

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 28th MAY 2019
title: LONGRIDGE BOWLING GREEN
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To outline the current situation with regard to the Bowling Green area in Towneley Gardens, Longridge.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – To help make people lives safer and healthier
- Community Objectives – To improve the health and well-being of people living and working in our area. To improve the opportunity for young people to participate in recreational and sporting activity
- Other Considerations - None

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The area known as the Bowling Green in Longridge Towneley Gardens was until last year leased from the Council, by the Royal British Legion Club.

2.2 The bowling club operated from the Legion Club and were in the local league. The members maintained the grass and the Council had no involvement with it directly.

2.3 Along with other parts of Longridge the green has been subject to increasing levels of misuse by young people, which meant the club having to repair the damage caused.

2.2 The membership of the Legion Club in Longridge took a decision last year to close it and sell the club site. That has now been completed and a local developer purchased the property.

2.3 The bowlers at that time had been in discussion with the Council to obtain a lease to continue to run the bowling club as they had previously, knowing that the Legion site was being sold.

2.4 Council officers were able to determine the lease with the British Legion and they surrendered it, thus paving the way for a new one to be drawn up with the bowling club. When the people who had being in discussions with officers about a new lease were asked to provide details of the club to which the green would be leased to, so that a report could be submitted to Community Committee for approval, officers were told that they no longer wanted a lease as they were not forming a bowling club.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The former bowling green is used by young people to play football on, despite Kestor Lane playing field being a short walk away. Consequently the fine turf needed for bowling has deteriorated to the point that reinstatement would be a costly exercise. Nor would reinstatement put an end to the misuse of the area by young people.

- 3.2 There is no bowling club currently identified to use the site, it is understood many of the former bowlers have either retired from the activity or moved to the Conservative Club on Berry Lane to continue playing.
- 3.3 There is no Council budget to reinstate or maintain the green as a fine turf area, it would require new equipment to be purchased and additional staff time to be found, over and above that available currently. If it were reinstated it would need a substantial fence to prevent unauthorised access, which would then involve providing access to people who may wish to bowl.
- 3.4 Longridge Town Council has expressed a preference for the area to be kept as bowling green with fencing around it. The area could be leased to the Town Council if it is their wish to provide a bowling green for casual use, or even if they wished to provide an alternative amenity use, such as a garden area for the surrounding residents to enjoy.
- 3.5 The situation regarding the bowling green has been discussed recently at CMT and they have asked for a report on the Council's land holdings in the town and how they can be most effectively utilised for the community.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The Council has no budget to restore the fine turf as it was previously leased to the British Legion Club who maintained it. The opportunity for income generation were it returned to a playable state is limited at best.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None
- Political – None
- Reputation – None
- Equality and Diversity – None

5 CONCLUSION

This updates the current information on Longridge Bowling Green.



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Community Services/ 28.5.19/MB