

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

08 December 2014

**Report of the Director of Street Scene and Leisure and the
Cabinet Member for Leisure Youth and Arts**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 FIELDS IN TRUST – CENTENARY FIELDS

Summary

This report advises Members on the Fields in Trust Centenary Fields initiative and brings forward a proposal for Tonbridge Memorial Gardens to be dedicated under this scheme.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 To commemorate the centenary of World War 1, Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) are leading on a nationwide initiative aimed at securing and protecting a range of green spaces in perpetuity. Safeguarding these sites will create a living UK-wide legacy in commemoration of the sacrifice made by those who lost their lives in World War 1.

1.1.2 The scheme was launched earlier this year and aims to achieve a network of protected sites across the country by November 2018.

1.2 Process of Dedication

1.2.1 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 this the landowner will be advised 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.

1.2.2 Fields in Trust will draw up the 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.

1.3 Scheme Criteria

1.3.1 Fields in Trust are looking for a range of sites including war memorial parks or recreation grounds, memorial gardens, parks and recreation grounds that contain a war memorial or other valued green spaces (with significance to World War 1).

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

- The landowner of the site must complete the application form
- Evidence of ownership, and where relevant freehold interest must be produced.
- The principal use should be outdoor recreation, sport or play. However, sites can also include facilities such as pavilions, village halls, indoor leisure or heritage facilities that are established for community recreational purposes.
- Sites must have public access.
- Sites should be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community.
- 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.

1.4 Borough Council Sites

1.4.1 Taking the above into consideration it is proposed that the newly refurbished Tonbridge Memorial Gardens be nominated for dedication under this scheme. This will offer the site future protection to ensure it continues to be a site for commemoration and further mark the centenary of World War 1. Liaison has been undertaken with the Tonbridge Memorial Gardens Trust which is supportive of the proposal.

1.5 Parish and Town Council Sites

1.5.1 Phase one of the campaign started in April 2014 with Fields in Trust approaching all first tier local authorities and asking them to protect at least one suitable site. Phase two, scheduled to begin in November 2014, will be to directly approach all Town and Parish Councils with the same request. It is suggested that it would be appropriate for Fields in Trust to be invited to present the scheme to a meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel.

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 Following confirmation/acceptance of a site under the scheme the landowner will be required to sign up to a Deed of Dedication with Fields in Trust to secure the site, in perpetuity.

1.6.2 Consultation will be undertaken with the Director of Central Services in regard to the details of the Deed prior to signature and Fields in Trust have indicated their flexibility over the wording of a particular deed to deal with any local need.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 It is anticipated that nominal costs associated with the installation of the commemorative plaque and registration with the Land Registry will be met through existing revenue budgets.

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 The Council will need to consider the implications arising from the dedication of the site as highlighted above at 1.6.2.

1.9 Equality Impact Assessment

1.9.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.10 Policy Considerations

1.10.1 Asset Management and Community.

1.11 Recommendations

1.11.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that,

- (i) subject to consideration of the Deed of Dedication by the Director of Central Services, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council nominate Tonbridge Memorial Gardens for dedication under the Centenary Fields scheme,
- (ii) Fields in Trust be invited to present the scheme to a future meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel.

The Director of Street Scene and Leisure confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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