

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 15 th October 2019
Report Subject	Greenfield Valley - Six monthly progress report
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and the Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a six monthly update on the work carried out at Greenfield Valley between April and October 2019 to deliver the recommendations of the recent audit report and outline the current operational position at the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members note the content of the report and the positive progress achieved at Greenfield Valley.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	
1.01	Greenfield Valley is managed by the Greenfield Valley Trust Ltd, a registered Charity and a Limited Company. The Trust was established in 1986 to manage the Greenfield Valley on behalf of Flintshire County Council. The Trust manage the site under a Management Agreement with the Council. Under this agreement the Trust receive a management fee and Flintshire provide staff to enable delivery of the Business Plan.

1.02	In April 2015, the Trust engaged Sam Hunt Consulting to carry out a review of the long term governance arrangements at Greenfield Valley. The Governance Review made recommendations for the Trust and the Council to strengthen the governance and operation of the site.
1.03	The audit of Greenfield Valley Museum and Heritage Park was included in the Council's annual Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17.
1.04	The audit was undertaken to examine the governance, funding and operating arrangements in place within Greenfield Valley and assess whether efficient and effective systems were in place to manage Greenfield Valley.
1.05	<p>Areas highlighted by the audit which required improvement were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic decision had to be made around the short and medium term management arrangements at Greenfield Valley; • Clarification was required around the task and reporting structures, responsibility and lines of accountability within the site; • A Decision to be made around Trust compliance with the Councils Contract Procedure Rules; • Implementation of full electronic banking; • Development of effective financial controls (including segregation of duties) to ensure transparency, accountability and good financial stewardship.
1.06	In summary, all actions and recommendations from the audit report have now been completed.
1.07	The new Management Agreement was signed on 19 th August 2019, and supersedes the previous agreement of 1995. This agreement, formalises the partnership arrangement between the Trust and Flintshire County Council. The agreement is open-ended but with termination clauses built in. The Management Agreement is the legal framework to allow the Trust set the strategic direction and have responsibility for management of the site through an agreed Business Plan. The Business Plan details the site vision and goals and highlights the areas of work over a fixed 5 year term.
1.08	The Trust, in response to the Hunt review, has changed its Trustee membership so that neither the Town, nor County Council, have representation on the Board. The Trust, FCC and Holywell Town Council meet twice a year to discuss items of mutual interest and to maintain open and positive communication. The Trust has undertaken recruitment and has a full complement of Trustees with a wide range of skills, experiences and backgrounds.

1.09	<p>Site operational highlights for the last six months:</p> <p>Site Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly patrols and day to day maintenance completed and standards are continuing to improve. • Fly-tipped waste (which included two filing cabinet and a mattress) has been cleared from the path that runs along Wat's Dyke, and two trailer loads of green fly-tipped material was dumped in Bryn Celyn car park and has been moved. • Funding has been secured through the Landfill Tax Grant (£19,600) to improve access and sense of place into the Valley from the Strand area and includes new kissing gates and improved footpath surfacing. Unfortunately a small amount of fly-tipped material has been seen since the completion of the works. • A site meeting was held with volunteers who undertake weekly butterfly surveys in the Valley. Although the overall number of butterflies in the Valley are up this year due to the mass migration of the painted lady, some butterfly species have shown a drop, in particular the dingy skipper. Management prescriptions have been discussed and agreed to reverse this decline. • Staff have supported the summer holiday event programme and led events such as feed the animals and den building.
1.10	<p>Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has continued in creating a coffee point at the Bake-house – electrical work has been completed and security shutters installed. Plumbing work and flooring is outstanding. • The Trustees have approved works for a new path to view the animals. • New windows are due to be installed in Abbey Farmhouse • HLF funded enhancements 2019 - £15,600 • HLF funded events and activities 2019 - £16,000
1.11	<p>Active Travel Route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback has been received from users about the Active Travel Route. An increase has been seen in people using mobility scooters in particular. • A representative from the Welsh Government Active Travel Team visited the Valley and were happy with the scheme and impressed with the site in general. • Further signage funded by the Trust matched by Flintshire County Council is to be installed to warn people of pinch points along the route and that it is a shared access path. • Proposals for tree management for phase two, an improved route from the main path to Holywell High School, has been drawn up and consulted on.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A site meeting was held during the summer with the Trust Chair, Sustrans and Holywell Town Council to discuss the second phase of the scheme.
1.12	<p>Volunteering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new volunteers have started in the Valley, helping with the Community Garden Volunteers and also with preparation for events, but also with general duties in the Valley. • Two new Community Service placements have started with the Valley and have completed a significant amount of work. • Historic Garden Volunteers have improved the area in front of Basingwerk House and put bark around the new planting that was completed earlier during the year.
1.13	<p>Fire Alarm / Electrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to renew the fire and electrical systems was suspended during the summer holidays to ensure that it didn't impact on the visitors during the school holidays. Work has now reconvened, with the contractors currently working at the Lower Cotton Mill. • Flintshire County Council has agreed to pay for the updating of the electric fuse board at Abbey Farm. • Electrical safety checks has been completed on those buildings that required a survey on an annual basis due to particular issues identified with the electrics in the last audit.
1.14	<p>Health and Safety Assessment</p> <p>Unison and Flintshire County Council's Health and Safety department undertook a safety audit of working areas at Greenfield. Staff are currently working through the list of items raised.</p>
1.15	<p>Greenflag</p> <p>Greenfield Valley and the Community Garden have both received the Greenflag award this year. The Greenflag is the industry standard for greenspace management and is a nationally recognised award. Independent judges score the site on its management, presentation, marketing & PR, community involvement, natural & cultural heritage and cleanliness. It is testament to the staff that this award is achieved.</p>
1.16	<p>Footfall within the pay boundary has increased 20.3% from 9916 in 2018 to 11937 (2019 year to date).</p>
1.17	<p>Income taken from till (entrance, shop, education and events) has increased 21.8% from 2018 figures.</p>
1.18	<p>Promotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual elements now on the website • The Valley has moved away from 'season passes' and now issue passes for a year, and at any point of the year, which allows staff to maintain contact and continuity with the customer and will pave the way for standing order payments and a more efficient administration

of the process. The customer gets a full year regardless of when they join.

- Radio promotion with Radio City Liverpool.
- An agreement with 'Groupon' has seen 1485 vouchers sold, 1015 redeemed, with an additional income this year so far at £3250 and feedback suggests that these customers would otherwise not have experienced the Valley.
- A new 'App' has been commissioned and is currently being designed.

1.19 Social Media
Greenfield Valley Facebook Page follows are 4903 (to date), with a reach of 115k, this is an increase from 3749 in 2018, many recommendations and high number of people checking in. Twitter and Instagram are still relatively new to the Valley but are slowly increasing in number of followers.

1.20 Events 2019
18 events held with 4074 attendees

Event title	Date	Footfall
Wonderful Wales	1 & 2nd March	400
Welsh Myths and Legends	13th April	350
Re-enactment festival	20th & 21st April	580
Merry Mayfair	4th May	411
Wicked and Wonderful Weeds	18th May	80
Greenfield Goodies Vs Valley Villains	25th May	300
Party in the Park	22nd June	430
Teddy Bears Picnic	29th June	220
Meadows and Flower Fairies	6th July	60
Wizard Academy	20th July	146
Foraging and Campfire cooking*	24th July	110
Fuzzy Felt	10th August	97
RSPB	14th August	40
Victorian School Experience	17th August	140
Wind in the Willows	24th August	325
World War two Workshop	29th August	118
Den Building*	30th August	107
Woodland Skills	1st September	160
		4074

2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 The improvements are being delivered within Service budget.

3.00 CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT

3.01 None

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The Internal audit report identified a five high and three medium priority actions to be implemented. All recommendations are now complete.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager Telephone: 01352 703902 E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Greenfield Valley Heritage Trust - The Valley Trust is a registered company and charitable organisation, established to manage the Greenfield Valley on behalf of Flintshire County Council.