliage lengths with paths cut through and a boardwalk has been created to assist with access to the area which is occasionally marshy. Pedestrian access is via a gate onto Dukes Road and the area is also accessible from the main car park. Operation of the dog walking area will continue to be contained within the existing revenue budget for the Park.

Recommendation

The dog walking area continues to be maintained in recognition of the needs of users and of the natural environment within the dog walking area.

Recommendation

That the main expanse of dog walking area be cut and baled/composted once a year in August in line with the suggestion from the Manx Wildlife Trust.

New Attractions

Although there have been a number of new developments, such as the kickabout area, BMX track, resurfaced multi-sports area, skatepark equipment, and the community facility within the Pavilion building, the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee wishes to expand the amenities in the Park. A number of options have been suggested by Committee and through public feedback. However, since the first draft of the Plan, some of the proposals, such as a water feature, wetlands and boating lake, in recognition of the economic climate, have been removed or deferred.

> Crazy Golf

The Park was home to a crazy golf course which gradually fell into poor repair and with the creation of the new Pavilion building, was demolished. Crazy golf is a popular activity and it is perceived that this would be a welcome facility within the Park.

Recommendation

That a crazy golf course be created by 2014 on the area where the grass tennis courts are sited, subject to funding.

> Multi-purpose building

It has been suggested that a structure/building could be provided to assist with year-round sports, and other use of the multi-sports area. Further research would be required to assess demand, costs, and likely income generation.

Recommendation

That a building to cover the multi-sports area be created, possibly a tensile structure which would assist with year-round sports use and in addition could be adapted to facilitate events, indoor soft play area, performance space or touring/temporary exhibitions or attractions. To be subject to further research with an aim for a funding bid by the 2016/17 financial year.

Recommendation

That a planning application in principle be submitted during 2012 in respect of a multi-purpose building to cover the multi-sports area.

> Outdoor Amphitheatre

It has been suggested that an open-air amphitheatre would be a popular addition to the Park. This idea has yet to be further developed, and the demand for such a facility has currently not been researched but it is suggested that the area adjacent St. Ninians Road, where the stage for the Elton John concert was located, would provide a natural venue.

Recommendation

That an outdoor Amphitheatre area be created, subject to funding and further research.

> Karting

It has been suggested that karting in the main car park would be a popular attraction. Discussions continue with local karting organisers who have responded positively. Due to the demands on the use of the car park, it is suggested that designated karting weekends be identified rather than permanent use of the area.

Recommendation

That private operators be encouraged to hold karting weekends in the main car park, during available weekend slots, subject to health and safety compliance, by May 2012.

> Picnic/Barbeque areas

It is proposed that a picnic/barbeque area be created on the site of the old tot lot to incorporate picnic tables with barbeque plates.

Recommendation

That a picnic/barbeque area be created in the Park during 2012, on the site of the old tot lot, to include picnic tables with barbeque plates and associated facilities.

Sporting Facilities

Historically Noble's Park has been the home of a variety of sports and sporting events. It is intended to continue to support sport within Noble's Park.

> Bowling Greens

There are currently 2 crown green competition greens which are used during the main bowls season. In addition there is a third green, adjacent to "the Hoggery", which is used, weather permitting, in the winter. Bowling greens require significant maintenance which is provided by the Council.

It is known that a number of Bowling Clubs on the Island carry out their own maintenance to greens under agreements with local authorities. Whilst this appears to have been previously considered not feasible, it is suggested that there could be opportunities for consolidating bowling clubs and investigating options for the clubs carrying out maintenance.

Two clubs, Noble's Park Bowls Club and Noble's Mixed Bowls Club, use the Noble's Park greens as their home base and a number of tournaments are held over the season, notably the June and September Bowls Festivals which attract a number of visiting bowlers.

The building which houses the old ticket office/kiosk and bowling club room, adjacent to greens 1 and 2, is in a poor condition and this is further discussed later in this document.

An automatic irrigation system is in place for greens 1 and 2. It was identified in 2010 that the irrigation system supplying the third green requires replacement. However, at an estimated replacement cost of £50,000, it was considered that, although labour intensive, manual watering would continue.

The third green is currently used mostly in winter for the winter bowls league, during bowling festivals and in the event of non availability of other greens. In 2011 the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee resolved to discontinue the use of No. 3 green as a bowling facility and that options for use of the facility be brought to Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee.

Recommendation

To continue to provide two bowling greens in Noble's Park for use by established bowling clubs, residents and visitors.

Recommendation

To investigate opportunities for bowling clubs to carry out maintenance to the bowling greens under a lease agreement.

Recommendation

Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee to consider options for alternative uses of No. 3 green.

> Football Pitches

There are currently two full-size pitches and a junior pitch (on a slope). These pitches are hired on a 'pay per play' basis and in the past few years have been the home ground for Douglas Royals AFC and Corinthians AFC. The junior pitch is used by St Ninians High School.

With the new pitch development at Ballafletcher, teams are juggling venues whilst the new pitches come into match condition. For the 2011 football season, Douglas & District AFC relocated to Noble's Park from Pulrose.

The effect of the refurbished Bowl (which has 5G artificial pitches) for casual play and junior use will need to be evaluated. The Bowl commenced public use in late 2011.

As there has historically been a shortage of grass pitches in Douglas which is supported by the Eastern Pitches Report, it is anticipated that women's and junior football can be developed. Consultation will continue with clubs with a view to hosting a junior football event during the summer of 2013, subject to demand.

Whilst it is acknowledged that demand for pitches at Noble's Park will remain, the difficulty of maintaining pitches in good condition when the areas are also used for events remains a problem. Event usage, compounded by the wet conditions, leads to the cancellation of fixtures. Verti-drainage and proven methods of maintenance do take place, but the pitches would benefit from an overhaul in an attempt to have less cancelled fixtures.

Recommendation

To continue to maintain 2 full-size and one junior football pitch at Noble's Park.

Recommendation

That a long-term plan for pitch improvement be commissioned by 2013 at which time the long-term use of the playing fields can be evaluated, given the ongoing usage of the area for events.

Recommendation

That women's and junior football be developed in the Park with an aim of hosting a junior football event in the summer of 2013, subject to demand.

> Rugby Pitches

The Park has been used for rugby in the past, although the demand for playable football pitches has taken priority in more recent years. Vagabonds RFC, who have traditionally utilised a small practice area in the Park, connected to the Hailwood Centre (which has been the club's clubhouse facility) are in the process of relocating to the new pitch development at Ballafletcher.

Recommendation

That demand for the use of the Park for rugby be monitored during the period of the Plan to identify future needs, particularly for junior use.

> Cricket

The use of Noble's Park for cricket has gradually decreased. This is in part due to the difficulty maintaining consistent usage of the playing fields as a home ground, as usage for other events continues throughout the cricket season. The formal cricket wicket, which had deteriorated to a point beyond restoration, was removed in 2008.

Recommendation

That demand for the use of the Park for cricket be monitored during the period of the Plan.

> Tennis/multi sports hard surface

Resurfacing and re-marking of the hard courts area for multi-sport options has taken place during 2011 and usage by netball clubs is increasing.

Recommendation

To develop interest with sporting clubs/groups to maximise opportunities for use of, and income from, the refurbished multi-sports facility.

> Fitness Development

Although it is known that the Park is used for exercise and by personal trainers for 'boot camp' regimes and similar activities, it is proposed that this be actively encouraged.

Recommendation

That discussion takes place with Manx Sport & Recreation, Department of Community Culture and Leisure, with a view to holding sports development activities within the Park.

Recommendation

That a fitness trail be established around the perimeter of the Park by 2015, incorporating robust general-purpose fitness equipment.

Motorsport

The Park, and in particular the main car park, paddock and campsite areas, are essential for hosting motorsport events, particularly the TT and MGP Races and a number of rallies and associated events.

> TT Grandstand, paddock and campsite

It has been recognised that the TT Grandstand and related areas used for the TT Races require improvement. As agreed by Council, subject to suitable legal agreement being finalised, it is intended to lease, during motorsport periods, the grandstand, paddock and campsite areas of the Park, to the Department of Economic Development for a seven-year period (with the option for a further seven years), subject to the Department agreeing to significantly develop the infrastructure of the area. A considerable amount of improvement work has been undertaken by the Department to date which has been well received by users.

Recommendation

That the long-term lease for the grandstand, paddock and campsite areas of Noble's Park be completed by March 2012.

> Shower block and associated facilities

Under a long-standing agreement, the Department of Economic Development meets the costs of maintaining the campsite shower block and associated infrastructure. This has proved to be a significant commitment by the Department. Up until 2008 the campsite was opened and manned for casual campers during the periods when the area was not required for TT and MGP. However, as the period when the area has been handed over to the Department has extended to most of the summer months, and since the whole campsite area is of a poor standard, the campsite has not been publicly opened outside of TT & MGP periods. The Department has indicated that it would wish to retain the usage of the shower block for motorsport related events.

Recommendation

That the shower block at the campsite be maintained, funded and operated as a motorsport paddock facility by the Department of Economic Development as part of the Council's long-term lease with the Department.

Campsite

Although the shower block is maintained by the Department of Economic Development for TT purposes, and the whole campsite area is utilised as a motorsport paddock for significant periods of the year, it was considered that there was an opportunity for owners of motorhomes to stay in the Park for periods outside of motorsport events. This would encourage usage of the Park and provide a facility for motorhome users to stay in Douglas. It was agreed to designate an area within the TT3 paddock area, south of the Police access road for this purpose and to put in place regulations to govern the area to restrict long-term stay and to allow clearance of the site for motorsport and events purposes. It was further agreed that motorhomes utilising this area must be self-contained, ie with the exception of sluice facilities, no other services would be provided.

Recommendation

That an area be designated for use for self-contained motorhomes for resident and visiting motorhome owners, outside of motorsport periods.

Events

In addition to the high profile motorsports events such as the TT and MGP, a number of other concerts, charity events, car boot sales, and the Council's own Fun Day are held in the Park. It is proposed to actively encourage small-scale events in the Park and work will continue with community groups. In addition, liaison will continue with the Douglas Development Partnership and the Library to link town centre and library activities with the Park.

Recommendation

To continue the use of the Park as a venue for events and to maximise income where appropriate.

Recommendation

To liaise with Douglas Development Partnership and the Henry Bloom Noble Library to utilise the Park for community events and library activities.

Recommendation

For larger-scale events, particularly those utilising grassed areas, to require a reinstatement deposit/bond of £10,000.

Whilst it is proposed that events continue, there is ongoing inconsistency with the use of the playing field areas of the Park and the need to maintain football pitches fit for purpose. The length of time required for reinstatement and the underlying wet condition of the ground, does pose an ongoing challenge.

Event organisers are required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council regarding reinstatement, provision of risk assessments and insurance etc. Experience with event organisation has shown that damage to grassed areas can be significant for larger-scale events, hence the recommendation to require a deposit/bond requirement of £10,000.

Community Engagement

> Partnerships

A number of organisations and individuals are actively involved within the Park, namely the Police, Douglas Community Safety Partnership, Ward Managers, Youth Groups, Department of Education & Children, Councillors, sporting clubs, the Council's enforcement team, events organisers, etc. The binding factor remains the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee of the Council and at this time it is considered that, given the current remit of the Committee with regard to the Park, this should continue.

In terms of user involvement, previous user groups have not fared particularly well and none are currently in existence. However, it is proposed that users be encouraged to form a 'Friends of Noble's Park' group under the initial auspices of the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee.

Recommendation

That the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee remains the co-ordinating body for community and voluntary groups involved in the Park and that engagement with interested parties be actively pursued.

Recommendation

That users of the Park be encouraged to form a 'Friends of Noble's Park' voluntary group, under the initial auspices of the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee

> Accessibility

Whilst the Park's Pavilion and Café buildings are fully accessible for those with disabilities, it is proposed to review the facilities throughout the Park for persons with disabilities and to seek ways to enhance the experience available to those groups and individuals.

Recommendation

That a review of access, provisions and opportunities to enjoy and participate in the open space and events held in the Park be reviewed in consultation with relevant groups and agencies.

> Marriages and Civil Partnerships

It is proposed to licence the bandstand and community room as sites for marriages and civil partnerships.

Recommendation

That the bandstand and community room at Noble's Park be licensed for marriages and civil partnerships by August 2012.

> Public Art

There is very little public art within the Park at present and it is proposed to work with Douglas Development Partnership and community groups to introduce more temporary and permanent art to the Park.

Recommendation

That, in partnership with Douglas Development Partnership and community groups, both temporary and permanent public art be introduced into the Park.

Natural/planted Environment

> Drainage

The geology of Noble's Park is mostly rock with a heavy clay soil. Natural drainage is therefore limited and this, coupled with a high water table, can present problems particularly when the campsite and paddock areas are heavily used during TT periods.

Although a drainage trench was created by the Department of Infrastructure some years ago along the lower border of the Park, parallel to Dukes Road, surface water still makes for very wet conditions in parts of the Park area following heavy rain.

There are limited drains for surface water within the Park and the creation of new drains would require significant investment. It is not proposed in the current economic climate that the Council should upgrade drainage. The Department of Economic Development has similarly concluded that major drainage works are prohibitively costly although minor works have been undertaken.

In addition, some ground drains were installed during the creation of the new BMX track in 2011 which assists in taking the water away from the BMX and paddock areas, but which does not solve the ongoing problems.

> Manx Wildlife Trust

Andree Dubbeldam of the Manx Wildlife Trust has visited the Park and suggested a number of ways in which the Park's natural environment could be enhanced.

Recommendation

To increase planting of native trees, creating a long-term species planning policy.

Recommendation

Increased hedgerow planting – fuchsia hedging and palm trees for formal areas and wych elm with hawthorn and honeysuckle for informal areas.

Recommendation

Creation of butterfly flower borders near formal gardens in order to bring wildlife to public areas (already commenced in vicinity of Pavilion).

Recommendation

To increase the population of wild flowers and establish a nature trail through the Park, including interpretation.

> Formal bedding

The number of formal flower beds has been increased since the opening of the Pavilion building and it is intended to concentrate the main areas of colour to the entrance drive and Pavilion areas.

Recommendation

Formal bedding areas to be concentrated at the entrance drive and Pavilion areas.

> Community Nut Grove

Following representation from the Manx Woodland Trust, the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee agreed to designate an area adjacent St Ninians Church as a Community Nut Grove for the benefit of the community. Approximately 20 trees are planned to be planted including chestnut, walnut, hazelnut, complemented by apple trees and damson hedging. The trees, which will need to be nurtured for a year at the Nursery, will be funded by the Woodland Trust through sponsorship and it is intended that the Woodland Trust will work with the Parks Section to put in place suitable interpretation signage for the area. The Woodland Trust has identified several species of tree which will grow in the Manx climate and which will produce nuts within five years. An initial planting has taken place and further trees are being cultivated to a size suitable for planting in 2012.

Recommendation

It is recommended that an area adjacent St Ninians Church be designated as a community nut grove with planting on site to progress by Spring 2013.

Buildings/Service Areas

There are a number of buildings within the Park which are summarised below.

> Noble's Park Pavilion

Completed in 2008, the Pavilion building comprises the Parks depot, changing rooms, public conveniences, ground-floor restaurant and first-floor community room.

- The changing rooms are utilised during the football season, and there may be an opportunity when the Sports Council vacant football pitch on Glencrutchery Road is leased for the team to use the Pavilion changing rooms.
- The restaurant has a 7 year lease in place with effect from 2010 and it is anticipated that this will continue during the life of the plan.
- There is a suite of public toilets adjacent to the depot.
- The usage of the Community Room remains steady at approximately 2-3 bookings per week, and it is proposed that the usage of the facility continues to be monitored during the life of the plan.

Recommendation

It is recommended that usage of the Noble's Park Community Room continues to be monitored and reported to the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee on an annual basis.

> Noble's Park Café

Completed in 1997, the building is in general good repair, is let to a tenant on a three-year tenancy, and provides a café facility for users of the Park. No major works are envisaged during the life of the plan.

> Art Deco public toilets

Refurbished in 2007, these toilets continue to provide a useful facility in the Park. No major works are envisaged within the life of this plan.

> "The Hoggery"

"The Hoggery" is let on long-term peppercorn lease to the Phil Hogg Trust on a full-repairing basis. There are no envisaged changes in circumstances for the duration of the Plan.

> Old tot lot cabin

The old tot lot cabin is in poor condition and currently used for storage.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the old tot lot cabin be demolished by 2012 and that the site and surrounds be used as a picnic/barbeque facility.

> Kiosk

It has been identified that the kiosk/bowls club hut building has reached the end of its useful life. The toilets were planned to be closed when the new public toilets in the Pavilion became operational but were eventually left open due to demand from bowlers. Unfortunately, the toilets are regularly vandalised. Although the kiosk section of the building is not used following the decision not to have ticket attendants on site, the bowling clubs use the clubhouse section of the building regularly in the bowling season and for bowling festivals.

A number of options were considered by Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee, i.e. repair, complete refurbishment and replacement of the building. As costs for repair and complete refurbishment were disproportionately prohibitive in relation to use, it was agreed that the building be demolished. The use of a section of the building as a clubhouse for the Noble's Park Bowling club, will require to cease, and it was resolved that Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee would consider a request from the Club to erect a small shed or similar.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the existing kiosk be demolished during 2012 and the area paved.

> Bandstand

The Centenary Bandstand was relocated from the Villa Marina in 2008 as part of the Pavilion development. A local charity operation has commenced to establish a series of events in the bandstand and liaison continues with the organisers.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Centenary bandstand continues to be used for small-scale performances.

> TT Grandstand, Hailwood Centre, Manx Motor Cycle Club, TT Marshalls Association

Liaison continues with the owners and tenants of a number of buildings within the Noble's Park site which are within the area contained in the long-term lease with the Department of Economic Development.

> Works Compound/storage area

This area is utilised for storage of machinery and materials, and variously used on a temporary basis for TT purposes and other general storage for Parks and within the Council. The lack of a suitable wash-down area/compound in the Park has added to the general clutter in the area. It is intended to reorganise this area, which houses a number of unattractive containers, improve the control of its use, and create screening using suitable planting.

In addition, it is intended to further explore the potential of this area for the staging of events, within temporary structures such as marquees, as few services run through this site, it is removed from main residential areas, and there is less likelihood of damage to the ground as the area is graveled.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the works compound area be improved in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years by reorganising storage, controlling usage, and creating planted screening, utilising existing Parks revenue budgets.

Recommendation

It is recommended that opportunities for staging of events in the compound area be explored with a view to income generation and attracting the public into the Park.

> Covered Water Reservoir

Maintained by the Water & Sewage Authority, there are no known changes to the reservoir during the life of the plan.

Recommendation

It is recommended that consultation continues with the Water & Sewage Authority, with potential development of the planting on the reservoir to incorporate wildflowers or diverse foliage

Recommendation

It is recommended that the existing kiosk be demolished during 2012 and the area paved.

Security

> Lighting

Whilst some main routes within the Park are covered by lighting columns, it is proposed that a review of lighting provision within the Park be undertaken by 2014, to include environmentally sustainable options and low-cost decorative lighting where appropriate.

Recommendation

That a review of lighting provision in Noble's Park be undertaken by 2014 to include environmentally sustainable options and low-cost decorative lighting where appropriate: the outcome to be reported to the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee for further consideration.

> CCTV

It is planned that, following on from the completion of the town centre CCTV system, the installation of CCTV in key areas will be commissioned as a priority. Some CCTV is currently in place on the Pavilion building, which was installed at the time the building was erected.

Recommendation

That CCTV be installed in key areas in Noble's Park, the project to be undertaken as a priority following the completion of the town centre CCTV works.

Parking/traffic management/vehicular access

> Main car park

The large tarmaced car park provides ample car parking for everyday use. During the TT and MGP period the car park is used as a paddock for participants and parking into the adjacent fields is permitted. In addition, parking is available on a day-to-day basis adjacent to the Pavilion. Further parking was applied for as part of the Pavilion planning submission but was refused on the grounds that it would be an intrusion into the areas of open space.

The Council, in May 2011, resolved that it would submit a planning application for use of part of the main tarmaced car park for parking for large and commercial vehicles, outside of motorsport periods. This was in response to a call from central Government for local authorities to designate areas for long-term parking of large vehicles, in order to relieve pressure on residential area. The planning application was submitted in July 2011 and a decision is awaited.

Recommendation

That the designation of an area of the main car park in Noble's Park be progressed for the long-term parking of large and commercial vehicles outside of motorsport periods by September 2012.

> Traffic management

A traffic management plan for the Park is being progressed, in consultation with the relevant bodies. The plan will address matters such as pedestrian and vehicular conflict, traffic calming measures, parking and cessation of the Park as a shortcut for traffic.

Recommendation

That a traffic management plan for Noble's Park be in place by December 2012.

> Internal Roadways

Arising from a legal ruling in 2010, that all the 'roadways' within the Park, including the main car park, be designated as roads under the Highways Acts, road closing orders have to be obtained by event organisers wishing to formally close areas of the Park's roadways. The full implications of this ruling are being progressed with the Department of Infrastructure.

> Other vehicular usage

The Council has been informally approached by the Department of Infrastructure via the Council of Ministers and the 'Chief Minister's Young Persons Working Group Report – Social Facilities for 14-23 year olds' in respect of a recommendation that practice areas for driving and motorcycling skills be developed: the suggestion being that the main tarmac car park within the Park be utilised for this purpose.

Recommendation

That liaison continues with the Department of Infrastructure in respect of developing informal driving \ practice areas.

Marketing/information/signage

> Marketing

It is not anticipated that additional sums will be sought to undertake any major advertising campaigns. However, events in the Park and the Park's facilities continue to be publicised by press releases and coverage of Council business, and it is planned to maximise media opportunities where possible without incurring costs.

It is planned to produce a concise brochure including a map and directory of facilities during 2012 in tandem with development of the Council's new website.

Recommendation

That a brochure be produced publicising the facilities of Noble's Park in tandem with development of the Council's new website.

> Website

Development of the Council's website is planned using in-house expertise of the Council's ICT section, to incorporate a separate area for Noble's Park, similar to that developed for the Henry Bloom Noble Library.

Recommendation

That the Council's website be developed to incorporate a separate area for Noble's Park, to be implemented by December 2012 utilising in-house expertise.

> Signage/waymarking

There is little remaining signage within the Park and the Park would benefit from a themed suite of clear directional and informative signs, including a map at the key entrance(s) and exits.

Recommendation

That a suite of themed signage be developed by December 2012 and be bid for in the 2013/14 budget process, and the potential for utilising town centre regeneration design to be investigated.

Public feedback

In response to an informal request for views and suggestions for the Park, by the Chair of Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee, a total of six responses were received and a summary of the ideas, which have been covered within the main body of this Plan, were submitted as follows:-

Suggestion

1. Karting in main car park area.
2. Indoor soft play area could be established – asking Council to donate land.
3. Indoor soft play area adjacent café and creation of smaller bowling facility.
4. Mini/crazy golf.
5. Improved/enhanced Tot Lot.
6. Trampoline area.
7. More to do for small children.
8. Fitness trail (2 correspondents suggested).
9. Water feature (similar to Mooragh Park).

Resources

> Economic Climate

The Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee recognises that the economic climate is difficult and that priorities have to be set and budgets scrutinised. However, residents of Douglas are entitled to expect the Council to provide accessible public open space and facilities for the public to enjoy recreational and sporting opportunities. The budgetary implications of this plan will be scrutinised annually as part of the Council's budget process and support or otherwise will need to be demonstrated by clear benefits to ratepayers.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Noble's Park 5-year Plan be formally revisited annually by the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee.

> Capital Programme

Wherever possible initiatives for the Park will be met within existing budgets. Where it is more appropriate to seek capital funding, this will be supported by business case and put forward as part of the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee's annual budget proposal.

Recommendation

It is recommended that prior to making any bid for funding through the Council's budget process, a business case and project mandate be prepared for consideration and approval by the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee.

> Income Generation

Every opportunity must be made to obtain sponsorship and generate income, whilst recognising the need to provide recreation and sporting facilities for Douglas ratepayers, Island residents and visitors. Income is currently generated from:-

- hire/lease agreements for the paddock area for TT and MGP and other motorsport related events
- hire of playing fields for events/hospitality/motorsport retail use
- income from bowling clubs and bowling festivals
- hire of multi-sports area
- hire of community room
- leases for the restaurant and cafe

Recommendation

It is recommended that opportunities for sponsorship and income generation be actively pursued with a target of increasing income by 10% year on year for the life of the Plan.

Review

> Actions and Monitoring

The final schedule of the agreed recommendations contained in the Plan will be compiled. This will form the basis for an action plan with identified action holders, which will be progressed and monitored by the Council's Chief Officers Management Team and reported to the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee, as part of an annual review of the Plan.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the final schedule of agreed recommendations be implemented and monitored by Chief Officers Management Team and reported to the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee, as part of an annual review of the Plan.

> Benchmarking

It is intended, through the Council's Membership of the Association of Public Service Excellence, to find comparative and performance measures appropriate to the Park. This will be carried out as part of the performance management of the Parks Section.

Recommendation

To identify comparative statistics and put in place a suite of performance measures for the Parks Section, to include Noble's Park, by December 2012.

> Customer Satisfaction

Recommendation

To work with user groups to gain feedback on progress against the 5-year plan and to report such feedback to the Regeneration & Community Advisory Committee on an annual basis.

Ref: ACX 13th June 2012.

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

