

**KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELDS, OLD HALE WAY, HITCHIN. CHARITY COMMISSION No. 1087603, REGISTERED TITLE No. HD493587: INFORMATION NOTE**

THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PERFORMANCE & ASSET MANGEMENT

### **1. Background**

The District Council owns King George V Playing Fields, Old Hale Way, Hitchin. The grounds comprises open space used for organised and informal sport, recreation and leisure uses. The District Council holds the land in trust for the King George V Fields Foundation and as corporate trustee has statutory duties for its charitable assets.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013 (Min 84) the Council received a report asking it to amend the Council's Constitution in order to create a new Sub-Committee of the Cabinet, the intended purpose of which would be to administer Charitable Trusts, including King George V Playing Fields Trust. Councillors Burt, Hone and Lovewell have agreed to become Trustees.

Future decision making in respect of the King George V Playing Fields charitable trust will be made by the Trustees in line with the obligations set out in the King George V Fields Foundation Trust Deed dated 3 November 1936. The Trustees will shortly be considering the following matters:

### **2. Hitchin Rugby Football Club**

An early surrender of Hitchin Rugby Football Club's existing ground lease and management agreement and grant of a new lease for 99 years. Hitchin Rugby Football Club (HRFC) propose to knock down and rebuild the changing rooms and club house at King George V Playing Fields. HRFC have planning permission and funding to start the first phases of a long term plan to replace the existing changing rooms and club house on the trust land. The club and their funders require a new lease of the site, the club house and changing rooms. This would be achieved by an early surrender of HRFC's existing ground lease and granting a new 99 year long lease for the footprint of the combined buildings.

The granting of a long lease in trust land is considered a disposal under Charity Commissions Acts. The Trustees are required to obtain independent professional advice from an appropriate Chartered Surveyor, paid for by NHDC. The Chartered Surveyor will report and advise the Trust directly.

### **3. 5th Hitchin Scouts**

The Scouts have a lease of a hut next to the rugby club. The lease has come to an end and is being renewed under Part 2 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, as amended. This is a normal lease renewal and the Scout's rights to a new lease are protected under statute. The Council has renewed other similar Scout and Guides leases of its own property over the last few years at below market value to reflects the

valuable social wellbeing that they provide. The Trustees we will need to obtain independent professional advice paid for by NHDC before approving the heads of terms of the new lease.

#### **4. General management of the playing fields**

The Trustees may also wish to consider reviewing the future arrangements for the management of the playing fields.

#### **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

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