

Public Questions – Charity Trustees Sub-Committee – 16th July 2024

1.	Question from Caroline Dewar on behalf of the Friends of Graves Park	Response:
Page 1	<p>Regarding Item 10 on the agenda</p> <p>The FOGP have been informed by Graves Park parks manager about the plans to lease the cricket hut at the south side of the park for 5 years to a local group, who want to improve changing facilities etc. We have since read the report and the amended report for the agenda item.</p> <p>Naturally we fully support the increased access, use and maintenance of a facility. The club concerned seems to be doing an excellent job and we can fully understand their desire to have reasonable changing facilities and need for a longer license to achieve this. Indeed we are willing to support them in any fundraising or applications for funding in the future.</p> <p>The report indicates that there has been “appropriate consultation” but it would seem that this has only been within the council as we were informed once the proposal was being submitted. We were unaware that the whole of the pitch/outfield was included.</p> <p>After making enquiries and listening to various people, including some of the group themselves, we have concerns about this suggested lease and arrangement for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To put in historical context, the land was first offered as a cricket pitch in 19th century and from then Norton Woodseats Cricket Club (or the local community) had the right to play there, so this predates Graves Park. 2. The council is incorrect in item 4.3.1: the Conveyance for this land dates from 1936, when J G Graves bought this land to be added to his previous acquisitions of 1925 and 1931. 3. The cricket hut, or shed, was put up by NWCC and to our knowledge does not belong to the Graves Park Trust. 4. NWCC moved to Matthews Lane so that they could have a better pitch, proper cricket pitch and get funding for a proper pavilion, which is now in place. One of the problems of trying to improve their pitch in Graves Park is that it would involve serious intervention which would 	<p>Response provided in the Minutes of the meeting (when available): Agenda for Charity Trustee Sub-Committee on Tuesday 16 July 2024, 2.00 pm Sheffield City Council</p>

Page 2	<p>damage or destroy what is a significant historical heritage site. This has always prevented such improvement in the past.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The current group informed us that they do not want a lease, just a licence to use the hut and improve it. 6. All the above notwithstanding, the FOGP are not happy about yet more leases being given to people to have control over land within Graves Park, when land is not to be disposed of according to the covenants. <i>This is especially true of designated parkland, for which the clause 4.3.5</i> “where the extent of the disposal is in proportion to the overall size of Trust so small that it will have no impact on the charity’s ability to further its objects” does not apply to designated parkland, as far as we understand from previous discussions with the Charity Commission. <p>Bearing all the above in mind, we respectfully ask the following question:</p> <p>Will the Charity Subcommittee, as trustee of the Graves Park trust, please postpone this decision and arrange a discussion between SCC, the FOGP and the cricket group, so that information can be shared and the situation regarding the hut can be addressed in a way that benefits all those involved, while at the same time protecting the Park’s covenants and heritage?</p>	
2	<p>Questions from Russell Johnson</p>	
	<p>Regarding the Restoration of the next section of the Nurseries back to parkland:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the Charity Subcommittee aware that the Friends of Graves Park are still waiting for permission to restore the next section of the Norton Nurseries site back to parkland? 2. Has the Charity Subcommittee noted that, as with the previous 2 restorations of parts of the site to parkland, the new restoration will be fenced off with supervised access to volunteers until the site is fully restored and safely opened to the public? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes the Charity Trustee Sub-Committee are aware of this request. 2. Yes the Charity Trustee Sub-Committee has noted this.

3. Will the Charity Sub-committee please, as a matter of urgency, agree to the land for the next section of Chantreyland Meadow and Arboretum (as identified in the questions of 22-1-24) being released to the Friends of Graves Park for restoration with immediate effect, so that it can be fenced off while it is restored back to parkland and then once restoration is complete, reopened to public use?

Wider Discharge by SCC of its charities' responsibilities:

4. Does the Chair agree with me that, in order to properly discharge its responsibilities and in accordance with principles of good governance, the Charities Sub Committee should include representation of relevant parties beyond Elected members? This matter has been the subject of a previous PQ by a member of the public. An assurance was then given that action would be considered. Has that consideration taken place, and if so with what outcome?

5. Would the Chair agree with the point I made to Cllr Hunt over a year ago that if SCC's protestations that they aspire to become a listening, responsive and open organisation are to carry any credibility, this glaring flaw in Council practice with regard to management of charitable parks should be remedied without further delay?

3. The trustee has considered the request from the Friends of Graves Park and up to now has taken the view that the land is in use operationally and needed by the Charity to maintain the Park.

4. As part of the ongoing review of the governance models for the SCC parks that are held on trust the inclusion of representatives who are not elected members is one of the options under consideration.

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