



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board

6th June 2019

Report of the Head of Streetcare

Matter for: Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Gnoll Park

Purpose of the Report:

To provide information as requested by Members.

Executive Summary:

Members will recall that the Forward Financial Plan in 2018/2019 included Gnoll Park making a further saving of £30k. Several recommendations were approved, and a further report was requested to measure the effects of these.

Background:

Members may recall that whilst a considerable reduction in the subsidy for running the park had already been made, the Council's Forward Financial Plan for 2018/2019, included a proposal to save a further £30K.

A report presented on 15th February 2018 identified several recommendations to increase income, aimed at improving the

sustainability of the park and assist in the preservation of the heritage features such as the dams, cascades and the Mackworth House ruins.

Members agreed to:-

- Car parking: Charges being increased to £2.50 for up to 4 hours, £3.50 for all day, and a season ticket for £52.
- Room Hire: Charges being increased to £66.00 for a full day and £33.00 for a half day.
- Footgolf: Charges being increased to £5.10 adult and £4.00 concession/junior.
- Café: Charges being increased generally by approximately 5%.

Since the 1st April 2019 rates have further increased in line with the corporate guidance for income included in the approved budget as follows:

- Car parking: Charges increased to £2.60 for up to 4 hours, £3.60 for all day, and a season ticket for £53.
- Room Hire: Charges increased to £68.00 for a full day and £34.00 for a half day.
- Footgolf: Charges increased to £6.00 adult and £5.00 concession/junior.
- Café: A further review has increased some prices based on popularity and market comparisons.
- The income from the fun fair has increased to £3,000 (see note below).

The fun fair has been selling food such as burgers, hot dogs and slush puppies when the sale of food was not permitted within their licence agreement. Action was taken to stop the fun fair from selling food given its potential detrimental effect on café sales and thereby income to the Council. However, the fun fair threatened to withdraw their fun day services and given the advertising that had already taken place an

agreement was reached for the remainder of the fun fair's licence agreement (which runs until September 2020) to sell food on fun days (up to 40 days per year) for an additional £1,000pa on their licence agreement.

Due to procedural matters associate with the legal parking order increased car parking charges for 2018/19 did not come into operation until Mid-June 2018

Visitor Centre Numbers

Visitor numbers recorded by an electronic counter on the entrance doors to the visitors centre are included in the table below.

2016	2017	2018
152,044	149,535	144627

It should be noted that many people visit the Country Park but do not enter the Visitors Centre and also, as detailed above, the impact on café sales by food sales on the part of the fun fair is not known. Increasing costs in the café could also be having an effect but for example:

Some comparative costs of a large milky coffee around Neath Port Talbot

Gnoll	Cedars (Afan Forest Park)	Costa	No.46, Neath	Gregs	Charlotte's Pantry Margam
£2.20	£2.70	£2.65	£2.70	£2.20	£2.20

Car Park Income

16/17	17/18	18/19
76,009	80,784	81,468

Café Income

16/17	17/18	18/19
166,635	173,542	172,436

Footgolf Income

16/17	17/18	18/19
1,389	2,725	1,145

Room Hire Income

16/17	17/18	18/19
1,789	4,039	3,696

Fun Days - Fair

16/17	17/18	18/19
2,000	2,000	2,000

Developments

A review of the Café facility has recently taken place. Matters such as stock control, food waste and staff allocation have been reviewed.

The Senior Ranger retired on the 31st March, this post is being replaced with the post of Managing Ranger.

The onsite previously tied cottage of the Senior Ranger is being considered as a holiday let.

A consultant is being commissioned in conjunction with the Tourism team, to develop a Master Plan for the Gnoll to review the overall development of the park.

Car park ticket machines have been replaced with two cash and contactless card payment units and a third is due to be installed. The associated software with these will also allow greater analysis of numbers, times of visits etc.

Issues

Parking on fun days: Improved parking management and potentially enhanced enforcement is required. Consideration also needs to be given to restricting parking at the lower pond access road to disabled parking only.

Fun fair franchise: Value for money and procurement approach needs to be considered in advance of current agreement expiring.

Facility development/management: need to revisit existing structure to ensure support is available to enhance commercial activity/income generation. Appointment of the Managing Ranger is part of such improvement.

Financial Impacts:

The table below identifies the annual expenditure (excluding any one-off costs for dam works etc.) for 14/15, 15/16, 16/17, 17/18 and 18/19 for the park.

2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
£228,195	£179,110	£106,067	£93,585	£97,168

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications.

Workforce Impacts:

No implications.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

If the Groll Country Park does not move towards a more cost neutral position then the sustainability of the park going forward will be called into question given the current climate of austerity.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Appendices:

None

List of Background Papers:

Groll Park Charges 2018/19 – Education, Skills and Culture Board
15th February 2018

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