

LBSA statement for 14/03/2022 meeting

We contacted Sport Wales with a brief;

There currently stands a derelict tennis / netball single court facility within the community recreation ground, which is not fit for purpose; with broken down fencing, foliage growing through the tarmac, it is often being used to let dogs off their leashes for fouling.

Grant funding would help boost the hopes of the Sports Association to help fund the regeneration of the facility to a useable MUGA facility that the whole community could enjoy including the local football, netball and rugby clubs, the playschool, as well as allowing more space for development of new girls and ladies football teams, and the community walking football team and potential for a tennis club to be resurrected.

Currently the derelict court is a waste of space, health and safety hazard, being used as a fouling haven for irresponsible dog walkers not to mention an eye sore. It is also a site for antisocial behaviour, attracting kids on bikes to vandalise and abuse the facility and its surrounding community buildings.

We have quotes to show this regeneration would be achievable and has the full support of the local community council who have already offered to help fund with approximately £20k year.

A regeneration of the court would provide a new facility and encourage use from all corners as well as eliminate the dog fouling and anti-social use. As stated, there is joint interest from football, rugby, netball, cylch meithrin (playschool), cricket, local schools for use of such a MUGA.

The people and communities that will benefit the most from any potential investment (i.e. the expected number of additional participants and teams and their demographics - ages, gender, priority communities, people with disabilities & those from BAME backgrounds) are as follows:

Football Club Girls section - 70 members aged 6-14. Opportunity to develop the ladies section who currently hold "soccer fit" classes.

The community walking football team (aged 18-70). Currently train in facilities outside of the community. This would benefit and allow them to increase participation (currently 24 regulars) to grow.

Football and rugby club Junior and Minis - additional space and lights for evening training within the community.

Rugby tots (4-6 years old) - currently have no hard-standing facility and have to hold seasonal community sessions dependent on the surface conditions.

Netball club - the community club team currently play indoors only at the local leisure centre 6 miles away. They would return and play in summer if a community facility became available to train and play netball games. (Ages 8-40). Would encourage male participation or teams to develop also.

Playschool - a safe and securely fenced hard standing facility that the on-site playschool could use to allow the children to play alternatively to the grassy wet areas they currently have to use. (These include Disabled children & those from BAME backgrounds).

Personal trainers / coaching business - potential hire to local businesses to carry out one to one training with paying clients. These businesses already exist and use the grass spaces where they can.

Why can we be assured that you will be able to deliver the impacts referred to above?

The Sport Association is a charity set up in the community as a combined effort of all the aforementioned community sports clubs and schools in order to improve community facilities.

With support from the community council we have already taken over the maintenance programme of the main playing field with very positive results and we continue to pull together all corners of our community to work with a common aim of improving shared facilities for communal use and mutual benefit. Delivery of this project would further enhance that vision.

... and this was their initial feedback.

In terms of the MUGA development – Do you hold the lease / freehold to the land?

We explained that the surveyor has been working on a draft.

What surface are you looking to put down? I know you've mentioned Tennis, football rugby etc but you would really need to think about this as a tarmac surface would only be suitable for tennis. With rugby training you would need an artificial turf surface with a shockpad for health and safety but then that would rule out tennis being played. Have you considered these options?

We explained that we understood the implications of contact sports sessions on tarmac, however felt it would still have a wide-ranging benefit to the following (rugby tots/tag rugby, minis football / 5 a side, walking football, netball, tennis, schools, cylich meithrin)

Who will oversee the usage? Will there be a booking system in place and full maintenance regime?

These are all stipulations attached to the lease and (within the draft) would fall to the LBSA as part of that agreement.

I would say the starting place would be liaising with your Local Authority Sports Development team so they can help you address the need (different sports, specific sports etc) once you are set on the sports you want to cater for I would then engage the National governing bodies of the sports.

Herein lies a concern with our reliance on Sport Wales, they expect us to go to FAW, WRU, perhaps even the Mudiad Meithrin, Tennis Wales (who have already pointed us toward Sport Wales!) but also to initially discuss with CAVS (Carms Association of Voluntary Services) or Actif Carmarthenshire. Our previous experience is that CAVS too will point to Actif or Sport Wales. As I have previously brought to these meeting to convey, it's a difficult process. We have now gone back again to Tennis Wales for further feedback on their funding process.

However, I would ensure you think that the MUGA is exactly what is needed or would regenerating the playing fields be the better option? You need to clearly think of usage, would rugby / football clubs want a small pitch to train on or would a larger area be more beneficial.

We explained that durability is an issue however we have seen an improvement in the playing surface since taking maintenance of it. As stated here before, the LBSA have ideas on improvements of this kind, which take priority for the same reasons brought to us in this instance by the Sport Wales Officer. We have learned in our 4 years what a "show-stopping" application will entail and that includes a statement on the number of members benefitting from such schemes. The masses lie within the juniors and senior football and rugby. So, any application for improvement to justify usage by these groups will carry the most weight.

In terms of Sport Wales investment the project would be eligible – however you would need to clearly demonstrate on any future application how the facility would be run and maintained, would there be specific sessions.

Again, these are stipulations attached to the draft license.

We made them aware of the £76k we've been quoted, and await a response to confirm the level of funding that we can expect from them (anticipate 50% max), and have also stressed that the council can anticipate they can go to a maximum of £20k. In this case, (and we round the quote up to £80k for ease of debating) should an application - without the strength of the football and rugby population to back it up be successful - we would still be seeking near £20k in grant funding from other sources, in the best case scenario. (80k total, 40k Sport Wales, 20k Llan Council = 60k).

I have followed up with Tennis Wales for an update in their procedure also, but they did initially say in January it would be mid-April before they could provide any funding.

Questions from LBSA to Council:

1. Is there any further update on that figure the council would be able to contribute? £20k?
2. Would the councillors be open to an alternative approach if the LBSA sources such funding not necessarily from grant sources?
3. Is there an update on the park field maintenance budget for the next financial year, or anything the LBSA needs to provide the council with in anticipation of that as we approach the end of our first year of taking care of it as per our agreement? Its in very good condition by the way.
4. Is there any feedback on the S106 money from the development at Afon Road, and have councillors yet discussed the offer from Simon Clement of the Cricket club to update them on the S106 procedure.