

Appendix 4

Attendees of the community consultation exercise held 5th September 2013 were asked to complete the following exercise(following 2 pages overleaf) in order to gain feedback. Prior to the exercise a short presentation was given highlighting the current financial situation and detailing some of the options for change available for consideration.

The results of the exercise follow afterwards.

Parks and Open Spaces Review 2013
Community group consultation exercise **5th September 2013.**

Name of group

Name of representative(s)

Existing options	
If you agree with the option stated then please put a tick in the corresponding box. Where there is a choice then circle which is appropriate. If you do not agree with it then leave the box blank.	
Grass cutting:	
Assess each site individually to choose the best option	
Priority is still given to areas such as cemeteries; memorials; park frontages; gateway and town centre sites; play areas and where sight lines are important.	
Vary the amount of maintenance in each park, with the changes to be agreed in consultation with local parks groups active within that park.	
Remove some areas from the grass cutting schedule to support wildflowers and insects.	
Reduce the area cut on verges to 1-2m strips	
Reduce frequency of cutting on some sites.	
Planting:	
Use more sustainable forms of planting by replacing some or all bedding schemes with shrubs and perennials	
Increase or decrease or keep the same number of flower meadows.	
Reduce the number of formal flower displays (winter / spring bedding, planters and troughs)	
Stop planting formal winter / spring bedding displays and replace with naturalised planting with greater community involvement.	
Remove neglected beds altogether where continued maintenance is problematic.	
Other:	
Consider options for self-management for allotments and bowling greens in consultation with local groups who use them.	
Consider alternative arrangements for managing and maintaining football and rugby pitches in partnership with clubs and organisations which use our facilities	
Explore further partnerships and arrangements with local community groups and residents where maintenance is then carried out by them.	
Stop Christmas tree collection / drop off points.	
Change the way we support community groups.	
Find sufficient changes which allow improvements to service delivery in other areas such as weed control, path maintenance and site development.	
Make changes to sites in consultation with grounds maintenance teams and relevant stakeholders.	
Income generation:	
Charge for tree works carried out to a healthy tree where it has been requested by an individual and will only benefit that individual or household (all tree works for safety reasons will be carried out free of charge).	

General principles and suggestions.

Please tell us what ideas and suggestions you have. These are general ideas, none site specific.. Please be as radical as you like and please state the obvious if we have missed something

Site specific ideas and suggestions.

Have you already thought of something or somewhere specific that we could change – please tell us below.

Parks and Open Spaces Review 2013: Community group consultation exercise 5th September 2013. RESULTS

35 attendees, of which 22 forms were returned accounting for 30 of the attendees (28 named, 2 anonymous), some completed the forms as individuals and some as groups.

Existing options	No. of positive responses (forms) %	No. of positive responses (individuals) %
Grass cutting:		
Assess each site individually to choose the best option	21 95%	27 90%
Priority is still given to areas such as cemeteries; memorials; park frontages; gateway and town centre sites; play areas and where sight lines are important.	20 91%	27 90%
Vary the amount of maintenance in each park, with the changes to be agreed in consultation with local parks groups active within that park.	20 91%	26 87%
Remove some areas from the grass cutting schedule to support wildflowers and insects.	20 91%	26 87%
Reduce the area cut on verges to 1-2m strips	19 86%	22 73%
Reduce frequency of cutting on some sites.	19 86%	24 80%
Planting:		
Use more sustainable forms of planting by replacing some or all bedding schemes with shrubs and perennials	21 95%	27 90%
Increase or decrease or keep the same number of flower meadows.	Inc = 11 50% Dec = 1 5% Same = 1 5% Not spec. = 4 18%	Inc = 14 47% Dec = 2 7% Same = 2 7% Not spec. = 6 20%
Reduce the number of formal flower displays (winter / spring bedding, planters and troughs)	15 68%	19 63%
Stop planting formal winter / spring bedding displays and replace with naturalised planting with greater community involvement.	19 86%	25 83%
Remove neglected beds altogether where continued maintenance is problematic.	19 86%	24 80%
Other:		
Consider options for self-management for allotments and bowling greens in consultation with local groups who use them.	13 59%	16 53%
Consider alternative arrangements for managing and maintaining football and rugby pitches in partnership with clubs and organisations which use our facilities	14 64%	16 53%
Explore further partnerships and arrangements with local community groups and residents where maintenance is then carried out by them.	15 68%	17 57%
Stop Christmas tree collection / drop off points.	Stop Coll = 2 9% Stop Drop = 1 5% Stop Both = 15 68%	Stop Coll = 2 7% Stop Drop = 1 3% Stop Both = 21 70%
Change the way we support community groups.	8 36%	9 30%

Find sufficient changes which allow improvements to service delivery in other areas such as weed control, path maintenance and site development.	14 64%	18 60%
Make changes to sites in consultation with grounds maintenance teams and relevant stakeholders.	13 59%	16 53%
Income generation:		
Charge for tree works carried out to a healthy tree where it has been requested by an individual and will only benefit that individual or household (all tree works for safety reasons will be carried out free of charge).	21 95%	28 93%

The boxes filled in green show those options where more than 50% of responses were positive, the darker green being for options gaining over 75% positive responses.

The only option not widely accepted was “Change the way we support community groups”, however on some forms comments were made such as “need more info” or were marked worth a question mark. This indicates that perhaps people were not confident on what this meant.

The following comments were also written on the first (tick box) page of the exercise.

- Keep (*Christmas tree*) drop off – allow folk to pick them up and use if they want!
- Not enough info (*re: change the way we support community groups*)
- More info needed (*re: find sufficient changes....*)
- (*Re: reduce frequency...*) – if grass collected rather than left.
- (*Re: explore further partnerships*) Whitworth Horticultural Society fully committed.
- *Increase flower meadows* – would like to see this but doubt if this would cut costs.
- *Stop formal winter / spring bedding...* - in some cases.
- (*Re: reduce frequency of cutting*) Not on bowling greens (on 2 forms).
- (*Re; Consider options for self-management...*) Not possible for bowling greens.
- Where frequency reduction was ticked a few stated – not to bowling greens though.
- Self-management option has a ring around for allotments only on one paper.
- (*Re: remove neglected beds*) Low maintenance gravel etc.
- (*Re: reduce the number of formal flower displays*) We have none to reduce.
- (*Re: remove neglected beds*). Would increase grass cutting.
- (*Re: stop Christmas tree collection / drop off*) Would increase fly tipping.

Many comments were given, both general and site specific.

General principles and suggestions.

Please tell us what ideas and suggestions you have. These are general ideas, none site specific.. Please be as radical as you like and please state the obvious if we have missed something

Grass cutting

- Buy a goat. Hire out feasible areas for grazing.
- Blitz areas – this picks up on the point made by one gentleman about lack of transport to site causing areas being over manned.
- Odd hours here and there – pit to good use as per example of 3 men taking rubbish to tip.
- Could a weed killer be used that kills grass as well in some areas.
- (*Re; removing some areas from schedule*): within a year they might well look very ragged. An annual strim (or whatever) in late autumn might prevent this?
- Could some grassland areas be seasonally grazed?
- Where large expanses of open grassland are mowed, leave some unmown, but do so in creative way, e.g. sweeping curves – rather than looking “uncared for”, look designed – good for wildlife – good for kids to explore.
- Do as people do in their own gardens. Make as many places as possible low maintenance, take grass up and gravel.

Planting

- Plastic – London fab looking roundabout – majority of the stuff was plastic with additional seasonal live colour added.
- More wildflower displays.
- Schools could perhaps be encouraged to let children help plant bulbs / shrubs. Also local mental health groups to help with gardening projects.
- Todmorden I.E – plant annuals along with veg & herbs. Doctors are referring people on to the “Green Tour” (health and wellbeing). Plant in any available spaces.
- Encourage wildlife – wildlife friendly flowers and plantings. Improve environment, benefit nature – let’s go with the valley eco system and plant sustainable herbage.
- Increase areas of wildflower meadow but only with funded plans to ensure these do not degenerate in to unsightly scrub.
- I think there is room to also cut the number of baskets etc. hung all over Rossendale.
- Reduce the number of planters drastically.
- Definitely more wildflower meadows. Green and beautiful.
- Why pull bulbs up every year. Why not leave to come up each year.
- Cut out all the flower planters planted throughout the valley. Would save a lot of money. You don’t have to follow what other towns do in this respect.

Other

- Labour intensive areas – bowling greens – keep grass cut but encourage maintenance of gardens and surrounding areas. Consider increasing fees? Small amounts.
- Charge to cut down “inconvenient” tree. Sell the wood, sub contract and charge for delivery.
- Niche groups such as bowling clubs should be self- supporting and pay the going rate for maintenance of their greens. This is a very labour intensive activity for the small number of people involved.
- Any trees that the council cuts down sell the logs on a pick up only basis.
- Make a point of telling householders / make aware that they can do certain things themselves without the risk of being sued.
- Let nature take its own course where possible.

- Reduce maintenance work (labour costs) by asking groups to help where possible (if they can't mow greens), i.e. get bowlers to do their own litter picking / picking up cigarette ends instead of the council workers doing it.
 - Xmas trees – get a community group or enterprise to collect the trees and they will sell the logs = sustainability (not sure if pine logs are good for burners).
 - Bowling greens / clubs are not scared cows. I'm an old age pensioner:- and would not expect the local authority to be paying for the maintenance of my hobby!
 - Allow individuals to access felled wood to recover for firewood – a register of interested parties could be raised. Might save on chipping up branches etc.
 - Remember that bowling is by older people.
 - All the members at Victoria are elderly and look forward to an afternoon and evening playing bowls, if this is taken away it will hurt a lot of people as this is all some of them have. Please leave the greens maintained.
 - Important to ensure sports facilities are maintained, e.g. football pitches, not just “formal teams” which use them, but for people who use them on a more “casual” basis.
 - Please keep cutting all bowling greens, cheers.
 - Purchase a machine / mower which both cuts and verticuts a bowling green by using 2 different cassettes.
 - Purchase a machine which distributes top dressing evenly.
 - We agree to the proposals as long as Bowling Green is still cut and maintained as much as possible, as it would affect a lot of people's activity as they are limited.
-
- I wish you had come with an outline casted (ball park figure) plan. With a discussion about our thought on your priorities. I realise this is all difficult. You have to consult. We need somebody to draw active groups together, maximise community capital. Community organiser £7500 will gain you an overall £30,000 package.
 - Community ownership – get communities to maintain parcels of land, verges that may also extend their gardens. Council maintain ownership though. Give permission for user groups to maintain and fix areas that they use. i.e. bowling greens if bale, football pitches, if able.
 - Ask community / user groups to raise the funds needed or to do some work themselves.
 - Sorry! The way some staff are supervised, and the attitude to their job needs tightening up. I've seen mowing teams finish by 3.30pm, be back at Whitaker Park by 3.50pm and then site around waiting to knock off. Regret, there are other examples.
 - Consult with planning dept. before consent is granted for section 106 open spaces funding to be channelled in to the local budget.
 - Work with local schools to try and promote ownership in the communal areas.
 - Is there a youth volunteers or even young offenders scheme that could help with maintenance.
 - Explore possibilities of training and providing access to RBC owned plant and equipment in order to involve individual volunteers in scheduled work or special projects.
 - Make available to groups the unit costs of the various management regimes at the time specific proposals are put forward and that the costed plan is updated before any changes or adjustments are proposed.
 - Attend to dangerous structures, e.g. deteriorated retaining walls.
 - Encourage voluntary organisations apply for funding from outside sources, e.g. Community Spaces.
 - Better cleaning and maintenance to toilets.
 - I think any service the council provide as in allotment maintenance etc. should be charged for.
 - Give people the option to maintain their own gardens.

- Sell logs from cut trees.
- Charge only for tree cutting as long as poor, disabled people are not affected.
- Work in conjunction with other councils to see how they save money. Take ideas from them.
- The number of bowling greens in Rossendale has already been reduced to the minimum Acceptable number (8). Bowling greens provide social and health benefits to a large number of people. Having written the constitution of several bowling clubs myself, I know that the bowling greens are made available to all people regardless of age, ability, race and religion. Bowling greens are one of the amenities regularly used by that group of people who have, over the years, paid the greatest amount of tax in Rossendale.
- Make sure grass cutters and other staff have a driving licence. Stop them sitting around waiting for lifts. Look at buying them a van or other transport instead of using tractors for transportation. Expensive use of fuel. Why cannot grass cutter perform other duties whilst waiting “not my job” is all that is said. Monitor time spent on green maintenance seems to take a long time. Does anyone in charge know how long things should take? Do we have nay experts in gardening?

Site specific ideas and suggestions.

Have you already thought of something or somewhere specific that we could change – please tell us below.

- Civic Pride have long term plans which we look forward developing with RBC.
- The greenhouses could be used more effectively to grow plants for the park and be involved in the actual planting and maintenance. Also splitting perennials costs nothing.
- Can’t think of specifics, but I am all for encouraging nature. Concentrate on weeds maybe where they are unsightly or notifiable as injurious weeds.
- Marl pits – I’m sure Rossendale RUFC would be delighted to take over some / all of pitch maintenance and preparation.
- We (C.Pride0 could take over some areas entirely IF there are means of funding the costs we would incur. Open for negotiation – gi’ us a ring!
- (Re: remove neglected beds) in front of fudge factory – 3 or 4 beds.
- Areas in Whitworth suitable to be converted in to parking spaces, e.g. Market Street above St John’s church Lane.
- Work on some of the most complained about areas to find easier to work solutions that can then be taken on by the community groups, e.g. market street, Birds embankment – rankles the public constantly – would be great to get a solution that maybe Bacup pride could then maintain the area.
- Guidelines for community groups – more encouragement of ???? insurance schemes as pioneered by Ross Civic trust.
- Please don’t take our planters from Bacup – let’s reposition and (maybe) Bacup pride could take on.
- Discussing (with Tricia brindle / groundwork) possibility of training for groups re: growing and propagating perennials ready for town centre groups (funding already applied for).
- Better toilets on Bacup rec.
- Edgeside Park: We are planning to consult with local residents through a newsletter delivered 14 Sept onwards, and an event in the park 28 Sept. We think savings can be made in grass cutting, but need to consult with people about any preferred routes which people want to remain cut. Dog walking is a major use of the park!

In summary there is wide support to consider many options and find the best that suits the site.

There was a strong concern over future maintenance of bowling greens with clubs wary of the self-management principle and concerned that bowling greens will not be maintained in to the future. However there were also feelings from non-bowlers that the sport should not be over subsidised. The option to consider self-management should therefore be kept in recommendations as it will allow further detailed discussions with clubs and therefore may enable a more sustainable future for bowling greens.

The most supported option from was that to *“Charge for tree works carried out to a healthy tree where it has been requested by an individual and will only benefit that individual or household (all tree works for safety reasons will be carried out free of charge)”*.

The least supported option was “Change the way we support community groups”, however this may be due to lack of knowledge rather than actual effects and it is likely that through further discussions with some groups there will be changes anyway.