

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

MELKSHAM AREA BOARD

16 APRIL 2014

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

St Mary's Recreation Field and Former School Playing Field, Steeple Ashton

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of St Mary's recreation field and the former school playing field, Steeple Ashton to be transferred to Steeple Ashton Parish Council in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Steeple Ashton Parish Council for the transfer of St Mary's recreation field and the former school playing field, Steeple Ashton. The applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 3.

Reasons For Proposal

This proposal supports and implements Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Recommendation

To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 9 of the report.

Alison Sullivan
Melksham Community Area Manager

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Purpose of Report

1. The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Steeple Ashton Parish Council for the transfer of St Mary's recreation field and the former school playing field, Steeple Ashton (see plans attached at Appendices 1 and 2). The applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 3.

Background

2. Wiltshire Council is supporting the principle of the transfer of community assets in order to empower and strengthen local communities. The Council believes that transferring appropriate public assets to communities leads to more responsive services that better meet local people's priorities.
3. Transfer of an asset can also provide the opportunity to lever more resources into a community and provide a more accessible and responsive base from which to deliver local services.
4. A community group or organisation can benefit from greater financial stability and build confidence through having ownership (or long term security through a lease) of a physical asset. This financial sustainability can help the organisation become less dependent on grants, provide security for further borrowing and opportunities for further growth.
5. Typically, organisations that would be considered appropriate are Voluntary and Community Groups/Associations, Town or Parish Councils, Trusts or Charities, or Social Enterprise Groups.

The application before the Area Board

6. The application from Steeple Ashton Parish Council is attached at Appendix 3 and relates to the transfer of St Mary's recreation field and the former school playing field, Steeple Ashton.
7. The application was submitted in accordance with the Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the

Area Board.

8. The Community Area Manager has consulted with Strategic Property Services, who have undertaken appropriate consultation with service departments across the Council. Local consultation has been undertaken by the applicant in accordance with the application checklist and the outcome of the consultation is included within the application. Cllr Seed, the local member, has been apprised.

The views of Council officers

9. On behalf of the Council, Strategic Property Services (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) has provided the following observations to the Area Board.
 - 9.1 Both areas of land are currently leased to Steeple Aston Parish Council for thirty years from 1st October 2005.
 - 9.2 Public Footpath Steeple Ashton 2 crosses the St Mary's site.
 - 9.3 The land is to be transferred on the standard basis. This is that there will be a covenant restricting use of the land to community purposes. If the land should cease to be used for this purpose it will revert to Wiltshire Council.
 - 9.4 The land has no value other than as amenity land and Steeple Ashton Parish Council will continue to maintain it. Therefore, financial implications are limited to the loss of the rent paid in accordance with the terms of the 2005 lease.

Recommendation

10. To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 9 above.

Alison Sullivan
Melksham Community Area Manager
