

Report of Barton Fields 2007.08

Introduction

The Barton Fields Trust has been in charge of the field for three years. It took over the management of the field from Bristol City Council on April 1st 2005. The Trust has been given an annual grant by the Council to help maintain the field.

Improvements

We laid a copse, last year, to support and hide the Badger set from open view. This was good environmental work and will benefit the set enormously. It has come on well and protects the set from unwanted interference.

We also laid a hedgerow, last year, along the chain link fence by Argyle Road. This hedgerow has now come on really well and is developing into a young hedge. This will be an asset to wild life and will act as a barrier to the road when the chain link becomes old and decays.

The trust provided £6000 for the rail around the pitch. The crowd rail had to be removable hence the slight wobble of the rail. But it has proved to be successful even though we did have some vandalism initially.

The Trust also provided £650 towards the Floodlighting of the rugby training area.

The Trust invested significantly into the surface of the pitches again in the past year. It is noticeably improving year in and year out since the Trust started running the field.

The council has, this year, completed the Play area after much lobbying by the Trust. It has taken the council some years to provide this area for the community. The Trust has worked so hard to motivate the council to deliver on the play area. There are so many Health and Safety issues in the management of a play area that the Trust were delighted when the council agreed that it was in the best for all for them to install and maintain it for ever.

Litter and fly tipping has been costly to get picked up and it would really help if the Neighbours, Children and crowd watching the Rugby would use bins etc and not to drop rubbish everywhere!

We have planted trees, laid a path etc on the top field to help beautify it at a cost of £10,000. Unfortunately and very upsettingly, most of the trees have been vandalised. It is hoped that the trees will 'bush out' in the near future.

Maintenance

The Trust employed CPS Grounds Maintenance to look after the field from 1st April 2005. The Contractor has been doing a good job and we work closely with them to improve the condition of the field.

We believe this has happened:

- The condition of the turf has improved by regular mowing.

- The two rugby pitches have never been so good. (Still a long way to go!). Grass growing where it hasn't before – due to drill seeding at the right time.
- Poor quality soil on the pitches has had treatment using a mulch to improve its quality.
- A planned schedule with the Contractor for ongoing improvement of field and pitches
- Planned trimming of the hedges

Accountability

The Trust and the development of the field have become accountable to the community.

- Complaints received by the Trust about various things: litter, motorbikes, Fly tipping etc. have been dealt with.
- The Trust holds an AGM which may be attended by the public

Finance

The Council's funding for the field is vital for its development.

With good budget control and careful management of the funding, far more has been achieved with the capital than any previous management.

For the same amount of funding we have managed to achieve quality maintenance and development in the part three years.

The Future

The Trust has a masterplan for the future. The control and maintenance of the field is vital to allow this to happen for the community, the Rugby Club and to all other beneficiaries who may use the field in the future.

It is hoped that this year we can connect the pathway laid recently to the pathway crossing the site.

We hope to place some seats for the benefit of all of the community.

It is with regret that I have to say the infill of the pitches, to improve the playing surfaces, is on hold still. The Environment Agency has objected to the plan due to the prospect of flooding and it will cost in the region of £30,000 to obtain. It is hoped that a contractor will stand this money for the tipping rights. All this however could be delayed for some while.

There has been no progress on the sale of a piece of land at the bottom of the field and I have to say it isn't looking good for this particular fundraising project.

Conclusion

We believe we have made good progress to have an excellent playing field and park for all the community.

The field is looking far tidier and pristine than ever before.

Development is continuing into the coming year

The future is looking really good and promises great things for the field with hard work, careful management and with the will from other agencies, which could help make things happen.

Mike Bond

Chair, Barton Fields Trust

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