

## **Centenary Fields Initiative**

### **Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**6 December 2018**

#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out the aims of the Centenary Fields initiative to commemorate World War 1, recommending the nomination as a Centenary Field of Duns Park.
- 1.2 Centenary Fields (CF) is a partnership programme led by Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion to commemorate World War 1 through protecting green spaces. It was launched by HRH The Earl of Strathearn in 2014 to mark the centenary of World War 1 and will close in 2018.
- 1.3 CF aims to protect at least one site (containing WW1 war memorial(s), and used for active recreation/sport/play) in each local authority area across the UK which meet specific criteria relating to ownership, accessibility, land use, management and wartime heritage. This is aimed at creating a long-lasting legacy of WW1, protecting and promoting green space for recreation, increasing physical activity, promoting social cohesion and improving the environment.
- 1.4 Upon a successful application to Fields in Trust for Centenary Field status, sites are subject to a Minute of Agreement, similar to those which are in place on all King George V (KGV) Playing Fields. This safeguards the sites for recreational use as protected green space.
- 1.5 Following a regional appraisal and in consultation with communities and Fields In Trust, three sites have been identified in the Scottish Borders as potentially appropriate - Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, Lower Green at West Linton and Duns Park.
- 1.6 Upon designation, a commemorative plaque (supplied by CF) is installed. The site name will not change and there are no funds associated with CF status. Designation as a Centenary Field would not only protect the historic and conservation value of these sites, but would also strengthen the case to attract external funding. The management of these sites will be retained by the local authority.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Berwickshire Area Partnership Committee approve the nomination of Duns Park for Fields in Trust Centenary Field status.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Centenary Fields (CF) is a partnership programme led by Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion to commemorate World War 1 through protecting green spaces. It was launched by HRH The Earl of Strathearn in 2014 to mark the centenary of World War 1 and will close in 2018. Sites containing war memorials, which are used for active recreation/sport /play, are appropriate greenspaces to nominate. The centenary commemoration is aimed at a creating a long-lasting legacy of WW1 that also promotes and protects green space for recreation, increasing physical activity, promoting social cohesion and improving the environment. The main benefits of taking part in the initiative are to;
- contribute to a UK initiative to commemorate those involved with World War 1.
  - raise awareness of both the initiative and the Council's commitment to providing for public access and recreation.
  - raise the profile of the nominated sites.
  - safeguard valued public spaces for the future
- 3.2 Nominated sites are subject to an application process including a site visit by CF. If accepted, the Council is required to undertake legal processes, including signing and registering a Minute of Agreement (MoA). The MoA ensures the Council does nothing to detract from the amenity value of the site, and in the event of disposal, that the MoA is transferred to the new owner. The Council has existing MoAs for all King George V (KGV) playing fields – at Broughton, Foulden, Clovenfords and Newtown St Boswells.
- 3.3 Any site within Scottish Borders can be nominated by the landowner – this includes community groups and private landowners bringing forward their own site nominations if they wish. For simplicity, and especially due to the legal undertaking required, it is recommended that the Council should nominate a site in its ownership and management. In addition to the conditions covered above in relation to a site's ownership, connection with World War 1, and its recreation function, CF specifies that eligible sites must:
- be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community.
  - should have local managers who are responsible for the quality of the facilities, maintenance and development, improving participation, and financial and operational sustainability.
- 3.4 On this basis, and following separate consultations with Fields In Trust, Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, Lower Green at West Linton and Duns Park have all been identified as appropriate sites to submit for application as they meets all of the criteria for a Fields in Trust Centenary Field. During the appraisal process, no sites in Eildon or Cheviot areas were identified as meeting the relevant criteria above – however we welcome community groups/private landowners nominating sites under their ownership/lease that meet the Centenary Fields criteria.
- 3.5 Upon designation, the Council will be required to install a commemorative plaque supplied by CF and arrange an unveiling ceremony at each location.

The site name will not change and there are no funds associated with CF status.

- 3.6 Designation as a Centenary Field would not only protect the historic and conservation value of these sites, but would also strengthen the case to attract external funding. The management of these sites will be retained by the local authority, and while they are safeguarded as recreation, this safeguarding is flexible to future change;

*"Fields in Trust does accept that on rare occasions communities change and land use changes accordingly. Parts of sites, or very rarely, whole sites can therefore be disposed of provided the disposal is of clear advantage to, and in the best interests of, the community from a recreational perspective. The criteria which Fields in Trust applies to replacement facilities are that they should be of:*

- 1. at least equal size*
- 2. better quality*
- 3. serving the same community in terms of catchment area*

*Additionally, and very importantly, any disposal should apply as much of the proceeds as necessary to replacement sport, recreation and/or play facilities, with priority given to outdoor before indoor facilities."*

- 3.7 All three sites are allocated in the Local Development Plan as 'Key Greenspace', which are protected from development – Centenary Fields status would not prejudice this in any way.
- 3.8 At its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> November, the Executive Committee of SBC has agreed the nomination of Duns Park, subject to discussion at the Berwickshire Area Partnership Committee.

## **4 DUNS PARK**

- 4.1 Duns Park is a Victorian Park situated in the south of the town. The park is accessed off Station Road by imposing gates and is home to two wartime commemorative structures;
- Duns War Memorial - facing the entrance gates, a memorial obelisk commemorating those from Duns who fell in both World Wars.
  - Polish War Memorial - a memorial to the Polish soldiers who were stationed in Duns during the Second World War.
- 4.2 The park is also home to a memorial bronze bust of Duns Scotus, a notable philosopher-theologian who originated from the Duns area in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It forms the main civic greenspace in the town, with mature planting, informal recreation areas, a play area and tennis courts. It is proposed to nominate the civic park area, as outlined in Appendix 1.3, as a Scottish Border's Council Centenary Field.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

Costs incurred will be modest and will be accommodated within Corporate & Neighbourhood Services Estate Management budget and includes the following:

- a) Legal costs incurred with agreeing to the Deed.
- b) The costs of installing a commemorative plaque (a plaque is provided free of charge by Fields in Trust).
- c) Registering the resulting restrictions with the land registry.

**5.2 Risks and Mitigations**

The report fully describes all the elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this project and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed.

**5.3 Equalities**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

**5.4 Acting Sustainably**

There are no anticipated economic, social or environmental impacts anticipated other than the enhanced protection and promotion of recreational greenspace within communities.

**5.5 Carbon Management**

There are no known effects on the Council’s carbon emissions by this proposal.

**5.6 Rural Proofing**

N/A

**5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Delegation associated with this report.

**6 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

6.2 To date, consultation has been undertaken locally with members. It is proposed to consult with Area Partnerships in all three relevant areas prior to final submission of the nomination to Fields in Trust.

**Approved by**

**Martin Joyce**

**Director of Asset & Infrastructure    Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

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**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jason Hedley can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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Appendix – Duns Park, Duns