

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	11 May 2015
Subject: Warlies Park – Upshire Millennium Field SEF 17/15	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest	For Decision

Summary

A field at Upshire on the Warlies Park Estate, part of City of London's Buffer Land, has been utilised for community benefit for many years, firstly as St Thomas' Cricket Club and since 2002 as the Upshire Millennium Field (UMF).

This report seeks approval to a request from the UMF Trustees to grant a further lease to the Upshire Millennium Trust in respect of the Millennium Field for a period of three years. The Trustees have sought a continuing commitment to the peppercorn rent enjoyed since the Greater London Council's ownership of the site.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the grant of a lease to the Upshire Millennium Trust in respect of the Warlies Park Millennium Field for a period of three years from the 12th May 2015 at a peppercorn rent and to exclude the protection provision of S.24-28 Landlord & Tenant Act 1954 and that the Comptroller and City Solicitor be instructed to complete the necessary documentation with each side to bear its costs.

Main Report

Background

1. The Upshire Millennium Trust (Trust) has been using the Upshire Millennium Field, being part of the City's Buffer lands, for informal recreation and local events since 2002. Prior to this, the field was leased to the St Thomas' Cricket Club and was run and maintained by the Club.
2. The Upshire Millennium Trust was set up to care for and administer the site. In 2002, when a lease was first granted to the Trust, grants had been obtained from the local town council and funds had been raised by the local community to help towards clearance and maintenance of the site.
3. The field is primarily used as an informal recreation ground for community benefit. Past activities have included a Country fair in 2010.

4. Due to finances, the Trust has been unable to put on any major public activity in the past three years, although the Trust is slowly building up funds with smaller activities and are hopeful that a larger community event may take place in the future.
5. The Trust holds a lease of the Millennium Field for a period of 3 years from the 12th May 2012 at a peppercorn rent and which excludes the protection provisions of S.24-28 Landlord & Tenant Act 1954, thereby removing the statutory right for the Trust to seek a new tenancy when their lease ends.

Current Position

6. The current lease to the Trust expires on the 12th May 2015. It is seeking a new lease on similar terms and conditions which include provision to pay a fair proportion of the City's costs in maintaining public access and an obligation to manage the field according to good husbandry.
7. The Trust are committed to keeping the Millennium Field in good order for the public to enjoy and have maintained fences, hedges and seats over the last three years.
8. The Upshire Millennium Trust wishes to take a further three year lease which the Superintendent supports. The Trust continues to be a satisfactory tenant supporting and encouraging local use in addition to holding small local events. Its activities and use compliment the purposes of the Forest and its Buffer Lands.

Proposals

9. It is proposed that a lease for a period of three years is granted to the Upshire Millennium Trust from the 12th May 2015 at a peppercorn rent and to exclude the provisions of Section 24-28, Landlord & Tenant Act 1954, and otherwise upon similar terms to the existing lease.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. **Together Strategy:** The granting of a lease to the Upshire Millennium Trust is in line with the vision of the City of London as 'The heart of a World Class City that: 'supports our communities', specifically by encouraging and supporting services and initiatives which benefit communities within the City and City fringes, contributing to local prosperity.

Implications

11. **Financial:** The Trustees have sought a continuing commitment to the peppercorn rent enjoyed since the Greater London Council's ownership of the site. Although only a peppercorn rent, this arrangement represents savings to the Epping Forest division in terms of reduced grassland maintenance costs. There are no other financial implications arising from this proposal.

12. **Legal:** the City has the power to deal with the proposed letting under the provisions of Section 27 of the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938.

13. **Property:** The letting proposal ensures that the City retains proper control over the use of the land.

Conclusion

14. The grant of a further tenancy to the Upshire Millennium Trust will give the opportunity for volunteers in the local community to provide a community managed facility extending public access and enjoyment of a section of Buffer land at little cost to the City of London.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Plan of Upshire Millennium Field

Background Papers

SEF 29/07 Warlies Park: Upshire Millennium Field

SEF 20/09 Warlies Park: Upshire Millennium Field

SEF 16/12 Warlies Park: Upshire Millennium Field

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