

**CHARITABLE TRUST COMMITTEE**  
**23/06/2025 at 6.00 pm**



**Present:** Councillor Rustidge (Chair)  
Councillors Ball and Charters (Vice-Chair)

Also in Attendance:

Emma Barton	Deputy Chief Executive
Kaidy McCann	Constitutional Services
Zoe Theofilopoulos	Solicitor – Legal Services

**1            APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bashforth, Marland and Sheldon.

**2            URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

**3            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**4            PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

**5            MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

**6            CLAYTON PLAYING FIELDS**

Consideration was given to a report which updated Members on activities at Clayton Playing Field to safeguard, improve and utilise the asset for community benefit and sought committee endorsement for the recommendations set out in the report in order to inform a formal decision by the relevant portfolio holder.

Members were informed that the asset comprised 9.85 hectares of playing fields and open recreation space, with a supporting car park. The asset was a charitable asset and was owned freehold by the Council via the Charity Committee. There was a cabin on-site providing changing facilities to support the use of the playing fields. The whole asset was designated as a Town Green. Boundary Park neighboured the site together with Little Wembley training ground (a designated Asset of Community Value (18 October 2021)). It was noted that there were no proposals to change the ownership of the land or its status as an important community asset.

Members were made aware of concerns that had been raised by local residents and elected members about tree planting on

Clayton Playing Fields. City of Trees had been working with the Council to enhance and protect woodland areas and the green nature of the borough. Trees were planted to create a small new woodland area adjacent to Clayton Playing Fields. Community concerns related to the location of where the trees had been planted, surveillance and safety parameters due to how close together the trees had been planted, and whether there was an impact on the designated helipad used for air ambulances. After investigating the matter, the following had been identified for Committee Members to note:

- title records were not correct with the Land Registry, and therefore officers did not realise that the location of the tree planting fell under the charity committee remit. This is being rectified and the land titles corrected.
- the contractor planting the trees has installed them at the wrong spacing compared to the instructions from officers.

Members were informed of community concerns which included antisocial behaviour from dog walkers and quad bikes. Members were also advised of the maintenance agreement as both Oldham Athletic Football Club and Oldham Rugby Clubs now trained and played matches at the stadium at Boundary Park (adjacent to Clayton Playing Fields), the SportsTown partnership were interested in supporting the local community to access sports and had offered to maintain the playing fields on the Council's behalf to the Council's current standards. Members were asked to note the recent Cabinet decision to accept the Community Regeneration Partnership funding designated for the support of SportsTown. A proposed capital allocation of £5,000,000 would be utilised to support the delivery of SportsTown Phase 1 which would include:

- Create new facilities for Higher Education, (HE), skills provision in the top floor of the Joe Royle Stand, including classrooms, access to specialist kit and changing facilities.
- Modification of the Joe Royle Stand to facilitate the above, including relocation of gym to create a new safeguarding access to the venue.
- Creation of new all-weather pitch on "Little Wembley" facility and 3G pitch, substantially increasing local use, access and participation.
- Provision of new outdoor netball court facilities (Oldham is a top-performer in netball) and University 5G.

Members were provided with the following recommendations:

1. approve retrospective tree planting around the edge of the area;
2. note that a site visit will be arranged with residents and ward members to review and identify remedial actions to correct the errors detected;
3. delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) any further resolutions and actions on this matter
4. to introduce a designated walking route around the pitch areas (around the outside of the fields) to continue to

- allow local residents to walk their dogs, but away from the playing pitch areas;
5. to designate a dog park area (exact location to be agreed at the site visit with local ward members and residents) where dogs can run off the lead in a safe space;
  6. to permit the introduction of dog poo bins along the new walking route and by the designated dog park to encourage owners from allow their pets to leave a mess on the playing pitch areas.
  7. to install a single rail (knee-high) barrier around the perimeter of the pitches, minimising the impact on the community playing fields and their intended use, and allowing continued community access, but preventing unwanted vehicles from causing damage to the area.
  8. to approve a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to be drawn up for the maintenance of the playing fields in return for mid-week / daytime use of the pitch areas (i.e. at times when the area is not used by local community groups). The pitches would still be available for use by the local community and other clubs and community groups in the evenings and at weekends (as now).
  9. to note and agree the proposals for a Service Level Agreement with the SportsTown partnership and to delegate the details of the agreement and final approval of the maintenance agreement to the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) and the relevant portfolio holder.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendations be noted and approved.

7

#### **LAND AT LADHILL LANE**

Consideration was given to a report which advised Members of a request to grant easement to United Utilities with such pipes/drains serving Fourways' development on nearby land. When eventually the precise location and extent of the land that was going to be affected by this proposal was established and a copy of the registered title was obtained, it transpired that the land affected was part of charitable trust playing fields and recreation ground. It was noted that no consideration whatsoever had been offered by Fourways, not even a market value payment for the grant of the easement.

Members were advised that even a market value payment for the easement would not be sufficient to make the grant of the easement in the best interests of the Charity. What would need to be offered is something which would provide a clear and unequivocal net benefit to the Charity. It was noted that a full decision was not needed by members at this point as the Committee needed to take on board the implications of the proposal or consider that kind of negotiation.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee instructs Oldham Borough Council Legal Services to:

a) disclose the Scheme relating to this Charity governing the recreation ground/playing fields at Ladhill Lane, Oldham (being information which is not available from the Land Registry but only from the Council's own records) to Fourways' solicitors (and therefore Fourways) in writing (that is by email), and  
b) to respond to Fourways' solicitors in writing (that is by email) that Fourways Projects NW Ltd's proposal does not offer anything to the Charity which would make a grant of the easement proposed to United Utilities in the best interests the Charity."



The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.26 pm