

## COUNCIL: HOUSING, HEALTH & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	Use of the St Mary's Field [Courage Playing Fields] by Shenfield Cricket Club
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Marcus Hotten, Director of Environment

### REPORT SUMMARY

To consider and review the use of St Mary's Field at Courage Playing Fields by Shenfield Cricket Club during the 2024 cricket season.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. That members delegate authority to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chair of Committee and Ward Members to review and approve the fixtures list submitted by Shenfield Cricket Club for the use of the St Mary's Field at Courage Playing Fields prior to the commencement of each season.**
- R2. That Shenfield Cricket Club issue a list of fixture dates to the Council as opposed to a blanket permission, prior to the commencement of the season and in good time so that a decision may be issued before the start of the season.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In December 2018, the Community, Health and Housing Committee approved a new approach to granting requests from Shenfield Cricket Club to play on the St Mary's Field at Courage Playing Fields.

This approach resulted in delegated powers being given to the Chief Operating Officer and Chair of Committee to review the submitted fixtures prior to the commencement of the season and grant permission if deemed appropriate.

Shenfield Cricket Club have recently approached Ward Councillors to propose a change to the previously agreed approach that would result in a blanket permission for use of the St Mary's Field for the entirety of the cricket season as opposed to specific days, this would be a material change from the current manner by which permission is granted.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The land at Courage Playing Fields was conveyed to the Council by the Courage family by two deeds of Gift dated 27th February 1950 pursuant to section 268 of the Local Government Act 1933, to hold and administer the property for the purposes of Public Open Space, recreation grounds and playing fields.

A second deed of gift dated 5th October 1951 dealt with a smaller piece of land adjacent to the St Mary's School.

The Council has title to this land under registration No EX762070 and are therefore the freeholders and custodian of this public open space inclusive of the cricket ground.

The intention behind this was to provide much needed publicly accessible open space to the residents of the rapidly expanding ward of Shenfield. As part of the deed of gift an area of land was also highlighted to provide playing facilities i.e., square and wicket for Shenfield Cricket Club.

The club have utilised this piece of land as their home ground since the deed of gift, however in 1993 they approached the Council with a request to expand their facilities into the adjoining park field next to the main cricket field.

This request was considered by the Leisure, Recreation and Arts Committee on 27th September 1993 with permission granted for the club to establish a second square and wickets on the park field also known as St Mary's Field. This permission was granted with conditions, two of which were that the facility should be used for cricket on one day of the weekend and the other that the permission be reviewed at a later date [min. 304 refers].

Each season the club have notified the Council in advance of the upcoming fixtures for the season so that they may be published on site on notice boards. The intention of this is that families are aware of when a match may be played on the park field and can plan their social recreation around these.

Unfortunately, the release date of fixtures and the timing of the committee calendar means that it is not conducive to bring the list of fixtures back to committee for a decision prior to the season commencing.

To address this issue the December 2018 Community, Health and Housing Committee approved to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer and Chair of Committee to approve fixtures without the need to go before a full committee meeting. This is the process that has been followed since that time.

Shenfield Cricket Club has recently approached Ward Members to discuss the process of notification for fixtures. The Club have requested that rather than issue individual fixture dates that they instead request use of the St Mary's Field for the entire of the cricket season as a blanket request.

This would mean that the club would have permission to use the St Mary's Field any day from the start of the season in April through to the end of September.

As this would constitute a material change to the original permission granted by the December 2018 Community, Health and Housing Committee Members are asked to consider the request as outlined in the report.

### **3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Should Members be minded to approve the request to issue a blanket use of the St Mary's Field at Courage Playing Fields for the duration of the cricket season then it is possible that public access to the field for social recreation during the summer months may be impacted and limited at weekends and evenings when practice and training takes place.

Members could consider a blanket permission for the cricket season but ensure restrictions are applied as to the number of times the field may be used through the season or the number of weekends it can be used to ensure that there is fair and equitable use for both the cricket club and the public for whom the land was originally gifted to the Council to use by.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer**  
**Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / [tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk](mailto:tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk)**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Claire Mayhew – Joint Acting Director of People and Governance & Monitoring Officer**  
**Tel & Email: 01277 [312741](tel:312741)/[claire.mayhew@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:claire.mayhew@brentwood.gov.uk)**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **6.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Kim Anderson - Corporate Manager – Communities, Leisure & Health**  
**Tel & Email : [kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk)**

There are no equality and health implications arising from this report.

### **7.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Henry Muss, Sustainability & Climate Officer**

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There are no environment and climate implications arising from this report.

## 8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

**Name & Title: Laurie Edmonds, Corporate Manager – Economic Development**

**Tel & Email 01277 312500 / [laurie.edmunds@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk](mailto:laurie.edmunds@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk)**

There are no economic development implications arising from this report.

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## BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
None	