



Ayr Field Community Plan St Ives

12th September 2006

Contents

1.0	Executive Summary
2.0	Context
3.0	The Vision for Ayr Field
4.0	The Case for Open Space
5.0	Proposals
6.0	Maintenance and Management
7.0	Financial Issues
8.0	Risks
9.0	Timescales and Milestone Outcomes
10.0	Conclusion
11.0	Appendices

Cover image by Fraser Bramwell age 5 - St Ives Infant School

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This plan seeks to secure Ayr Field as public open space and allow for its sympathetic enhancement for informal recreation and community events. The Plan has been devised and written by Ayr Field Community Group following a series of local consultations and has been endorsed by Penwith District Council.

Ayr Field is a green space of over one acre in the heart of St Ives. It was purchased by Cornwall County Council in 1915 with the help of donations from local people. St Ives lacks sufficient informal open space: its provision falls short of the National Playing Fields Association's standard, and those open spaces that do exist are remote from many of the residential parts of the town.

Ayr Field Community Group was constituted in January 2006. By August 2006, it had over 100 members, a further 835 registered supporters and over 60 volunteers.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

Ayr Field Community Group's aim is to establish the field as a year-round open green space, for use by the community for informal recreation and locally organised activities and events. Our objectives are:

- To re-create a large grassed area by removing the tarmac track and replanting with grass.
- To improve access to the field.
- To improve the facilities on the field, specifically children's play equipment and seating.
- To improve the visual and natural amenity of Ayr Field, through shrub and tree planting.
- To improve the safety of the field for its users.
- To encourage use of the field for informal recreation and organised activities.

In pursuing these objectives, the Group is committed to community involvement, environmental responsibility, access for all and community safety.

1.3 Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken in a number of different ways, including a public meeting, community and young people's questionnaires, involvement with schools, supporters' cards and other activities. The results of the consultation have been emphatic and overwhelming: local people are unhappy with the current provision of open space in the town, and they want to be able to use Ayr Field for a range of recreational activities which they are unable to undertake elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

1.4 Proposals

It is proposed that the field will be used for informal recreation, including children's play, ball games, picnics and family activities. There will also be organised activities such as community events and sports sessions, arranged either by the Ayr Field Community Group or by other local organisations.

A number of site improvements are proposed. These will include the extension of the central grassed area, enhancement of access points to the field, upgrading of equipment in the children's play area, provision of seating, and shrub and tree planting, with all elements designed to take into account the safety of users.

The redevelopment of the Scout Hut will be a separate but complementary project.

1.5 Maintenance and Management of the Site

It is proposed that Penwith District Council will be responsible for the regular maintenance of grassed areas and equipment. Ayr Field Community Group, through its volunteers, will undertake the planting and maintenance of shrubs and trees, and the upkeep of the boundary hedges.

It is proposed that the site will be leased from Cornwall County Council to Penwith District Council for a peppercorn rent. Ayr Field Community Group will undertake the management of community activities on the field and will play a full part in driving forward the proposed site improvements.

1.6 Financial Issues

Ongoing maintenance costs will be met by Penwith District Council. It is intended that the costs of site improvements, events, activities and the running of Ayr Field Community Group will all be met from external grant aid, local fundraising and voluntary contributions, to be sought by Ayr Field Community Group. Any future financial contribution from Penwith District Council towards improved facilities will be subject to the agreement of the Council.

Boys gather after school for football 1974



2.1 Proposal Background

Ayr Field is an historic field that has survived intact while the town of St Ives has expanded around it. The field is over one acre in size. In addition to its open space, it is also home to the St Ives Scout hut and a small equipped playground. The field was purchased in 1915 by Cornwall County Council, supplemented with funds raised by local people, for use as a school playing field and was used by local children for school sports by day, while in the evenings, weekends and holidays it was used for informal play. Many local people have fond memories of Ayr Field and 30 a-side spontaneous weekend football matches were commonplace. The field has hosted a large variety of community activities from fetes and fairs to vintage car rallies and even a circus.

Since the late 1980s, following the relocation of the school, the field has been used as a seasonal car park and more recently a builders' compound. Prior to the formation of the builders' compound in 2002, local people were able to access and use the field freely outside of the summer parking season.

Ayr Field lies within the North Ward of St Ives, which is noted as being one of the most deprived wards within Cornwall. The town of St Ives is home to 2733 households, representing over 6500 people (Census 2001).

2.2 Ayr Field Community Group

In late 2005 it became apparent that the field had been earmarked for intensified parking use. Ayr Field Community Group formed in response to this proposed use and is now working with Town, District and County Councils to propose an alternative future for the field.

Ayr Field Community Group is a constituted voluntary group of St Ives residents who would like to see Ayr Field reinstated as an open green space. The group's constitution is reproduced as Appendix 10. The group developed following a public meeting in December 2005 attended by 70 local people. A ballot was held at the meeting that showed unanimous support for the idea of Ayr Field as an open green space. A summary of ballot comments is provided as Appendix 1.

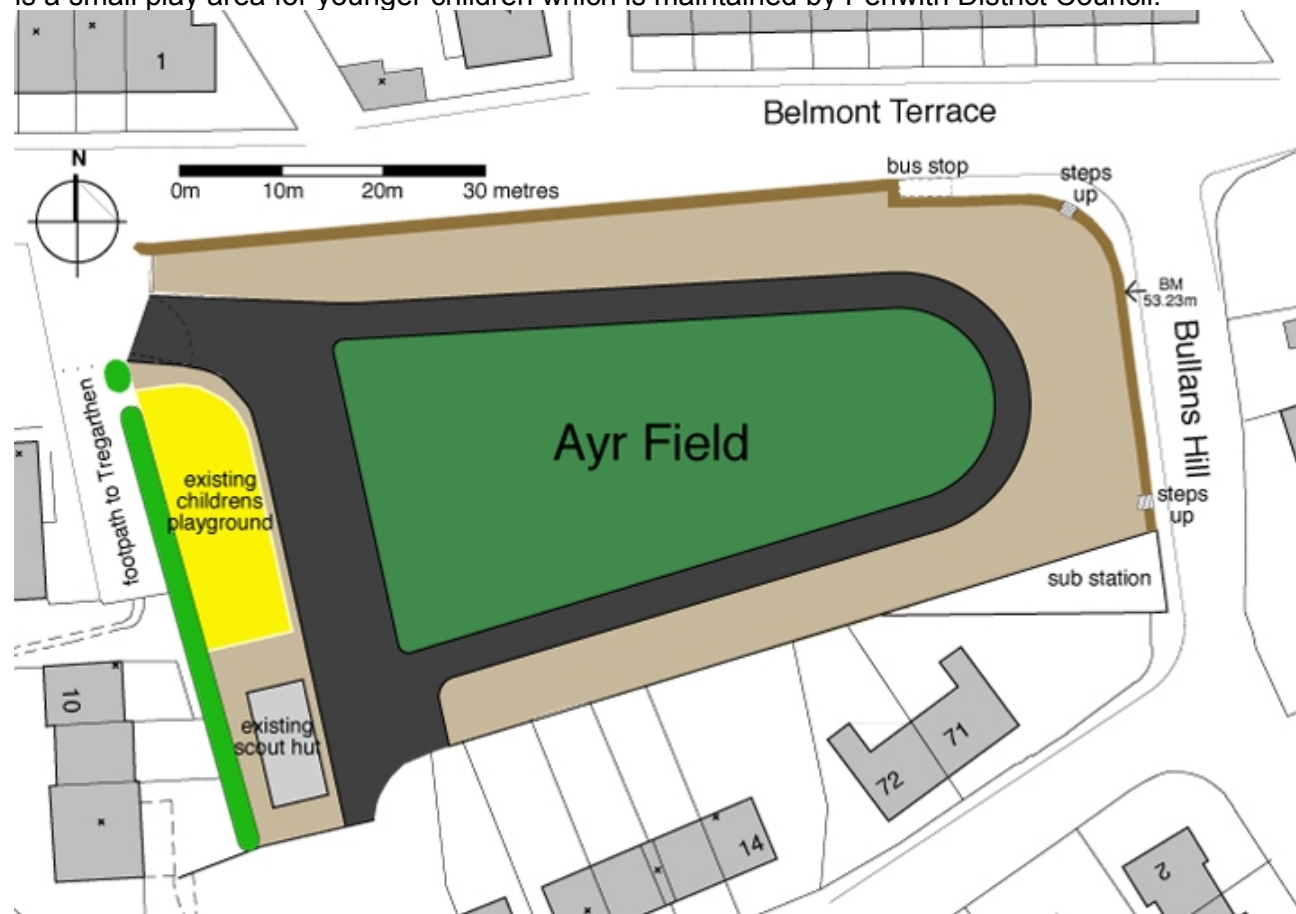
The group was constituted on 11th January 2006 with 26 inaugural members present. The group has approximately 100 members to date and has distributed supporter cards locally to attract more recruits. As of the beginning of August 2006, a total of 725 supporter cards had been returned to the group with a further 110 signing up on-line, resulting in 835 active supporters. Over 40 supporters have volunteered to help our project in the future and the recent Ayr Field Day event involved over 60 volunteers.

Ayr Field prior to removal of safety fencing and 1st Community Tidy Up Day 22nd April 2006



2.3 Ayr Field as it is now

Ayr Field is a rectangular piece of land just over one acre in size. It slopes gently from west to east. Stone retaining walls make up the northern and eastern boundaries of the field, along Belmont Terrace and Bullans Lane. A mixture of fencing, hedging and walls comprise the southern and western boundaries. The large central section of the field has recently been re-turfed, following the removal of the builders' compound. Surrounding this grassed area is a tarmac track, dilapidated in places, which was originally constructed to service the seasonal car park. Between this track and the edges of the site, the ground is rougher, covered with a mixture of grass, wild flowers and vigorous weeds. The St Ives scout hut is situated in the south-western corner of the field and is accessed along the top of the field by a rough track opposite Ayr Terrace. Adjacent to the scout hut is a small play area for younger children which is maintained by Penwith District Council.



Our vision is simple:

Ayr Field should become an open green space for the enjoyment of everyone.



Finding out what children need at Mayday



Ayr Field day interviews by Kiara Simpson

3.0 The Vision for Ayr Field

People need open space in their local communities: somewhere safe and accessible, where children can meet up and play, where families can come for relaxation and picnics, and where people of all ages can enjoy the natural environment, somewhere gentle and quiet to get away from the bustle of everyday life. The people of St Ives need additional safe open space. Informal green open spaces within the town are rare, and in this regard, St Ives compares unfavourably with neighbouring towns.

The provision of open space is widely accepted as a vital community facility within the built environment. In new housing developments it is provided as a matter of course, in line with planning policy at national and local levels. For existing settlements, however, the provision of adequate levels of open space can be more challenging, due to the restricted availability of suitable land. Ayr Field provides a valuable, perhaps unique, opportunity to rectify the deficit in open space provision for the town.

3.1 Aim and Objectives

Our aim is to establish Ayr Field as a year-round open green space, for use by the local community for informal recreation and locally organised activities and events. Our objectives are:

To re-create a large grassed area removing the tarmac track and replanting with grass.

To improve access to the field.

To improve the facilities on the field, specifically children's play opportunities and seating.

To improve the visual and natural amenity of Ayr Field, through shrub and tree planting.

To improve the safety of the field for its users.

To encourage use of the field for informal recreation and organised activities.

In pursuing these objectives, we are committed to:

Community involvement By consulting local people about their ideas for the site, and by encouraging residents to participate in improvement, maintenance and management of the field.

Environmental responsibility By minimising waste, encouraging biological diversity and avoiding, where possible, use of artificial chemicals.

Access for all By providing safe and unobstructed access to Ayr Field for all potential users, and by maximising the range of complementary activities that can be undertaken on the field.

Community safety By designing into our plans the passive surveillance and overlooking of the site from neighbouring properties and streets, and by securing the field's boundaries.

4.0 The Case for Open Space

Ballot sheet written comments
Ayr Field Public Meeting 12th December 2005

'Children need green open space'

'There is no other open space that we can walk to near our house'

'If you develop every scrap of land in St Ives we will have nothing left as a community'

'My children grew up playing on Ayr Field and I would like my grand-children to do the same'

Questionnaire findings

76% of people are not happy with the provision of open green space in St Ives at present

97% agree that Ayr Field should be a green open space

The desire to have use of Ayr Field as an open green space not only represents the wishes and hopes of St Ives residents but is also backed up by a proven need.

4.1 The National Playing Fields Association Standard

The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard is a nationally recognised benchmark for the provision of both outdoor play and sporting space. The standard advocates that 2 acres of open 'play' space and a further 4 acres of 'sporting' space should be provided per 1000 residents. Assessing St Ives for 'play' space demonstrates that the provision and distribution of open space for 'play' is well below the NPFA benchmark. The map in Appendix 2 illustrates spatially how this conclusion has been reached. For clarity, formal 'sporting' space has been excluded. Some types of open green space, such as churchyards, are not counted in the NPFA calculation. We have taken both recognised and excluded 'play' spaces into account and still find the town to be deficient by over 7 acres (equivalent to 7 times the size of Ayr Field).

The majority of existing 'play' space provision is at the edge of the town, which means that the core residential centre of St Ives is not served by open green space. Because busy roads and physical distance from home deter children from accessing open green spaces, it is widely accepted that these spaces should be within no more than 5 minutes walk from children's homes. The map in Appendix 2 also demonstrates that a large number of homes in St Ives are not served by open space, at present, when measured by this method. In fact, the majority of homes within 5 minutes walking distance of Ayr Field have no other open space provision. The ability to use Ayr Field would greatly improve this town wide problem.

4.2 Community Survey May and July 2006

Ayr Field Community Group conducted a survey of local opinion, by means of questionnaires, at the town's May Day celebration 2006 and at the Ayr Field Day on 2nd July 2006. The 'community questionnaire' was completed by 263 householders, while a separate questionnaire for children and young people was completed by 170 individuals. The survey questions and methodology were agreed by Cornwall County Council and Penwith District Council. The overall results can be found at Appendix 3 of this document.

The key findings of the survey provide clear evidence of local need for additional green open space. Only 16.8% of respondents are happy with the provision of open green space in St Ives at present, with 76% not happy (Q3). 42% of children and young people surveyed said that there is not a playground with play equipment near to their homes (Q4). 97% of people agree that Ayr Field should be an open green space. 1.5% disagree and 1.5% don't know (Q4).

Questionnaire findings

If open space Ayr Field would be used for:

Family activities 79.8%

Leisure / relaxing 71%

Ball games 60.3%

Dog walking 21.4%

Other activities 20.2%

Support was given for the following works:

Seating provided 77.9%

Trees/planting at field edges 74.4%

More younger kids play equip 69.5%

Safer boundary / gates added 67.2%

Tarmac replaced with grass 57.6%

Perimeter footpaths 53.4%

More older kids play equip 52.3%

Other 17.9%

The present lack of open space is highlighted by the responses to the children's questionnaire. Asked whether they had ever been told off or criticised by adults when playing or socialising outdoors (Q9), 43.8% of respondents said Yes, and cited particular problems with neighbours when playing ball and other games in the street or local car parks.

The results of the community survey are emphatic and overwhelming: local people are unhappy with the current provision of open space in the town, and they want to be able to use Ayr Field for a range of recreational activities which they are unable to undertake elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

4.3 Supporter cards

Of the 2000 supporters card made available in the town, to date 725 have been returned to us. We believe that this demonstrates a significant level of support. Cards were simply left in a number of public places or posted through letter boxes in the immediate area. To return a card required the person to fill in their personal details including address and post back the card or hand into one of three venues.

In addition the card allowed the individual to tick 'keep me informed' and/or 'I would be willing to help, if asked'. Over 200 people have asked to be kept informed and a further 40 have volunteered to help. This is in addition to our group membership of over 100, from which we have approximately 60 active volunteers, to date.

4.4 Support from Local Organisations (see appendix 4 for full text)

Support for the retention of Ayr Field as green open space has been expressed by a number of local organisations. The following statements are a selection of remarks from local bodies and individuals. St Ives Town Council resolved to support the protection and restoration of Ayr Field in January 2006 and in June 2006 pledged to commit funds to the improvement works in 2007.

'that this Council seeks to protect and restore Ayr Field as a safe open green space, and secure the designation of Ayr Field in perpetuity as an 'Open Green Space' for community and people of St Ives.'
St Ives Town Council Resolution, 12th January 2006

'...open easily accessible grass areas are vital for the youths of St Ives, who enjoy the coaching and facilities our club provide them, to run and play complimentary sports such as football. Many of our senior members grew up playing on the Ayr Field and would like their children to enjoy the same freedom and facility.'
Morgarrows Hockey Club St Ives letter dated 27th June 2006

pictures by children from St Ives Infant School



Bernice Livermore age 5



Billy Devey age 6

'When Ayr Field was discussed at a recent meeting the governors were united in expressing their concern at the lack of safe places for the children to play, close to where they live, Many children play in the streets around Ayr Field and desperately need a place where they can play without being in danger from traffic or at risk of damaging property with footballs. Playing outside is also important for children's imaginative and social development. Ayr Field would provide a setting for many different forms of play, all of which are essential for the children's healthy development.'

Governors of St Ives Infant School comment (letter from Headteacher 19th July 2006)

'Children need spaces where they can play and meet, they have less play space near to their homes in today's society. Children who live near the beach, especially in the summer, may not get the chance to play as they would like because of the influx of tourists.'

The organiser of Hi tide Kidz Club says in her letter of 16th June 2006

'you adults keep on telling us young children how dangerous it is to play on the busy roads there is a perfect solution, known as ayr playing field.'

Maxwell Clymo age 9

'There is growing concern in the health community and government at the rising levels of obesity and inactivity related morbidity and mortality in our society. Exercise has been shown to have important benefits in reducing the risk of ill health due to these conditions and has benefits in psychological and psychiatric conditions. Public open space is important in encouraging exercise and has the added benefits of improving social cohesion and providing opportunities for contact with nature with consequent benefits for health and wellbeing. Ayr field is clearly valued by the local community and has demonstrably brought together people who would not otherwise have met, worked or played together. It is of adequate size to provide facilities that will facilitate exercise and contact with nature. I strongly recommend that, for health reasons alone, Ayr Field is preserved as a public open space.'

Dr Rupert Manley, a general practitioner in St Ives

(Extract of report written specifically for the Ayr Field Community Group)

4.5 Schoolchildren consultation

In early 2006, the St Ives Infant School Council, made up of 12 children aged 5 to 7, visited Ayr Field to find out more about the space. Since then we have had an ongoing connection with the school, including presentations at two assemblies. In May 2006 the children prepared drawings illustrating their hopes and wishes for Ayr Field. In addition to the pictures by Infant School children a number of pictures were also received from Hi tide Kidz Club. They show environments where children can interact with nature and play together. Many of the younger children portray equipment based play opportunities while older children tend to show game based activities such as football. A further selection of pictures have been reduced and represented as a montage in Appendix 5.



4.6 Ayrie Fairy & Ayr Field Chef

The Ayrie Fairy and Ayr Field Chef are two alter egos of Claudia Hope, an expert in community participation focussing on children. With the funding support of the National Lottery, we were able to involve Claudia in Ayr Field Day, to help children communicate their priorities for Ayr Field. For the first session, The Ayrie Fairy gathered wishes from young children (8 years old and younger). The wishes, recorded on large luggage labels, were threaded together and displayed at the event. For the second session, The Ayr Field Chef encouraged older children (8 to 15 years) to write their own recipes for a perfect Ayr Field. Read together the younger children's wishes (35 wishes) hoped for play equipment, flowers and trees and places to ride bikes. The older children (40 recipes) articulated a wider range of desires and many hoped for areas to sit and talk with their friends, spaces to play games and a repeated wish for a space where they could be left alone together without adult supervision.

4.7 Instant bunting

Instant bunting was a fun consultation method used at Ayr Field Day to capture the essence and key message from those attending the day. Members of the public were invited to write comments on small triangular 'flags', which were stapled together to make 'instant bunting'. The idea was that given a small space you were only able to say a few words and therefore the most important sentiments would be communicated. The overwhelming message was that the space should be 'green', made available for children to use and that cars should not be allowed onto Ayr Field. A summary of all comments can be found in Appendix 6.

4.8 Video evidence

With funding support from the Wakeham Trust, we were able to make a short video at Ayr Field Day. The resulting six-minute DVD captures the fantastic atmosphere of the day and gives young and old alike the opportunity to express their feelings about Ayr Field in their own words. The DVD, in Appendix 7, demonstrates local people's strength of feeling about Ayr Field. Furthermore, it highlights that having a space, free from cars, where the people can gather for special events strengthens the sense of local community and brings people together in a safe, friendly and relaxed environment.

4.9 Policy and Strategic Fit

The provision of open space and the involvement of the local community in its management, are supported in a wide range of policy and strategy documents. A full list is provided at Appendix 8. Key themes within the strategic context are:

Community strategies at district and county level

'All residents will have access to quality leisure and recreational facilities' [LTO4]

'The balanced proportion of open spaces will be safeguarded and enhanced to meet needs' [LTO6]

Penwith District Council Vision 2006

'Improve accessibility, quality and number where appropriate of local sport and recreational facilities'

Cornwall Community Strategy 2003

'To have cleaner, greener and safer public open spaces'. Achievement of this outcome will 'provide a focus on improving some small-scale open spaces within some of Cornwall's most deprived communities'

(Outcome STRONG6)

Cornwall Local Area Agreement 2006-9

Neighbourhood Renewal

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (2001) states that 'Communities need to be consulted and listened to, and the most effective interventions are often those where communities are actively involved in their design and delivery, and where possible in the driving seat...' [from the executive summary].

Children and Play Policies

'Healthy lifestyles are promoted to children and young people'; There is a range of accessible recreational provision for children and young people'

Every Child Matters (DFES 2004)

'We need to listen to children – to support the child's right to participate fully in leisure, recreation and play, the child's participation, opinions and views must be sought, listened to and taken into account'

Serious About Play – A Play Policy for Penwith (PDC 2005)

4.10 Case Summary

The consultation evidence strongly illustrates that there is both a strong desire and an unquestionable need to have Ayr Field as a green open space. This case is fully endorsed by an overwhelming suite of policy documents at local, regional and national level. In addition, the health benefits of Ayr Field as an open green space, summarised by local GP Dr Rupert Manley, highlights that access to open space can promote both physical and mental wellbeing. In summary, Ayr Field provides the opportunity to rectify an open green space deficit within the residential core of St Ives and improve the quality of life for people in the locality.

Ayr Field can support a variety of informal and formal activities



St Ives Community Choir at Ayr Field Day 2006



Bash Street Theatre at Ayr Field Day 2006

5.1 Proposed Uses

5.1.1 Informal Recreation

From the results of the consultations carried out by the Ayr Field Community Group, it is clear that the most popular uses of the field will be for informal recreation: children's play, ball games, picnics, family activities, sitting and relaxation. These activities are complementary and can be provided for on the field in a reasonably straightforward way.

5.1.2 Organised Activities

A number of local organisations have expressed a desire to use Ayr Field on an occasional basis for their group's activities. These organisations include the St Ives Scouts (who have traditionally used the field for scouting sessions, fundraising fetes etc), the St Ives September Festival committee, who would like to use the field as an open-air venue, and the Hi-Tide Kids Club, who would use the field for organised play.

Ayr Field Community Group also intends to hold events on an occasional basis, in order to raise the profile of the field and to provide a focus for the local community, especially for families and young people. The recent Ayr Field Day (2nd July 2006) demonstrated the potential of the field for events, including outdoor theatre, games, music concerts and community fairs. A key characteristic of the space will need to be flexibility, so that a variety of activities can be undertaken at different times.

5.1.3 Dog Walking

Ayr Field has traditionally been used for exercising dogs, and provides one of the few opportunities for doing so in the town. The public consultation conducted by the Ayr Field Community Group has demonstrated that a significant number of residents (21.4%) would like to be able to use the field for this activity.

However, other residents were strongly of the view that 'dogs and children don't mix', with the principal concern being expressed about the nuisance of dog faeces.

It is the view of Ayr Field Community Group that the use of Ayr Field by dog-walkers is only acceptable if dogs are kept under control and if any dog faeces deposited on site are removed immediately by the dog's owner. We propose that, on an initial experimental basis, dog walking should continue to be allowed on the field, with dogs kept on a lead at all times, but that if a nuisance results, dogs should not be allowed.

5.2 Proposed Improvements and activities

The following improvements are proposed for Ayr Field in order to fulfil the objectives outlined in Section 3. Approximate timescales for the achievement of these activities are set out in Section 9.

Objective 1

To re-create a large grassed area by removing the tarmac track and replanting with grass

The central grassed area will be enlarged by removing the tarmac road, to make it available for play, especially ball games, and organised events. This central area will be kept free of clutter, maximising its potential for informal recreation. The rougher areas of grass around the edge of the field will be levelled and turfed or seeded with grass.

Objective 2

To improve access to Ayr Field

Access ramps and new gates will be provided at the entry points to the field. Footpaths around and across the site will be constructed. These will provide all-weather access to the field. They will also provide wheelchair access into and across the site to the seating and shaded areas. The field is currently used as a pedestrian route for residents between home and the town centre, and Ayr Field Community Group also wishes to strengthen and encourage this activity. Pedestrian links to Tregarthen and Treverbyn Road will be improved through the construction of a new access point on the western edge of the field.

Objective 3

To improve the facilities on the site, specifically children's play opportunities and seating

The existing children's playground will be renovated and enlarged, with equipment for children across the ages of 1 to 6, and 6 and over. Clusters of seating and picnic benches for all will be provided around the edge of the field, and some shaded seating areas will also be provided.

Objective 4

To improve the visual and natural amenity of Ayr Field, through shrub and tree planting

Shrub beds will be planted along the southern boundary – with an emphasis on low-maintenance, native species that will encourage butterflies, other insects and wild birds. A few well spaced trees will be planted along the boundaries, perhaps with one or two larger landmark species (eg Monterey Pines), both to enhance the appearance of the field but also to provide shaded areas. The option of providing a sensory garden will also be explored. The use of artificial chemicals and herbicide sprays will be avoided where possible.

local kids get active clearing 1st grass clippings



Objective 5

To improve the safety of the field for its users

All facilities and planting will be designed for passive surveillance of the site, with clear views into the field from neighbouring residential properties, and convenient access through the field for pedestrians. The creation of secluded areas will be avoided. Safer access to the site will be achieved by means of a pedestrian link from Tregarthen and Treverbyn Road, in order to minimise contact with traffic. Access for the Scout Hut will be rationalised, in order to take vehicles out of the main field.

Objective 6

To encourage use of the field for informal recreation and organised activities

Once access to, and safety of, the field has been improved, Ayr Field Community Group will actively promote the availability of the field. We will also encourage other local groups to organise events at the field. We will investigate ways of getting local children more active, encouraging their families to join in with planting and maintenance days. As Ayr Field Day was embraced so passionately by the people of the town, we will endeavour to make it an annual event, with a focus on local participation and involvement.

5.3 The Future of the Scout Hut

The presence of the St Ives 1st Scout Hut at Ayr Field offers a fantastic opportunity for the field to become a vibrant community 'hub'. The existing hut built in 1957 is now quite dilapidated. Despite its poor condition, the Scout Group continues to provide for upward of 60 children a week, over 4 nights.

St Ives 1st Scouts wish to rebuild and enlarge the hut, ensuring that disabled access and facilities are provided and that the use of the building is made available to others. The Scouts, supported by Ayr Field Community Group, are currently developing ideas for their new hall, proposed as a robust building of traditional construction. It is likely that the building will be approximately twice the existing (90sqm) size and would include a small field store for the tools and equipment needed by Ayr Field Community Group to help maintain the field. Once ideas have been finalised and agreed, planning permission will be sought and an appropriate capital and revenue funding strategy developed under the direction of a 'New Hall' management team.

Care of Ayr Field by local people



Tidy up in April 2006 to make field safer



Local company donates gloves and bags

6.0 Future Maintenance and Management of Ayr Field

6.1 Site maintenance

Maintenance of the field will comprise the following elements:

- Grass cutting
- Litter picking
- Trimming of hedges and maintenance of other boundaries.
- Maintenance of play and other equipment
- Maintenance of shrub beds
- Occasional maintenance of paths, gates etc

Penwith District Council has agreed to undertake the maintenance required for the upkeep of the field as a recreation area, including maintenance of the children's playground which it already carries out.

Ayr Field Community Group has recruited forty additional volunteers who are willing to undertake occasional work on site, and who indeed have already conducted a number of tasks, including litter picks, cutting back of boundary vegetation and clearance of grass cuttings. The volunteer group includes a number of local children. The following sharing of maintenance responsibilities is envisaged:

Penwith District Council will undertake grass cutting, litter picking, maintenance of play equipment, occasional maintenance of paths, gates etc, and any structural upkeep of boundaries. PDC will also provide and empty litter and dog mess bins.

Ayr Field Community Group will undertake maintenance of boundary hedges and shrub beds and occasional 'deep' litter picks. The group will also be responsible for the planting of trees and shrubs.

AFCG and PDC are committed to an environmentally responsible approach to the maintenance of the field. Biodegradable waste arising from maintenance will be composted on site, and appropriate litter bins will be provided so that segregation of recyclable materials can be achieved.

6.2 Ownership arrangements

The field is currently in the ownership of Cornwall County Council, and no change to this situation is envisaged. It is proposed that Penwith District Council will lease the field from Cornwall County Council for a period no fewer than 25 years: a lease of this length will be required to enable capital improvement grants to be obtained by Ayr Field Community Group in partnership with Penwith District Council. It is proposed that the new lease will include the land that the Scout Hut is built on and the existing small playground on the site, bringing all provision together in one lease. Rent will be charged at one peppercorn per year and the lease will restrict the use of the site to activities for community benefit. Car parking will not be allowed. Lease terms will be agreed between Cornwall County Council and Penwith District Council in consultation with Ayr Field Community Group.

All changes and improvements to Ayr Field will be undertaken in partnership between Ayr Field Community Group and Penwith District Council, and with the agreement of Cornwall County Council. Wider community consultation will be carried out prior to any significant works.

6.3 Management of activities on the Field

The arrangements for organised activities will be undertaken by Ayr Field Community Group. Local organisations will be encouraged to hold activities on the field, such as sports and games sessions, scouts activities, etc, and the secretary of AFCG will maintain a booking system and calendar of activities to avoid potential clashes.

AFCG will also organise larger events on the field, such as the Ayr Field Day, to bring the community together and provide activities particularly for families and children.

7.0 Financial Issues

Ongoing maintenance costs of the site will be met by Penwith District Council in respect of the activities outlined in the section 'Maintenance and Management'. The grass maintenance costs have been estimated by the Council at £500 per annum.

Volunteer time will be provided as a contribution by the Ayr Field Community Group to fulfil its responsibilities. The costs related to this activity, including the purchase of hand tools and insurance, along with the general running costs of the group, will be met through local fundraising activities and grant opportunities.

With regard to the proposed improvement works to the Field, it is envisaged that the capital costs will be largely funded from external grants. Specific items include:

- Securing of boundaries and improving access points
- Removal of tarmac track, levelling of ground and reinstatement of grass
- Additional play equipment and upgrading of playground
- Construction of perimeter paths
- New seating, bins and signage
- Trees and shrubs

A costed, itemised list of capital works is provided in Appendix 9.

7.1 Capital Funding

Funding opportunities will vary over time and it is hoped that the Community Plan objectives will be realised by accessing funds that will bring additional monies into the region. At the time of writing, the second round of the National Lottery 'Breathing Space' fund has been identified as a source of biodiversity and planting funding (£10,000). The Big Lottery Community Buildings fund (maximum £250,000) will be pursued for the Scout Hut. We will work in partnership with the Penwith District Council Play Strategy Team to seek a portion of the play opportunity funding that has already been allocated to Penwith from the Lottery (£200,000). It is hoped that Play Strategy funding could be used to renew the playground, make the site more accessible and improve site safety. In addition to grants, we will seek to raise money locally via events and donations. Ayr Field Community Group will not commit to deliver events or improvements until funding/finance has been identified and secured.

7.2 Revenue Funding

The modest ongoing revenue funding required to support Ayr Field Community Group will come from specialist grant givers focussing on volunteering and community enabling, such as the Tudor Trust. Specific event funding will be sought as appropriate.

Ayr Field Day 2006 raised over £1000 for the onward upkeep of Ayr Field Community Group and lessons learnt in 2006 suggest that next year fund raising opportunities at the event can be further enhanced. Other local charitable giving groups such as St Ives Lions Club have pledged financial contributions to our group and we have received a number of individual donations. The local significance of the project means that these links can be further strengthened.

The ongoing revenue cost of the improvements will consist of the following elements:

- Maintenance of equipment and additional structures
- Tree and shrub maintenance

The additional maintenance of equipment and structures will be undertaken by Penwith District Council. Maintenance of trees and shrubs will be the responsibility of Ayr Field Community Group.

All organised activities and events will take place on a self-funded or grant funded basis. The securing of this funding, and any associated financial risks, will be the responsibility of the Ayr Field Community Group.

8.0 Risks to the Successful Completion of the Plan

The key risks to the successful completion of this plan are:

- Failure to secure funding for improvements, and
- Inability of the AFCG to sustain volunteer input into site maintenance.

8.1 Failure to secure funding for improvements

While Ayr Field has much potential for enhancement as a community facility, it is nevertheless recognised that simply maintaining the site in its current state would be sufficient to meet many of the needs and aspirations identified by our consultation work. As such, it would make a significant contribution to community life without large capital outlay.

However, AFCG is confident that, as indicated in Section 6, there are a number of potential funding opportunities for the improvements outlined in this plan. Their implementation could be achieved on a phased basis as funding allows.

8.2 Inability of the AFCG to sustain volunteer input into site maintenance

As with any voluntary group, there is always a risk of volunteer 'burn-out', whereby existing volunteers retire from the group and are not replaced by fresh helpers. AFCG has already demonstrated its strong support in the community, as shown by the forty local people who have already offered to volunteer, in advance of any definitive agreement with Cornwall County Council.

AFCG will seek to minimise the risk of loss of volunteers through the following measures:

- Ensuring that any commitments taken on by the group are realistic and achievable by the existing volunteer base.
- Continuing to provide a welcoming environment in which new members can become involved.
- Maintaining a link with the Penwith Volunteer Bureau as a source of potential new recruits.
- Maintaining and building upon established links with local schools and other community organisations.

The principal activities to be carried out by the Group will be the ongoing maintenance of shrubs and trees, 'deep' litter picking and the organisation of events and activities on the field. Planting will be designed to be low-maintenance, in order to reduce the workload on volunteers. The number of events to be organised will be dependent on the availability of volunteers, and can therefore be reduced or increased to match capacity.

9.0 Timescales and Milestone Outcomes

The programme overview below summarises the key milestones to delivering the community vision for Ayr Field. A more detailed project programme will be developed for each element, once community involvement, design and funding issues have been explored in greater detail. The programme will be a fluid and responsive document that takes into account volunteer input and changing funding opportunities. Timescales assume that a legal agreement between Cornwall County Council and Penwith District Council can be reached in the Autumn/Winter of 2006. A draft lease will be required to seek funding. The Scout Hut is excluded from the outcomes but it is hoped that the New Scout Hall will be completed with 5 years.

Objective No / Milestone Outcome / Timescale

1 GRASS

Remove tarmac road and level and seed rough ground 1-2 years

2 ACCESS

Provide access ramp/ new steps near bus stop 1-2 years

Provide level access via Tregarthen 1-2 years

Site perimeter footpaths 1-2 years

3 FACILITIES

Site signage 6 months

Relocate and renew play equipment 2-3 years

Provide seating clusters (including some with sun shading) 1-2 years

Tool and equipment store (temp/permanent) 6 months / 5 years

4 NATURE

Provide planting zone to south boundary 1-2 years

Provide specimen trees 1-3 years

other planting 2-5 years

5 SAFETY

Gates 1-2 years

Improve boundary walls 1-2 years

Site hut access 2-3 years

6 USE

Volunteer days Every 1-2 months

Events Every year

Promoting field use locally TBC (following basic site access and safety improvements)

10.0 Conclusion

If St Ives was being constructed today from scratch, it would be provided with far more open space, in line with local and national planning policy, than actually exists within the town.

Cornwall County Council, as the owner of Ayr Field, has declared the site to be land surplus to its requirements. This has created a rare opportunity to help rectify the lack of open space in St Ives – and thereby bring a range of social, health and environmental benefits for the local community.

In 1915, the then members of Cornwall County Council had the vision and the public spirit to purchase Ayr Field for children's recreation. Local people showed their support for this vision through the generosity of their donations towards the field's purchase. The town's older residents can still remember, as schoolchildren, taking their families' contributions into class.

Now, in 2006, the strength of local feeling has been clearly and overwhelmingly demonstrated that Ayr Field should be an open green space, for the enjoyment of everyone. What the local community requests of today's members of the County Council is that they take forward the original vision of their predecessors 91 years ago. We ask you to provide both present and future generations of St Ives with this acre of land, to play on, to kick balls about on, to relax in, to picnic on, and to treasure.

Written on behalf of the people of St Ives
by The Management Committee of Ayr Field Community Group

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