

# Hospital Road Playing Fields, Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge Programme



## Report of Cabinet Member Leisure Parks and Play

Date:	29 November 2011
Agenda Item	8.
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Key Decision?	No

## CABINET REPORT

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To seek the approval of Cabinet to nominate Hospital Road Playing Fields to Fields in Trust as an area worthy of protection, through the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge Programme.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet supports the proposal to nominate Hospital Road Playing Fields to Fields in Trust as an area worthy of protection through the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge programme.

### 3. Statement of Reasons

- 3.1 The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is an exciting new programme operated by Fields in Trust, led by its Patron, the Duke of Cambridge, to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The programme is designed to protect outdoor recreational spaces in communities across the country and to create a permanent, tangible and relevant legacy from the two major events scheduled to occur in the UK next year; the Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics.
- 3.2 Fields in Trust is an independent UK wide charity dedicated to protecting and improving outdoor space for sport, play and recreation. Formed in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association, it aims to ensure that everyone - young or old, able or disabled, living in urban or rural areas, has access to free local outdoor facilities, to enjoy healthy outdoor activities.
- 3.3 The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge has a particular resonance and continuity for Fields in Trust as it mirrors the memorial project created following the death of King George V in 1936. A total of 471 playing fields were dedicated in perpetuity as 'King George V Playing Fields' in communities all across the country in his honour. These playing fields still exist today and are much loved and well used by the communities they serve. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is an opportunity to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of this great, tangible legacy which has brought real benefit to thousands of people in the UK.
- 3.4 It is felt that Hospital Road Playing Fields is an ideal community outdoor recreational space worthy of protection because recent investment has made the site accessible, safe and welcoming to all ages wishing to utilise the area for sport and recreational pursuits.
- 3.5 A new pavilion at Hospital Road was officially opened on Sunday 9 August 2011 funded by contributions from the Football Foundation and compensation paid to Hammerwich Parish Council for the loss of Jubilee Park under the M6 (Toll). The Fields now consist of 2 senior, 1 junior and 2 mini football pitches, a 4-team block changing pavilion and will soon boast a children's play park, funded by S106.
- 3.6 The Fields are currently owned by the district council but approximately 50% of the land is to be transferred in the near future to the Highways Agency by means of a compulsory purchase order. When this has taken place the Highways Agency will then transfer the land to the Parish Council. The district and parish councils will then each own half of the Fields.

- 3.7 The two councils are working closely together to prepare, implement and fund a management plan.
- 3.8 If the nomination of Hospital Road Playing Fields is accepted by Fields in Trust, it will be protected from any future proposed development. At present, the Fields are protected by its location in the Green Belt.
- 3.9 The district council bought the site from the county council in the 1990s and there exists a covenant which prevents use other than for playing pitches and outdoor recreational uses.
- 3.10 Playing fields have a vital role to play in creating healthy communities, helping not only to increase physical activity but also to foster social cohesion and improve the local environment.

**Community Benefits** By giving residents access to free recreational space the council is helping them obtain a better quality of life.

**Alternative Options** Not to nominate Hospital Road Playing Fields as an area worthy of protection from future development.

**Consultation** A presentation regarding the nomination of Hospital Road Playing Fields for QEII status was made to Hammerwich Parish Council on 19 January 2011 and was favourably received. There has also been strong support from the County Sports Partnership, Fields in Trust and Staffordshire Playing Fields Association.

**Financial Implications** There is a cost of £100 to register the deed which can be met from existing revenue budgets.

**Strategic Plan Implications** The playing fields help improves people's health and wellbeing and provides for a greener environment.

**Crime & Safety Issues** Protecting our open spaces will provide children and young people the opportunity to participate in sport and play outdoors which will help reduce anti-social behaviour.

## 4. Risk Management

	Risk Description	Likelihood / Impact	Status	Countermeasure
4.1	If we do not protect Hospital Road Playing Fields from future development, the community could lose valuable open recreational space	Low / medium	Operational	Consider protecting other open spaces within the district
4.2	The District Council and Hammerwich Parish Council cannot afford to run and maintain Hospital Road Playing Fields facilities	Low / medium	Financial / operational	Seek to transfer of asset through lease agreement to a local community sports club or similar organisation.

**Background documents** Fields in Trust

**Relevant web links** [www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)