

Dear Mike

Thank you for the email providing notification of the above consultation. Sport Wales and Fields in Trust are both statutory consultees on proposed disposals of playing fields, working closely on such cases and would like to submit the following comments.

In assessing proposals, the criteria set out in Planning Policy Wales is referenced which states that that playing fields should be protected except where:

- facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;
- alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available; or
- there is an excess of such provision in the area.

The proposed disposal does not comply with the first exception as the whole site will be lost. With regard to the second exception, there is no proposed replacement and although the users of the fields, Fleur-De-Lys AFC, have been moved to Trelyn Park, they will be sharing with Fleur-De-Lys RFC and only have use of one pitch which cannot be considered equivalent provision.

In order to justify the disposal therefore, evidence is requested showing there is an excess of provision in the area ideally in the form of an up to date playing pitch strategy which has taken account of, and seeks to balance, supply and demand.

Fleur-De-Lys AFC, which has several teams, has been moved from their two pitches at Bedwellty to one pitch at Trelyn Park. Is this provision sufficient for their needs? What about other clubs and groups in the locality? Is there sufficient provision so that there is no need to retain Bedwellty?

It is noted that the pavilion at Bedwellty was situated on the land already sold and its relocation would be costly and would mean that one of the pitches would be lost. The need to retain the pavilion to support the continuing use of the pitches should have been considered before the land was sold.

Until evidence can be provided showing there is sufficient provision in the area both Sport Wales and Fields in Trust would like to object to the proposed disposal.

Kind regards

Jon Radcliffe
(Sport Wales)

Dr Jonathan Radcliffe
Research & Evaluation Officer | Uwch Swyddog Ymchwil a Gwerthuso
Sport Wales | Chwaraeon Cymru
Sophia Gardens | Gerddi Sophia
Cardiff | Caerdydd
CF11 9SW

📞 Tel | Ffôn: +44 (0)29 2033 8261

✉️ jonathan.radcliffe@sport.wales

🌐 www.sport.wales | www.chwaraeon.cymru

Fleur De Lys AFC
9 Hillside Park
Bargoed
CF81 8NJ

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To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to raise comments on behalf of Fleur De Lys AFC related to the Bedwellty Playing Fields Consultation.

In relation to the report for Cabinet – 25th April.

1. For clarification, we do not currently run any senior sides but are a grassroots club providing football for over 100 boys and girls in our mini and junior sections, played across both Saturday and Sunday.
2. Point 2.2 suggests that the pavilion would need to be removed or relocated. Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) did not offer the option of the pavilion being relocated.
3. Point 4.3 claims that the pavilion is no longer fit for purpose. However, it subsequently became apparent that the pavilion was in fact relocated to another playing field in the borough, despite CCBC informing us that the pavilion would not be able to be relocated due to its age and condition. The fact that the pavilion has been relocated calls into question the cost of circa £40,000 that the report claims it would cost to re-site the pavilion and connect it to services.
4. Point 6.1 states that the facilities at Trelyn Park have improved changing facilities. It is true that the changing rooms themselves offer more space but they are in a poorer state of repair than the changing rooms offered by the previous pavilion. Whilst we can appreciate the facilities are purpose built and is not a portacabin, the facilities are known generally through the borough as being in poor state of repair. In addition, there is the complicating issue of sharing the facility with the rugby club, especially in relation to the crossover between adults and children, which was raised as a safeguarding concern by the rugby club.

General Comments

Fleur De Lys AFC invested heavily in both The Ynys and Bedwellty Playing Fields over the past 10 years. Investment included installation of barriers at The Ynys (circa £5,000) and installation of water and electric into a cabin located at Bedwellty Playing Fields, again at a cost of several thousand pounds. All this work took place with the consent of the council, yet the full cost of the losses when we have been forced to move have been borne by the club, and, ultimately, by the parents and sponsors. By way of example, CCBC agreed and gave consent to install a cabin at Bedwellty School Fields to serve as a kitchen, which came at a cost in excess of £3,000, fundraised by club members. Having been installed for less than one year, the club was forced to decide whether abandon the cabin or relocate it to Trelyn Park by a deadline imposed by the council with the full cost borne by the club.

It is true to say that we entered into the discussions regarding the move to Trelyn Park positively, welcoming the opportunity to return to the village having been removed from Trelyn Park by the

council earlier in our history. However, the facility is not a like-for-like replacement. We have gone from two pitches to one, which means when we have two home games, that we have to arrange games to take place earlier and later to follow on from each other. As well as the wear and tear on the pitch, opposing clubs are often reluctant to kick off later, leading to games being postponed. Later kick offs also bring us into the territory of dual use of the pavilion when the rugby team are home. In addition to this, whilst we are happy to return to the village and play at Trelyn Park, the field, at the insistence of the council, has been made a dual-purpose rugby/football pitch, retaining posts for both sports. We therefore do not have use of a pitch exclusively for use for football.

The condition of the pitch has also been a disappointment. After many years as a second rugby pitch used mainly for training it was in a neglected state. Despite receiving assurances that the pitch would be made ready for football for the new season, little or no preparatory work appears to have been done. Fresh molehills continue to appear on the pitch and there are a large number of ruts and divots which have resulted in several minor injuries from players 'rolling' their ankles.

In Sport,

Shane Needs
Secretary

Phil Bowden
Chairman