

Appendix A

Public Petitions and Questions –Charity Trustees Sub- Committee– 4th March 2024

N.B - Please note that a period of up to 30 minutes shall be allocated at meetings of Policy Committees and other appropriate bodies for members of the public to present ordinary petitions or to ask questions of Members and officers present.

Petitions Received from Members of the Public - 0

	Petitions	Response:
1.		

Questions Received from Members of the Public x 1

	Question from Friends of Graves Park	Response:
1. Page 1	<p>Regarding the Restoration of the next section of the Nurseries back to parkland:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will the Charity Subcommittee please acknowledge that the response to the Friends’ questions which we asked at the last Charity Subcommittee did not answer any of our questions? 2. Will the Charity Subcommittee please acknowledge that the statement that “Elements of the Norton Nursery site have been used for the maintenance of Graves Park and other parks in the local area prior to the amalgamation of the nursery site into the 2009 Graves Park scheme” cannot be correct if SCC was claiming in 2008 that the site was “derelict and surplus to requirements” and that this response to our questions is misleading, particularly for anyone not fully familiar with the history of the site? 3. Will the Charity Subcommittee please note 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Charity Sub Committee provided responses to the questions asked by the Friends of Graves Park. 2. No. Sixteen years ago, the Norton Nurseries site may have been considered surplus to requirements despite elements of it being used for maintenance of Graves Park and other Parks sites. Since then both Sheffield City Council’s estate and the operational requirements of Graves Parks and other parks have changed, and the operational element of the Norton Nurseries site has been developed to better serve the parks. 3. No, this answer is not misleading. The Council is not in any position to allow any volunteer groups access to the Norton Nursery site,

until the site is fully restored and safely opened to the public, so the response given to our questions which states, “We are aware of the excellent work the Friends of Graves Park have put into the Chantreyland Meadow and the Arboretum and are motivated to see further parts of the site restored to similar standards. However, we are currently not in a position to allow any volunteer groups access to the site to conduct work due to health and safety concerns. Due to moving vehicles, COSHH and PPE required it would not be safe for members of the public to have access to this site. Furthermore, there are a lot of vehicles, equipment and other expensive items that need to remain in a safe and locked area that is currently provided by the site.” Will the Charity Subcommittee acknowledge that this response is misleading, particularly for anyone not fully familiar with the site?

4. Will the Charity Subcommittee please note that, in the above response from SCC to our questions, in the reference to the moving vehicles and expensive equipment, the Norton Nurseries site is not and never has been a depot, according to SCC, so it is not surprising that there are regular break-ins where fuel, vehicles and/or parts are stolen and that a proper secure depot would be a much better place to store council equipment that is not relevant to Graves Park?
5. 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?

Regarding the proposal to use the Glasshouses for Growing Food:

other than the existing areas of Chantreyland Meadow and the Arboretum, as the site is currently in use as an operational site.

4. No. Parks and Countryside use their equipment across multiple sites including Graves Park. Storing equipment at Norton Nurseries is the most practical and efficient place to store equipment to service parks in this area including Graves Park.
5. The answers provided in 2024, 2023, and 2022 to this question remain accurate and relevant.

1. While the Friends are broadly in favour of the glasshouses being used for food growing by members of the public, why was a formal consultation not conducted regarding this issue?

2. Is the use of the greenhouses in this way really in the best interests of the Graves Park Charity? Is this getting best value for the charity? Has SCC checked that it is allowed to lease the greenhouses in this way and that they do not have to put it out to tender?

1. Extensive informal consultation has been carried out with regards food growing in development of the Food Strategy for Sheffield. Throughout 2023, ShefFood hosted a series of public working group meetings on the subject of food growing, composting and the skills needed to produce food. These events have been well attended by community organisations, members of the public, students and Council officers. The outcomes of the working groups were a commitment from all attendees to find collaborative ways to transform the Sheffield's food system into one that responds to social, economic and environmental challenges. Identification of suitable space for food growing has been highlighted as a key priority for Sheffield City Council. Norton Nurseries Glasshouses has been highlighted as a potential site to support the ambitions of the strategy throughout this process.

2. The object of the charity is the provision and maintenance of a park and recreation ground for use by the public with the object of improving their conditions of life. SCC consider and are proposing that for the reasons set out in the report it would be in the interests of the Charity to commission an operator to work with them to bring the glass houses within Norton Nursery back into use.

SCC are looking to restore a structure in the park that is a charitable asset and are trying to find a way that this can be done at zero cost to the charity. This decision is going to Charity Sub Committee for approval to go out to tender and this approach is in line with charitable aims.

SCC are not proposing to lease the glasshouses but to grant a concession agreement and license to occupy the space for up to 5 years. A procurement process would follow a positive charity sub-committee decision.

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| <p>3. Are the members of the Charity Subcommittee aware that the glasshouses have not been maintained and that therefore the estimate of £10,000 to restore the glasshouses is a woeful underestimate? Has a proper survey of the glasshouses been done and have the results been shared with the Charity Subcommittee?</p> <p>4. Can the Charity Subcommittee guarantee that any plans to bring the greenhouses back into use will not adversely affect the Friends of Graves Park's long-standing request to restore the next section of the Norton Nurseries site back to parkland?</p> <p>5. Further to the above, does the proposed use of the greenhouses mean that the site will no longer be used as a general parks and open spaces depot and dumping ground?</p> <p>6. Does this also mean that the objections of SCC to the restoration of the next section of the Nurseries back to parkland by FOGP, at their own expense, because it would entail access by members of the public, will now be removed, as the above use of the greenhouses by members of the public is being approved?</p> | <p>3. The initial feasibility costs quoted from glasshouse repair experts, are for limited works to ensure the structural integrity of the glasshouses including clearing the gutters and replacing broken panes of glass. They will not be undertaking any work to the irrigation, heating, blinds or ventilation system. All additional infrastructure investment required to bring the glass houses back into use would be met by the operator, assessed and evaluated as part of the process.</p> <p>4. The glasshouses are not in the area that the FOGP have requested to restore to parkland. Occupation of the glass houses for food growing should be complimentary to any other activity which is delivered within this area of the park.</p> <p>5. The glasshouses will be used for food growing as highlighted within the report, fulfilling both the charity objects as well as contribute to outcomes within the Food Strategy.</p> <p>7. The answers provided in 2024, 2023, and 2022 to the question about the restoration of the next section of the Nurseries land remain accurate and relevant.</p> |
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