

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: TUESDAY 3rd NOVEMBER 2009
Title: CLITHEROE CASTLE GROUNDS – GREEN FLAG AWARD
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP - DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update to Committee on the progress made towards readying the site for an application for a Green Flag Award.
- 1.2 Contribution to the Council's aims and ambitions
 - Council Vision shared with the Local Strategic Partnership;
An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
 - Council Ambitions;
To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area
To help make people's lives safer and healthier
 - Core Values;
Strive to achieve excellence
 - Citizen's Charter:-
We will: Cut the grass in our parks and open spaces regularly
Maintain children's play area's so that they are safe to use

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of this Committee held on Tuesday 9th September 2008 amongst a number of issues it was resolved at minute 373 that:-
 - A future report to this Committee addresses issues of how the ongoing management of the Castle and it's grounds including the museum area can be carried out holistically;
 - A future meeting of this Committee give consideration to the issues involved in seeking a Green Flag Award for the Castle Grounds.
- 2.2 At the meeting of this Committee held on Tuesday 4th November 2008 it was resolved at minute 536 that:-
 - Committee agree to seek to achieve a Green Flag Award for Clitheroe Castle Grounds.

3.0 CURRENT SITUATION

A number of projects have been carried out in order to improve the entrance to the site for the reopening of the Castle and Museum area. These works were funded from the Capital Budget allocation members made towards readying the site for application for a Green Flag Award. These works resulted in a spend of £12,750 and included the resurfacing of the main Castle driveway, tree management works and redesign and restocking of the planting in the areas alongside the driveway approaching and around the museum.

3.1 Green Flag Assessment

On 30th October 2008 a mock Green Flag assessment of the Castle Grounds was undertaken by an experienced Green Flag judge. A further assessment was carried out, by the same judge, following the completion of works to improve the entrance and an increase in the amount of maintenance work. Further advice was given by the judge which has resulted in more specific tasks which will be used to develop the annual maintenance programme and compile a schedule of specific capital improvement projects.

The Judge's comments were presented to Committee on 14th July 2008. Following this second assessment a number of projects and areas of work have been identified which require carrying out in order to progress the park's development towards achieving a Green Flag.

Potential Works List	
Soft Landscaping Works	
Description	Cost
Establish a rockery on the opposite the large beech tree at the Castlegate entrance. Redesign bed to the rear of the enclosed seating area also as a rockery.	£1,750.00
Remove naturally regenerating ash saplings and other undesirable vegetation from rock outcrop along right-hand side of drive leading up to the museum.	£2,000.00
Establish shrubs along the top of the rock outcrop above the educational play facility to prevent soil washing down onto it.	£250.00
Remove berberis and pyrocantha hedges in front and adjacent to bandstand and establish a purple beech hedge in it's place. Establish wildflower beds in front of the new hedge planting.	£1,250.00
Remove small round shrub bed adjacent to the labyrinth, re-turf and install picnic bench.	£750.00
Redesign planting around Eshton terrace entrance introduce more planting.	£500.00
Remove 1 large and 2 small bedding areas outside Bowling Green and replant with shrubs.	£500.00
Convert raised beds within the bowling green area to herbaceous planting.	£250.00
Restock shrubs in area between the Bandstand and labyrinth.	£250.00
Re-turf top of grass slope along right-hand side of main drive from Castlegate entrance area.	£250.00
Sub-Total	£7,750.00

Hard landscaping Works	
Description	Cost
Patching of tarmac along main driveway and along path from bandstand to the rose garden	£2,000.00
Re-flag semi-circle area at entrance onto steps up to circular plinth. (Previously base for shelter.)	£1,000.00
Repair and repaint bowling green shelter (including perspex panels) in a green and cream colourscheme to match the pavilion. Repair and repaint the long bench under one of the shelters.	£2,500.00
Bandstand renovation including: Repainting of white lines on arena steps, cleaning and patching of tarmac arena steps, repainting of cast iron gates at entrances into arena, cleaning of all fencing around arena, painting of bins near entrances to arena, painting of all brick, timber and metalwork of bandstand structure.	£5,100.00
Removal of beds and crazy-paving surface in sunken rose Garden. Resurface with a bound gravel material with a centrepiece bed in place of the broken sundial. Installation of 2 benches.	£3,400.00
Installation of new Main Entrance boards at Castlegate, Eshton Terrace & Parson Lane entrances.	£3,000.00
Sub-Total	£17,000.00
Total	£24,750.00

The above list is not exhaustive and completion of these works alone will not guarantee the park would be of Green Flag Award Standard. It would however have as much if not more visual impact as the first phase of the works carried out prior to the re-opening of the castle and museum earlier this year. Items from the above list will be selected which will address the most important issues and have the most impact within the remaining budget. A full tree survey is currently being carried out and is likely to identify essential tree maintenance work which will also require additional funding. Other works recommended by the Green Flag judge's assessment in June are listed below, these are yet to be costed:

Further required works and schemes	
Separate pedestrian and vehicle access at Castlegate entrance and improve accessibility into enclosed seating area.	This will need further investigation as there are likely to be restrictions due to conservation status.
Review entrance signage as inappropriate to park's character.	Not clear as to how much this would affect Green Flag score. Moving fingerpost to location outside of park will require consent from Lancashire County Council.
Make better use of land by skate park and ball park.	A possible scheme is still in development which will affect this area.
Improve access to and maintenance of public conveniences. (Woone Lane)	This requires further investigation into whether it is desirable to retain these conveniences or to decommission them entirely.
Repair footpaths throughout park.	The patching work proposed above will address many of the worst problems along the busiest paths there are many more problem areas along less well used paths which will require attention as further funding becomes available.
Rationalise styles of seats, benches and bins throughout park.	This is an extensive piece of work which will require further funding to achieve.

3.2 Green Flag Award update

Many of the local authorities in Lancashire who already had Green Flag Award winning parks submitted more sites this year. Here is a list of the changes in numbers of Green Flags held by those authorities compared to last year.

Council	No. of Green Flags		
	2008	2009	Change
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	4	6	+2
Blackpool Borough Council	3	4	+1
Burnley Borough Council	5	5	0
Chorley Borough Council	1	3	+2
Fylde Borough Council	3	3	0
Hyndburn Borough Council	3	3	0
Lancaster City Council	2	1	-1
Pendle Borough Council	2	6	+4
Preston City Council	4	5	+1
South Ribble Borough Council	3	3	0
West Lancashire District Council	2	2	0
Wyre Borough Council	1	1	0

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Resources

The draft management plan will be prepared using existing staff resources. As mentioned at 3.0 half of the Capital Budget was spent to support the opening of the museum and café other than solely to achieve the award. The remaining budget will be insufficient to complete all of the required work that has now been identified as necessary to achieve the award.

4.2 Technical, Environmental and Legal

At this stage all technical issues can be arranged in house. There is expected to be an environmental benefit arising out of any work done on part of achieving a Green Flag Award. There are no legal issues that arise out of this report.

4.3 Political

There are no political issues arising out of this report.

4.4 Reputation

The achievement of a Green Flag Award for the Castle Grounds will enhance the Council's reputation and begin to be able to compare our performance with that of other Lancashire District Councils.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Note the contents of this report and the progress being made towards the achievement of a Green Flag Award for Clitheroe Castle Grounds. Work will be carried out to the extent of existing funding with the remaining work requiring further funding from the capital or revenue budgets in due course.

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For further information please contact Martin Kersey on 01200 414530.