



Berwick upon Tweed Town Council

Council

29 June 2021

Appendix K

Report of Town Clerk

Five Arches Park, Tweedmouth

Access Public

Background

1. Council has previously discussed its relationship with Northumberland County Council over Five Arches Park / Recreation Ground, where Berwick Town Council owns an allotment site and a former play area.
2. Proposals have been advertised by the County Council to dispose of part of their land, under a twenty five year lease, to a football club that uses the park as its base.
3. This is the third occasion on which this issue of the disposal of land has arisen. On both occasions the issue has been raised of the land being covered by a covenant, instituted by the donors, specifying that the land should be used for public recreation. The Town Clerk has previously advised that this is a matter that may be germane to a general scrutiny of the disposal by the County Council, but is not relevant to the Town Council's response to this consultation as a land owner with an interest in land adjacent to the land being disposed of.

The consultation process

4. The consultation process expires at the beginning of July, and for that reason this report is also being pre-circulated to the intended lessees, a football club, and to the Friends of Five Arches, a voluntary organisation.

Planning for the future of the land

5. The upgrading of the park with increased planting and maintenance was previously identified as a desirable outcome for the town, and the recent improvements to footpaths was a welcome development.
6. The Town Council has previously approached the County Council with an offer to surrender its land holdings in Five Arches in return for a new allotment site elsewhere. Those discussions have not moved forward but post pandemic we look forward to discussing these plans and believe they offer benefits all round.
7. Town Council has been approached by the relevant County Councillor, and a Town Councillor who believes they have obtained some private funding, with a proposal to reinstate the children's play area. The Town Clerk will provide guidance to council in confidential session as to the level of funding, but believes it is possible for the Town Council to match that funding. This is relevant to the consultation in as much as it provides a further measure of improvements to the park, and, in line with our current practice, may enable us to provide a measure of CCTV cover at the site as well.

Issues

8. Previous discussions around this topic have revolved around the issue of the football pitch possibly being fenced off, and of the risk of obstruction to allotment holders from football activities. Provided reassurance can be gained on these two areas, officers see no reason for council to object to these proposals

Recommendation

1. That councillors provide guidance to officers.

Author	GD	Town Clerk sign off (if required)	GD
Checked by	SC	Finance Officer sign off (if required)	N/A