

**Land and Asset Management
Committee**

**4th October, 2018 at 5.30 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Gavan (Chair);
Councillors Dhallu, Edis, L Giles and Preece.

Apologies: Councillors Eling and Moore.

8/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th June, 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

Key Decision

9/18 **Fields in Trust Centenary Fields Programme Smethwick ‘Lions of the Great War’ (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC10/10/2018)**

Approval was sought to place in perpetuity the public open space on Smethwick High Street.

It was reported that The Fields in Trust Charity ‘Centenary Fields’ programme had been created to honour the memory of the millions who lost their lives in World War I. The focal point of the site would be the ‘Lions of the Great War Monument’ a 3 metre bronze statue depicting a First World War Sikh soldier, erected to honour the sacrifices made by South Asian service personnel of all faiths from the Indian subcontinent who fought for Britain in both World Wars and in all subsequent conflicts.

Fields in Trust was an independent charity with over 90 years of experience protecting parks and green spaces. Over 2,700 sites had been protected since the charity was established in 1925.

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The Centenary Fields programme aimed to protect at least one green space in every local authority area across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to commemorate the centenary of World War I (WWI). These protected sites could be war memorial parks or recreation grounds, memorial gardens, parks and recreation grounds that contained war memorials or other valued green spaces. Safeguarding these sites would create a living UK-wide legacy in commemoration of the sacrifice made by those who lost their lives in WWI. Fields in Trust was working in partnership with the Royal British Legion to deliver the programme.

The Committee was informed that local authorities and other landowners were encouraged to dedicate such sites as Centenary Fields through the Centenary Fields programme. By doing so, they could ensure valuable green space was protected as a living remembrance to those who fought and lost their lives in WW1. This dedication was aligned with the spirit of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and would be recognised by the local community as a clear commitment to the importance of these spaces now and in the future.

All Centenary Fields dedicated would receive a commemorative plaque to display on the site: this would have provision for the name of the site and/or the name of the landowner or the geographical location.

The site proposed as Sandwell's contribution to the Centenary Fields programme stood between Tollhouse Way and High Street Smethwick, between the Guru Nanak Gurdwara and Rolfe Street station. The site was approximately 2000 square metres in area and was in council ownership, forming part of the adopted highway.

The site had two distinct components. Approximately 500 square metres was currently being laid out as a high-quality, paved public space. The focal point would be a monument entitled "Lions of the Great War". The nearby Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick had appointed Black Country sculptor Luke Perry to create the monument to honour the sacrifices made by South Asian service personnel of all faiths from the Indian subcontinent who fought for Britain in both World Wars and in all subsequent conflicts.

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The monument would take the form of a 3 metre bronze statue depicting a First World War Sikh soldier, in full trench wear and bearing a rifle. The statue would stand on a 2 metre high granite plinth, inscribed appropriately to explain the significance of the memorial. This inscription would highlight the key role played by all soldiers from the Indian sub-continent who served in the British armed forces and would emphasise the importance of the statue for Smethwick's long-established South Asian communities.

Immediately adjoining the new monument was an area of mounded green space which included paving, seating, a fountain, landscaping and a metal sculpture celebrating inventor James Watt, who pioneered steam power in Smethwick. This area was laid out in the mid-1980s and would be refurbished as part of the Lions project.

Resolved to recommend to Cabinet:-

- (1) that the dedication of the land located on Smethwick High Street through the Centenary Fields programme, be approved;
- (2) that subject to Resolution (1) above, the Director – Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal, if necessary, any other related documentation in connection with the protection of the land on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods.

(Meeting ended at 5.40 pm)

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