

Longfield Muga Enhancement

About your organisation

Trowbridge Town Council was established in the Mid-1970's but at that time had very few assets to manage. The town has expanded rapidly since that time. The statutory authority, Wiltshire Council had ownership of almost all the multi-sport facilities within the town but they have lacked investment overtime and are in great need of re-development. Trowbridge Town Council is passionate about supporting the development of the town creating a community that residents can take pride in and has taken responsibility for many of the assets Wiltshire Council can no longer manage ensuring their continuity for the community. Trowbridge Town Council has also gone further than this recognising the need within the town for access to affordable sporting provision by investing in a team of coaching staff, we believe we are the only town council to do so. It is the view of Trowbridge Town Council that now is the time to take these inherited multi sports assets and invest in them to provide fully develop leisure facilities that are accessible to all across the town. But due to budgetary commitments, lack the financial resources to make such a major investment.

Your Project

Trowbridge Town Council obtained 4 multi-sport sites in separate housing estates across Trowbridge as an asset transfer from Wiltshire Council. The sites have lacked maintenance for some time prior to the transfer and as a result have become over time, under used and a target for vandalism. The site at Grove has not had any investment in over a decade and has poor access for less able members of the community. The sites at Longfield, Seymour and Studley Green are all located in areas of social and economic deprivation. The latter being in the top 10% nationally. The existing goal ends on 2 of the 4 sites are plywood, 2 of the courts have been burned and 1 is gravel chippings unsuitable for play. Fencing on 2 of the sites are insufficient and the other 2 lack any kind of fencing at all. Investing in these multi-sport court facilities will make a massive contribution to the local communities, creating a community hub for sports and recreation. We would like to completely renovate each site with new goal ends, new fencing, resurfacing courts where required, line painting and provide improved access to sites where necessary.

The Chair of TCAF (Trowbridge Community Area Future), which is a small local youth and community charity in Trowbridge believes that redeveloping these MUGA's "will have a direct positive impact on the young people and residents we work with and ensure they have an increased value for their community and the local environment where they live."

Why you need to do the project

Investment in these multi-sport courts will draw them once more into their community. They can become a focal point for leisure and affordable sport in the community and support existing programmes with a renewed resource and opportunities to development. The site at Studley Green for example, redevelopment here would give investment to an area of the community that is in the top 10% nationally for social and economic deprivation in the UK. It could be utilised by Trowbridge Wanderers Football Club who play at Studley Green and foster the development of grass roots football. It would also give the National Street Games Doorstep programme a dedicated outside space to use. This is a view supported by Danny Gleeson Sports Development Officer, "Wiltshire Council will support and work in partnership with Active Trowbridge (Trowbridge Town Council) through our StreetGames, This Girl Can and Disability Sports programmes ensuring that new facilities are put to good use."

The site at Longfield is central placed again in one of Trowbridge's areas of economic deprivation and is key multi faith community. Investment in this site would benefit the local primary school, situated right next to the MUGA, it would benefit the youth group and the new formed This Girl Can programme which operate out of Longfield Community Centre. We can also ensure that the site is disability inclusive for Stepping Stones a specialist centre located at Longfield. The work to the site at Seymour can be finalised and could again be utilised by the Seymour youth group for sport and along site the grass pitches at this site could offer a great opportunity for the development of club sport. The head of Bellefield Primary (serving the Seymour Rd area), describes these multi-sport courts as vital. "They give young people a different focus than they might otherwise have had if there were no (or substandard) sports amenities...the Seymour Road residents value their community and this would be an invaluable asset to them as well as to all of the young people who attend my (and other) schools. The children in the area need a safe, high quality provision to encourage them to exercise and to learn how to be part of a wider community."

The multi-sport site at The Grove is adjacent to 2 of the other housing estates that have no play or sport facilities investing in this site that has severely lacked investment will help to make it a hub for a wide area of the town. It has close proximity to a local primary and Wiltshire College's Trowbridge Campus, giving students an accessible space for sport, and would, like the site at Seymour, provide a space for club sport to be developed. As the Head of The Grove Primary School states "It is clear that our local sports facilities are in need of repair...We need our children to be inspired by their local facilities and encouraged to further their sports participation by feeling pride in their environment".

Your People

The wider Trowbridge community is varied socially and economically. There are 19 different multi faith groups within a population just over 33,000. Trowbridge Town Council work closely with key partners across the community who could all benefit from investment in these community assets. The vast majority of people who will gain from investment in the multi-sport court facilities are from low income families who live in close proximity to the sites. Local Housing Association Selwood Housing, have 1164 properties within these 4 areas of Trowbridge and confirms 3 of the 4 have a particularly high IMD (Index of Multiple deprivation) score, almost over double that of the England average. All 4 areas are above England's average for young people population (0-15yrs) and all 4 areas score particularly high for adult obesity.

It is the view of the town council and Selwood Housing that 'giving access to sports facilities will help reduce the levels of obesity amongst adults and children.' According to data the National Children Measurement programme, Trowbridge has the highest number of obese children in Wiltshire, we can support the community to make healthier life choices by 'giving young people the opportunity to access free or subsidised activity close to home.' Children and adults living in deprived areas are also less likely to have access to their own transport and the regularity of public transport within Trowbridge has been reduced by Wiltshire Council particularly in the evenings. Providing sport and wellbeing activities close to home at reasonable or no cost encourages participation.

There are a number of groups and individuals who are already in active in the locality who would immediately benefit from this investment. These would include participants of the This Girl Can programme, National Street Games, local sports clubs, the fit and fed programme, attendees at youth services led by TCAF. Trowbridge Town Council can expand their own programme of activities and work with others, the statutory authority Wiltshire Council, other local sports providers, clubs and community groups to develop new programmes.

Selwood Housing also noted that investing in areas of deprivation helps build a sense of community ownership, pride, builds a sense of community spirit and cohesion and act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour.

Making It Happen

Trowbridge Town Council are already working collaboratively with the local schools in each of the estates, all of whom support the intended programme of development as do the resident associations and Trowbridge Community Area Future (TCAF). We have the support of the Sports Development team at Wiltshire Council to drive the programme forward. It will have a transformative effect on the local communities creating central hubs for leisure facilities locally and we would seek to ensure they are fully engaged in the decision making progress to ensure the multi-sport courts are designed to best suit the needs of their individual communities.

We are already working closely with Selwood Housing Association on the Longfield estate. Our proposal to seek support to redevelopment of the multi-sport court at this site coincided with Selwood's own community and partner consultation which asked residents to comment on what aspects of the estate required work and a re-occurring trend in the data has been improvements to the multi-sport court, providing facilities for young people, particularly with a focus on basketball and provision of new health and well-being initiatives.

We would seek to phase the re-development of the 4 sites over 2-4-year period starting from 2019, Trying to identify which of the sites, from the 4, had the greatest need and starting with that first. This would allow our facilities manager and neighbourhood services team to development a fully comprehensive project management plan, time to seek additional grant funding from the area board, to further consult with the community in each area, under take a tender process in line with Town Council procedure, submit and complete any required planning applications. Upon completion of the project any on-going costs for their maintenance would be absorbed by Trowbridge Town Council and the sites would be included in the regular schedule of works of the neighbourhood services department.