

# **Bingham Park Community Group public meeting. Whiteley Wood Bowling Pavilion.**

**11 March 2017 2pm**

## **Present:**

Bingham Park Community Group co-ordinators: Linda Sibley, Kate Robinson, Ros Tratt

FoPV: Ann Le Sage

Council officers: Andy Phillips and Stuart Turner

Councillors: Roger Davison and Shaffaq Mohammed

In addition 26 other people signed the attendance register

**Linda Sibley** welcomed everyone to the meeting (34 people signed the attendance book), and thanked the Bowling Club for allowing the use of the pavilion.

**Ros Tratt** summarised the findings of the community consultation that was carried out with the community after the meeting on 6 November 2016 (the report is available to view on the Bingham Park page of the FoPV website <http://www.fopv.org.uk/bingham%20park.htm>).

- 100 people responded to the consultation, either at the meeting or online.
- The main message from the responses was that people valued the flat, fenced, mud-free space, and support the restoration of the tennis courts area. They would like to see re-furbished tennis courts, and would accept some courts as pay-per-play, but they do not want to lose free access to the courts or the astroturf for informal sports and play activities.
- As well as strong support for tennis facilities and a range of fenced and un-fenced multi-use spaces for informal activities, there was also strong support for a netball court, a small (1 court) scooter and skatepark, a bike track and a climbing boulder.
- Most people who use the area live very locally in Greystones and High Storrs so it is an easily accessible space for large numbers of people, particularly families. Access to facilities and flat, mud-free ground in Endcliffe and Millhouses requires a return journey up a very steep hill, or a car journey.
- People recognise that vandalism has been an issue, and will probably continue to be, but that the installation of robust, sustainable facilities will minimise the impact of vandalism.
- Subsequently, representatives of the Bingham Park Community Group and FoPV met with councillors and council officials to discuss the results of the community consultation and the council's plans for the area, and the council developed a plan. This was shared at the meeting.

Council officers estimated that £250,000 would be required to carry out full structural repairs and to re-furbish the whole courts area. They have £70,000 from section 106 planning gain funds earmarked for Bingham Park. They have also put in a bid for £30,000 to the Lawn Tennis Association. This funding (£100,000) would cover structural repairs to the site to resolve the 'health and safety nightmares' that are present and the refurbishment of 2 tennis courts (courts 4 and 5), which would then be run by an external organisation (e.g. parks tennis) using an online booking and pay-to-play model (the same as is operated at Hillsborough, Millhouses, Weston Park etc.). However, although the astroturf football area would be retained, there would be no additional free access fenced courts / pitches under this scheme, and courts 1,2, and 3, which are in reasonable condition, and currently well used, would be landscaped to create a green slope. At the meeting the council officials provided an update to this plan and said court 1 could also be retained as an unfenced surfaced area. The council will find out whether their bid to the LTA has been successful in June.

BPCP have suggested that the community would welcome the restoration of 2 tennis courts but would also like to retain the option of providing free to access, fenced court areas, for groups to play sports (e.g netball), and for a range of other activities, particularly for teenagers. The ideal place for these would be courts 2 and 3. Court 1 should be retained as flat, unfenced mud free area!. Comments from people at the meeting showed support for this proposal (which was based on feedback from the consultation). Courts beyond 5 are in a worse state - but of those court 6 and court 9 could be re-purposed, possibly as a mini scooter skate and park.

In response to questions about why the lower courts (1,2 and 3) had been identified for landscaping, rather than repairs, the council officers said the main barrier was the cost of repairing the retaining wall between courts 2 and 3.

The council officers do not feel that it would be good value for money to refurbish all 9 tennis courts in this area (neither do most of the community). They said that it was an unusual location to choose for tennis courts and that this location would not be chosen if the courts were being created today. However, they recognise that there is strong local feeling to retain the courts area in a safe state so that funding can be sought in phases, possibly over several years, to provide a range of facilities - both for tennis and alternative uses. However, all facilities need funding provision for ongoing maintenance, and this has to be factored in to fund-raising bids.

Council officers suggested that a phased masterplan was needed, where the options for the tennis courts site, the astroturf and the wider park area (including top bowling green, golf course etc.) were set out and consulted on, but this would need the involvement of landscape architects and would be an iterative process, with to-ing and fro-ing of ideas, costs etc. The council do not have the resources to support the development of a masterplan. The council projects team is small - only Stuart Turner and 3.5 others for the whole of Sheffield.

Henry Boot Construction company have been approached by Bingham Park Community Group, and the council officials suggested that pursuing this partnership would be a good idea, and any support they could give to the project in providing materials and doing structural repairs would not only reduce the costs of any re-furbishment projects but could also be used to draw down further funding from other sources.

**Ann Le Sage** very helpfully suggested a variety of organisations that could provide funding, and reported that FoPV have already put in a bid to the co-op community fund. She also mentioned that the proposed flood prevention plans for Endcliffe Park could mean that facilities at Bingham Park might become more important in the future.

Other suggestions for funding applications included the **Community Asset Fund** which awards grants for sports facilities if the proposals are endorsed by the national governing body of a sport. At Bingham Park this could include skateboard, tennis, netball and football governing bodies.

#### **ACTIONS:**

1. **Council officers** will go back to the Capital Delivery Service (CDS) in Sheffield City Council and propose that a new plan is created with courts 1, 2 and 3 retained, with courts 2 and 3 fenced, but court 1 retained as an open, surfaced area (as present). The remaining courts should be made safe (fencing and high retaining walls re-graded). Court 9 has the potential to be a good location for a scooter and skate park so CDS will also be asked to include this in their plan. The cost of these additional works should be itemised so that Bingham Park Community Group can use the plan in funding applications.
2. **Bingham Park Community Group** will contact Henry Boot and apply to their committee for support to carry out structural repairs. We will write a letter and send a plan of the site showing the retaining walls, steps etc that need repairs. Our aim will be to arrange a meeting on site and to get them involved. If they do agree to be involved we will then arrange a meeting with council officials.
3. **Bingham Park Community Group** will draw up a fund-raising plan, starting with putting in applications to local trusts, and investigating the larger grants (e.g. the Community Asset Fund and Sport England grants). Several people have offered expertise in writing funding applications, and they will be invited to join in with this process.
4. **Councillors** will email Bingham Park Community Group a form so that they can apply for a community noticeboard to be installed at the park entrance or near the bowling / courts area.
5. **Bingham Park Community Group** will contact the Landscape Department at the University of Sheffield to see if developing a masterplan for the whole Bingham Park area would make a good student project.
6. Updates will be posted on twitter, facebook and on the Bingham Park pages of the FoPV website. If people would prefer email notifications of news and events, rather than via twitter and facebook, it would be very helpful if they could email [binghamparkcommunitygroup@gmail.com](mailto:binghamparkcommunitygroup@gmail.com).
7. Dates of bowling taster sessions will be posted on the FoPV Bingham Park webpage.
8. Thanks to Linda Sibley and Jane Hancock for their fundraising efforts. Their tombola and donations for tea and coffee raised £58.80 (in addition to £104.86 from donations at the meeting on 6th November and £103.40 for sales of re-cycled tennis balls). The money raised is held in FoPV bank account earmarked for Bingham Park.