

This report will be made public on 18 January 2022



Report number: **FPPG/21/02**

To: Folkestone Parks and Pleasure Ground Charity – Board of Trustees
Date: 26 January 2022
Head of Service: Andy Blazkowicz, Director – Housing & Operations
Subject: FOLKESTONE PARKS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS – UPATE REPORT

Summary: This report provides the Board with an update in relation to all those decisions taken by the Director – Housing & Operations since January 2021 under his delegated authority to deal with charity assets. This report also covers other matters relating to charity land and proposes that Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer – Operations, is given the delegated authority to deal with charity assets.

Recommendations:

1. To receive and note Report FPPG/21/02.
2. To agree the proposal to allow Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer – Operations, to have delegated authority to make decisions regarding charity assets, which are not politically sensitive, on behalf of the charity to a value of £20,000pa per decision. This will commence from the new financial year 2022/23.
3. To agree the proposal to request funds from the council (from the available CIL allocations) for the works for the remedial repairs to Radnor Park Lodge – estimated at £20,000.
4. To agree the proposed new rent for a new two-year lease of Little Switzerland of £21,760pa.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The council act as trustees on behalf of the Folkestone Parks and Pleasure Grounds (FPPG) Charity in managing all of the charity's assets.
- 1.2 The Board considered report FPPG/20/03 on 20 January 2021 and resolved to agree:
- **'that the next update report shall relate to the period up to and including the 2021/2022 financial year and that all subsequent annual reports shall relate to their respective preceding financial year'**.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides the Board with an update in relation to all those decisions taken by the Director – Housing & Operations since January 2021, and forecast to the end of the 2021/2022 financial year, under his delegated authority to deal with charity assets. This report also covers other matters relating to charity land and proposes that Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer – Operations, is given the delegated authority to deal with charity assets.

3. DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE JANUARY 2021

3.1 Lower Sandgate Road Recreation Ground (Coastal Park)

- a. Beach huts, Marine Walk (report FPPG/19/02): this project incorporated the renovation of 35 existing huts, the removal of 44 dilapidated huts and the installation of 80 new wooden huts. The works completed in the spring 2021 and the huts have been leased on two year leases to spring 2023. A policy on beach hut lettings is being drafted together with a proposal for the future basis of the Folkestone beach hut leases.
- b. Triennial artwork at the beach huts, Marine Walk: a licence has been granted to Creative Folkestone (CF) for an artist's painted design on the exterior of the new and refurbished beach huts.
- c. Folkestone Harbour (GP) Limited have withdrawn their request to construct a new car park on the site of the existing public car park at the eastern end of the Coastal Park.

3.2 Radnor Park

- a. Tea Room: the lease to East Kent College Group (EKC) for Radnor Park Lodge expired 18 August 2021. A tenancy at will has been granted to EKC whilst a new lease is agreed. In the meantime, it has been agreed that the new two-year lease will no longer be full repairing and insuring – instead EKC will be responsible for internal repair and internal and external decorations only. It is also agreed that the lessor will undertake structural works required as identified by the council's building surveyor in the schedule of dilapidations prepared at termination of the previous lease.

The two areas requiring remedial works include:

- the roof of the single storey element – estimated at £15,000 plus 20% contingency; and

- the roof valley of the front porch. This work can be completed in-house but a provisional sum of £2,000 is budgeted for additional remedial works that may be required following the clearing of the valley.
- b. The council will obtain quotes for the works and it is recommended that the charity request funds from the council to cover the cost of these repairs – estimated at c.£20,000. Officers will make a formal request on behalf of the Charity to use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to cover the cost of the repairs as the building is a community asset.
- c. Store adjacent to Radnor Park (Upper) Pond: Trustees of Shepway Angling Club have been granted a lease for a term of two years from 6 March 2021.

3.3 Various charity lands

- a. Triennial artworks: a new lease was granted to CF for the placement of six existing artworks and three new artworks (for Triennial 2021) on charity land for a term of two years from 1 January 2021.
- b. Triennial artwork: a licence was granted to CF for the placement of a temporary artwork (for Triennial 2021) on charity land at The Durlocks Recreation Ground and the Amphitheatre at the Coastal Park.

4. OTHER MATTERS

4.1 East Cliff and The Warren Pleasure Ground

- a. Martello Tower No. 3: CF was granted a 99 year lease from March 2012. In December 2020, it was agreed that CF could surrender the lease and this was effective from 31 January 2021. CF paid a surrender premium of £5,000 to be used for property maintenance.
- b. Southern Water's pumping station, Coronation Parade: the transfer of charity land (i.e. the site of the pumping station) to Southern Water completed in August 2021. This is therefore no longer charity land.
- c. Warren Camp Site: a new two year lease has been agreed with the existing tenant from 18 January 2022 at a rent of £7,000pa.
- d. Little Switzerland Camp Site: it has been agreed that a new two-year lease will be granted to the existing tenant from 1 March 2022. The proposed rent is £21,760 per annum. This is greater than the delegated authority amount of £20,000, therefore it is recommended that FPPG agree the new rent at this level.
Interest in both campsites has been received from Starglade Parks Ltd (park homes) and Roma Capital (residential development).
- e. East Cliff Observation Post: A new 15 year lease has been agreed with National Coastwatch Institution at a rent of £50pa. FHDC Legal Services confirmed that it was possible to grant a lease greater than two years as the Charities Act requirements do not apply in this case i.e. where one charity leases to another charity which has similar objectives to the lessor.
- f. Sidney Cooper Weston Fountain: In February 2021, Go Folkestone withdrew its proposed refurbishment of the fountain. The fountain was then painted to protect it from the coastal environment in the medium term. Further large scale works will be needed in the future, but the historical listed structure's future is secure for now.
- g. Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT): negotiations are ongoing with CAT in relation to it resuming (under a new licence) seasonal fieldwork at the prehistoric settlement and Roman Villa site to 2025. CAT's focus will remain on those areas at risk of being lost due to erosion. A two-year lease in relation to the small wooden attendant's hut is also proposed for CAT's site accommodation.

- h. A grazing licence is proposed (under the direction of the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership) to control scrub growth within a fenced-off grazing compartment.
- i. East Cliff and The Warren: consideration is being given to improving the visitor experience of this area which may include a new play area, visitor's centre and other facilities. This is a large piece of work which is ongoing. The Council has been successful in obtaining a £20,000 grant from KCC which is being used for draft masterplanning and viability work. Due to considerable local interest in the project, the cabinet as trustees agreed to move to full consultation prior to any further works.
In January 2022, CAT informed the council that Historic England is in the final stages of the process of putting the Folkestone Roman Villa on their Monuments at Risk register. CAT confirmed that in terms of the proposed development of the area, there shouldn't be an impact, as the legal status of the site hasn't changed.
- j. The Warren beach: following the temporary closure of the beach in May 2020, geological and marine studies have taken place to ascertain the size and complexity of the former waste site. Officers are undertaking cost and design work and looking to further quantify risk.

4.2 Radnor Park

It has been agreed in principle that Folkestone Town Council can install a Folkestone Town Trail sign – this will be in addition to seven existing trail signs at other locations.

4.3 Various Charity Lands

Electric vehicle charging points are to be installed, as part of a wider project, at Lower Sandgate Road West Car Park, Coastal Park Car Park and East Cliff Pavilion Car Park.

4.4 Delegated Authority Proposal

In July 2018, the Trustees granted Andy Blaszkowicz, Director – Housing & Operations (formerly Head of Commercial and Technical Services) delegated authority to make decisions regarding charity assets on behalf of the charity to a value of £20,000 and which are not politically sensitive. At the end of last year, Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer – Operations took on responsibility for the council's corporate property portfolio. Therefore the proposal is:

- i. For the trustees of the Folkestone Parks and Pleasure Ground charity to grant the Chief Officer – Operations delegated authority to make decisions regarding the charity assets up to a value of £20,000pa, effective from the 2022/2023 financial year; and
- ii. It is considered that any larger scale agreements in excess of a rental fee of £20,000pa, projects and improvements on charity land or any use that may have political connotations or are of a sensitive matter should still be referred to the trustees to obtain formal approval.

The risks to the Council and the Charity are considered to be low with regard to the proposal.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is considered appropriate that:

- The next update report shall relate to the period up to and including the 2022/2023 financial year;

- Alastair Clifford, Chief Officer – Operations has delegated authority to make decisions regarding charity assets up to a value of £20,000pa and which are not politically sensitive from the 2022/2023 financial year;
- The charity requests funds from the council for the works for the remedial repairs to Radnor Park Lodge (**from the available CIL allocations**) – estimated at £20,000; and
- A new rent for Little Switzerland of £21,760pa, effective March 2022, is agreed.

6. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

- 6.1 **Legal Officer's Comments (NM)** There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 **Finance Officer's Comments (RH)** – all finance related issues are covered within the report, including the use of CIL allocation for the Radnor Park Lodge repairs.
- 6.3 **Diversities and Equalities Implications** There are no diversities and equalities implications arising from this report.

7. CONTACT OFFICER AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None.

Appendices:

None.