

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2018

CENTENARY FIELDS

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.1 Agree that The Knowes Park Macduff and Memorial Park Laurencekirk be submitted as Aberdeenshire Council's nominations for the Centenary Fields programme.

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 Fields in Trust (FIT) working in partnership with The Royal British Legion are promoting the Centenary Fields programme which aims to protect parks, playing fields and other recreational spaces in perpetuity to honour the memory of the millions who lost their lives in World War I.
- 2.2 The Centenary Fields programme was launched by the President of Fields in Trust HRH The Duke of Cambridge. The programme provides permanently protected outdoor spaces for sport, play and recreation in communities across all the UK. Fields in Trust aim to create a legacy of convenient and free access for everyone to be more active and engage in physical activity and sport.
- 2.3 An outline of the Centenary Field programme is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Landowners across the UK are encouraged to dedicate war memorial playing fields and recreation grounds, memorial gardens, parks or recreation grounds that contain a war memorial and other valued green spaces that have some significance to World War I as Centenary Fields.
- 2.5 By dedicating land through the Centenary Fields programme local authorities and other landowners can ensure valuable green space is protected as a living remembrance to those who fought and lost their lives in World War I. This dedication is aligned with the spirit of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and will be recognised by the local community as a clear commitment to the importance of these spaces now and in the future.
- 2.6 If the green space is to be protected as a Centenary Field it must have a tangible link to World War I, either existing or planned.
- 2.7 Fields in Trust works in partnership with landowners including local authorities, voluntary organisations and private landowners to protect land through a Deed of Dedication (or Minute of Agreement in Scotland) – a binding legal commitment with the landowner – which allows green spaces to be protected in perpetuity for current and future generations to enjoy.

- 2.8 The protection to be conferred on fields would mean that designated fields cannot be lost, for any development, in perpetuity. However, given a reasonable case and a replacement or betterment of current facilities, Fields in Trust is willing to negotiate a re-designation of a particular field if appropriate.
- 2.9 The legal agreement with the Fields In Trust Association would be very similar to those developed for the Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge in 2012, However, in essence the agreement will seek to:-
- restrict the power of the Council to sell or otherwise dispose of any part of a designated area without the agreement of the Association;
 - restrict any buildings being erected on such areas without the agreement of the Association;
 - ensure that the Association will not unreasonably withhold consent for disposal or development so long as agreement on a replacement or betterment has been reached;
 - ensure that the Council shall have full power to let the areas for recreational and sporting uses and to carry out maintenance as necessary; and
 - bind the Council and its successors to this agreement in perpetuity.
- 2.10 In determining the recommended locations the Service consulted the Archivist Service and the sites at Macduff and Laurencekirk were selected as they are the only parks that were identified with tangible links with WW1. More detail on the information provided by the archivist for each site is outlined below.
- 2.10.1 Macduff
- The Macduff Town Council minutes for 3 May 1920 record that the Amenities Committee agreed that the land adjoining the memorial site at Canker Knowe, “now rented by the Town Council” be conjoined to the memorial site as gifted to the Town by the late Duke of Fife’s Trustees and that the whole be known as the “Memorial Park”.
- 2.10.2 Laurencekirk
- At Laurencekirk a public meeting of subscribers to the War Memorial agreed that the balance of funds raised would be used to acquire a public recreation ground. In March 1921 the Town Council were offered the field beside the bowling green owned by the Pearson family, plus the adjoining ground currently owned by a Mr Tindal, to the Town Council for use as a recreation park. The War Memorial Committee were subsequently offered and accepted a site at the corner of the park for the Memorial, and plans for the Memorial Park were accepted by the Town Council in December 1921.
- 2.11 The creation of Centenary Fields sites will contribute to National Outcome 12: We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
- 2.12 As the nominated parks are already designated as areas for recreation & sport there are no apparent risks associated to achieving this protected status.

- 2.13 The nominated parks already enjoy protected status via the Local Development Plan, however these plans are reviewed/revised every 5 years. Centenary Fields status would provide additional protection for these parks in perpetuity.
- 2.14 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to take a decision on this item in terms of Section F1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the matter relates to Roads, Landscape and Waste Management Service.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because the content of this report does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 4.2 There are no staffing implications or immediate financial implications arising from this report although there may be restrictions on long term future disposal of land.
- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Directorate level:-
- BSSR001 Balancing The Books - Restrictions on long term future disposal of land.
- 4.4 A Town Centre Impact Assessment is not required because there will be no significant impact as a result of this report on town centres.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by:- Graham Wall, Business Development Manager.
Date 15 November 2018

Centenary Fields FAQs



The Centenary Fields programme is working in partnership with The Royal British Legion and aims to protect parks, playing fields and other recreational spaces in perpetuity to honour the memory of the millions who lost their lives in World War I.

1. **What is the initiative all about?**

The Centenary Fields programme aims to protect at least one green space in every local authority area across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to commemorate the centenary of World War I (WWI). These protected sites could be war memorial parks or recreation grounds, memorial gardens, parks and recreation grounds that contain war memorials or other valued green spaces. Safeguarding these sites will create a living UK-wide legacy in commemoration of the sacrifice made by those who lost their lives in WWI. Fields in Trust is working in partnership with the Royal British Legion to deliver the programme.

2. **Are you creating any new fields or are they all existing fields?**

It is anticipated that the majority of fields protected through the Centenary Fields programme will already be in existence and will have a significant link to WWI. In some instances, where a suitable site is not already in existence, then local authorities may choose to mark the centenary of WWI by dedicating one of their flagship sites as a Centenary Field or by creating a completely new site.

3. **Is this just an exercise to rename existing fields?**

No absolutely not! Fields in Trust exists to safeguard fields in perpetuity via a legal document called a deed of dedication. Decades of urban development have seen the stock of playing fields reduce substantially and once outdoor

recreational spaces are lost to development they are lost for good. Safeguarding sites through the Centenary Fields programme and other Fields in Trust initiatives ensures that more parks, playing fields and other spaces will be available for future generations to enjoy.

4. Who are you targeting with this initiative?

Fields in Trust and The Royal British Legion hope that the whole of the UK will support this initiative. Phase One of the campaign started in April 2014 when all first tier local authorities were asked to protect at least one suitable field in their area. Phase Two, which began in November 2014, approached Town and Parish Councils with the same request. Phase Three was launched in June 2015, and invited sports clubs that either own their own land, or have a lease of 99 years or more, to protect their ground. Sports clubs eligible to apply are those that have been in existence for more than 100 years, and that had some members who fought in WWI. We hope that all landowners will see the great benefits that protecting these spaces will have in terms of addressing some topical agendas around increasing physical activity, promoting social cohesion and improving the environment, alongside commemorating the Centenary of WWI in a long-lasting way for their communities.

5. Why should landowners get involved with this initiative?

Dedicating a Centenary Field is a fitting way for landowners to mark the centenary of WWI by commemorating the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the conflict and ensuring that their communities benefit now and in the future from protected green spaces. The Centenary Fields programme is also a way of local authorities fulfilling the Community Covenant that the vast majority have signed up to.

6. Is there a deadline for applications to the programme?

The deadline for applications is 11th November 2018 and all deeds of dedication must be signed by May 2019. Any sites where the deed is not signed by this time will not become Centenary Fields.

7. How is a site defined for this programme and what criteria need to be met?

A site could be a war memorial park or recreation ground, memorial garden, park or recreation ground that contains a war memorial or other valued green spaces. If there isn't a war memorial on the site then it must have some significance to WW1, for example it could be playing a key role in the local WWI commemorations. As time goes on there will undoubtedly be some good examples of how sites are connected with WWI, and these will be promoted as applicable.

Each application will be assessed through a site visit but as a minimum, the following criteria must be met:

1. The Landowner of the site must complete the application form
2. Evidence of ownership, and where relevant freehold interest must be produced

3. The principal use should be outdoor recreation, sport or play. This can include buildings or facilities if the use is ancillary to the outdoor space
4. Sites must have public access
5. Sites should be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community
6. Sites should have local managers who are responsible for the quality of the facilities, maintenance and development, improving participation and financial and operational sustainability

The Landowner must be able to sign the agreed Deed of Dedication within six months of submitting an application.

8. **What form does the WWI memorial have to take? For example is a park containing a bandstand with a WWI dedication a suitable memorial?**

The WWI memorial can take various forms, for example a monument, remembrance garden, memorial gates, village hall. A bandstand with a WWI dedication would be a suitable memorial.

9. **How does the programme link with other WWI initiatives?**

Fields in Trust are working with the War Memorials Trust, who fund the repair and restoration of war memorials, and Historic England, who have an ambitious programme to list the country's significant war memorials. In August 2013, the Government announced a campaign to honour Victoria Cross recipients from WW1, with a paving stone being sent to the local council in which the recipient was born, on the 100th Anniversary of the Award. We think that it would be fitting to lay the paving stone in a Centenary Field, and indeed a number of landowners are planning to do so.

10. **What is the process for protecting these sites?**

The first stage in the process is for the landowner to complete an application form and this will be followed by a site visit, after which the landowner will be told whether the site is accepted as a Centenary Field or not. If the site is accepted the legal process then starts and sites will be protected in England via a deed of dedication. Fields in Trust will draw up the draft deed and then the landowner has a chance to make amendments. When all parties are satisfied with the deed it will be signed and then registered with the Land Registry. The site is then able to order a Centenary Fields commemorative plaque and can organise an unveiling event.

11. **How flexible is the legal part of the process?**

If landowners have any specific requirements Fields in Trust will be happy to discuss these on a case by case basis. We are willing to be flexible over the wording of a particular deed to deal with local need.

12. **What are the costs associated with the process of protection of a Centenary Field?**

The costs are as follows:

0. Any legal costs associated with agreeing the deed
1. The cost of installing the commemorative plaque – which will be provided free of charge

2. The cost of registering the resulting restrictions with the Land Registry – currently £80 for up to three titles

13. **Will Fields in Trust take over the management of a field?**

No, all the sites protected by Fields in Trust are locally managed. Local communities, landowners and users are in a far better position to know how local facilities can best be provided, used and enhanced. All aspects of management and maintenance are determined locally. Fields in Trust's role is custodial and advisory. We see protection by these means as having a light touch but being absolutely effective. We ensure that the fact of protection of these sites is in the public domain and that any change of use or any buildings which fall outside the terms of protection needs our specific advance consent.

14. **Can a site retain its current name or does it have to be renamed the Centenary Field?**

It is not necessary for the sites involved in the programme to change their names. We are very aware that so many sites already have names that are instantly recognisable within the community through their long usage. The site would acquire Centenary Fields status, and receive and display signage associated with this which would ensure there was no requirement for any actual name change. The King George V Fields are a good template for this. Many local authorities will be familiar with the King George V Fields in their area still being known by other names, whilst also having the King George V plaques at their entrances.

15. **Will protected sites be provided with any signage to show they are a Centenary Field?**

Every site will receive a commemorative plaque to display on the site. The plaques will have provision for the name of the site and/or the name of the landowner or the geographical location.

16. **Will the specific site always be protected?**

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:

0. at least equal size
1. better quality
2. 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.

17. **Is there a limit to the number of applications/successful applicants from a region/area?**

There is no quota per area, and the programme is not competitive between

landowners. Each application will be judged against the criteria on its own merits.

18. **Is there any funding available for Centenary Fields?**

There is no funding at present, but Fields in Trust is currently fundraising for the programme and will promote any funding programme when possible.

19. **Are sites which have a WWI memorial that are already protected as QEII Fields eligible to be put forward for the Centenary Fields programme?**

No these sites are already protected and therefore would not be eligible to become Centenary Fields. The programme aims to increase the amount of playing fields, recreation grounds and parks protected by Fields in Trust. However, to acknowledge the fact that these sites have a link with WWI we will be happy to provide a commemorative plaque in return for the landowner protecting an additional site.

20. **We have a Memorial park with a WWI memorial and would like to get it put on the official register of memorials, how can we do this?**

This is something that involvement with the Centenary Fields will facilitate through Fields in Trust's partnership with the War Memorials Trust. At the site visit the correct information will be collected to ensure that this valuable resource is enhanced.

21. **How can the public support the initiative?**

The public can support Centenary Fields by encouraging their local authority to safeguard a green space as part of the campaign, could get involved with a 'Friends of' group linked with a protected site and, if they wish, by making donations to the programme.

Find out [more information](#) on the Centenary Fields programme.

