

Item 4

Special General Meeting of the Council: 15 September 2021.

Bignold Park – Proposal to Create Improved Accessibility.

Joint Report by Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a proposal for the creation of better roadway access in the Bignold Park to enhance its use for the community.

2. Recommendations

The Council is invited to note:

2.1.

That much of the land that makes up the Bignold Park was gifted to the Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the City and Royal Burgh of Kirkwall in 1906 and 1911 by Sir Arthur Bignold as a public park for the use and enjoyment of the community of the Burgh of Kirkwall, with the remainder being acquired by the Council over subsequent years.

2.2.

That the original parts of the Bignold Park gifted to the Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the City and Royal Burgh of Kirkwall comprise Common Good land.

2.3.

That Bignold Park is viewed as an important amenity space by people across Orkney.

2.4.

That Council officers have worked with a number of local organisations investigating options to improve Bignold Park.

2.5.

That the Your Kirkwall Plan highlights improvements to the Bignold Park as suggested through public engagement.

2.6.

That the Interim Chief Executive and the Leisure and Culture Service Manager have engaged in positive and proactive discussion with Orkney Agricultural Society regarding construction of a roadway through the Bignold Park to significantly enhance accessibility for users.

2.7.

That Orkney Agricultural Society has offered to carry out the works, on behalf of the Council, to create an access roadway through the Bignold Park, as well as making a financial contribution based on commercial quotes the Society has received, which are within a price range between £50,000 and £76,000.

It is recommended:

2.8.

That a contribution of 75% of construction costs, up to a maximum sum of £57,000, to be met from the Common Good Fund, be made to Orkney Agricultural Society, towards construction of the access roadway through the Bignold Park.

3. Background

3.1.

The Bignold Park is a large open space in the heart of Kirkwall that was gifted to the Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the City and Royal Burgh of Kirkwall in 1906 and 1911 by Sir Arthur Bignold for the use and enjoyment of the community of the Burgh of Kirkwall. Orkney Islands Council holds legal title to Bignold Park.

Approximately 25% of the Bignold Park was acquired over subsequent years and this part of the park, shown on the map attached as Appendix 1, is not Common Good land.

3.2.

The Bignold Park is a multi-use public open space valued by the community but access within and across the Park is often adversely impacted by inclement weather which limits its effective use at various time throughout the year.

3.3.

For example, as a result of the disruption and damage the wet weather caused to the Bignold Park during County Show in the Summer of 2014, previous discussions between Council Officers and Orkney Agricultural Society took place looking at options to minimise the risk of a similar situation happening again.

3.4.

Following the 2014 County Show, and in response to this experience, Orkney Agricultural Society has rented a temporary road surface for the duration of each subsequent County Show, at an estimated cost of £5,000, to minimise damage to the Bignold Park.

3.5.

The Your Kirkwall Plan acknowledges the predominant existing uses of Bignold Park and promotes improvements to the space which will enhance these activities. Potential design principles include the addition of hard paving so that the park can be used all year round. These paved routes could connect existing housing areas and provide a safe route to Kirkwall Grammar School and Papdale Primary School away from busy traffic.

3.6.

As a result of the damage caused recently at County Shows and the proposal for inclusion of hard paving at Bignold Park in the Your Kirkwall Plan, there is merit in bringing forward a project to construct a roadway through the park.

3.7.

In recent months the Interim Chief Executive and the Leisure and Culture Service Manager have engaged in positive and productive discussion with Orkney Agricultural Society regarding construction of an improved access roadway through the Bignold Park.

4. Creation of Access Roadway

4.1.

The layout of the proposed access roadway is detailed on the plan attached as Appendix 1, with the following construction specification:

- Total road length 567m.
- Width 4.00m.
- Excavate and remove spoil to 400mm deep.
- Geogrid to base and sides.
- 300mm thick well compacted single sub-base layer.
- 100mm thick well compacted type 1 base layer.
- 25mm well compacted overfill (60mm rock dust) surface layer.

4.2.

Indicative costs for the creation of the access roadway to the specification detailed above were provided by the Development and Infrastructure service, however, due to other Council priorities, there was and continues to be limited staff resource to carry out the work.

4.3.

In May 2021, the Council requested Orkney Agricultural Society seek three quotes for the creation of a roadway to the specification detailed above. Quotes received show a price range between approximately £50,000 and £76,000.

4.4.

The creation of an access roadway would connect existing housing estates, providing more access to the park throughout the year as well as an alternative route to school for Kirkwall Grammar School and Papdale Primary School pupils that is away from traffic.

4.5.

The creation of this roadway would not impact on the major events held at the Bignold Park and indeed would improve accessibility to the park for major events especially during inclement weather.

4.6.

No significant maintenance requirements for the proposed roadway are envisaged within the first 10 years following construction.

4.7.

Based on the proportion of the Bignold Park that is Common Good land, it is proposed that the Council makes a contribution of 75% of the total construction costs, up to a maximum sum of £57,000.

5. Links to Council Plan

5.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority of Connected Communities.

5.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to the following priorities of the Council Delivery Plan:

- Priority 1.6 - Implement the Orkney Outdoor Access Strategy Action Plan and develop Active Travel Programme activity, including sourcing external funding for improvements to core paths and (where affordable) other path and cycle networks.
- Priority 1.7 - Revised Kirkwall Urban Design framework, incorporating the Your Kirkwall Action Plan.

6. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Strong Communities.

7. Financial Implications

7.1.

The report recommendation is that a contribution of 75% of costs, in proportion to the Common Good land within the park, up to a maximum sum of £57,000, be made to Orkney Agricultural Society. This contribution could be funded from the capital receipt in the Common Good Fund of £224,500.

7.2.

Should the Council determine that the full cost of the road works should be met, a contribution of up to £19,000 from the Crown Estate funding available to the Council would be a possibility. This could fit within one or more of the following principles for distribution of Crown Estate Funds which were adopted by the Council on 19 December 2019:

- Support investment in the infrastructure required for coastal communities across all of Orkney to thrive.
- Support the cultural and social wellbeing of local communities including the maintenance and enhancement of quality of life.
- Support and empower coastal communities across all of Orkney to deliver projects to realise sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits.

7.3.

In September 2019, the Council received an allocation of £773,673 from Crown Estate Scotland, being its share of the total net revenues for 2017/18. In July 2020 the Council received an allocation of £1,042,994 being its share of the total net revenues for 2018/19. The allocation received in 2019 has been fully allocated while the allocation of £1,042,994 received in 2020 has been partially allocated as follows:

2018/19 Crown Estate Share	£1,042,994
Housing project in St Margaret's Hope	-£25,000
Shapinsay Development Trust	-£15,000
Point of Ness Campsite	-£97,075
Embedded Officer Post £27k 2022/23 & 2023/24	-£54,000
Climate Change Officer (2 Years)	-£140,000
Papdale East Play Area	-£205,707
Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd	-£69,500
Total Allocated to date	-£606,282

Potential Allocations at time of Writing:	
Environmental Designations	-£30,000
Bignold Park Roadway	-£19,000
Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Heritage SCIO	-£40,461
Total Allocations under consideration	-£89,461
Total Unallocated	£347,251

8. Legal Aspects

There is a Common Good element to the Bignold Park, but the construction of a roadway would not constitute a disposal and accordingly there would be no legal impediment to the work being carried out, provided that the location of the roadway did not materially interfere with any of the established uses of the Bignold Park.

9. Contact Officer

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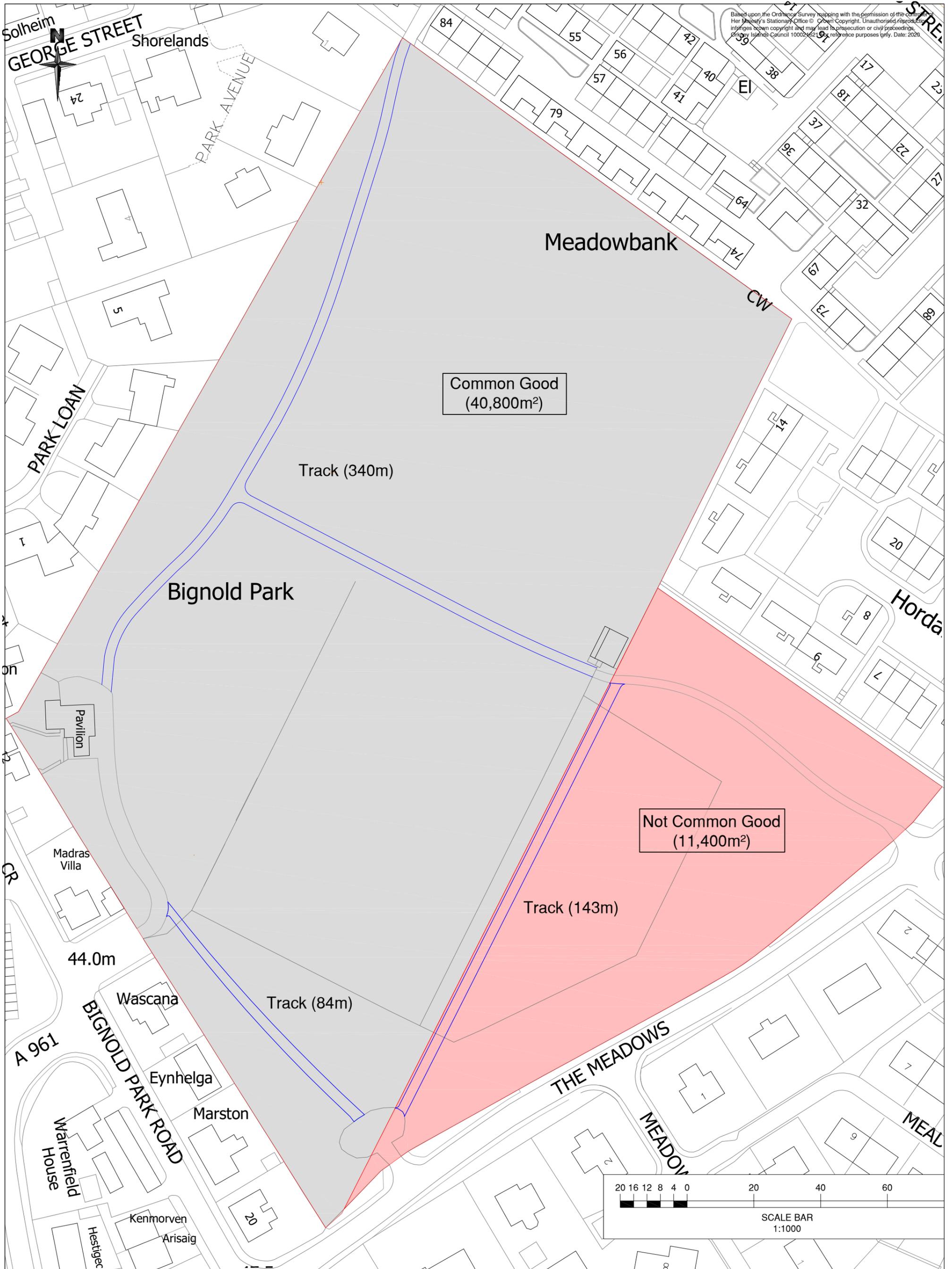
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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Map of the Bignold Park.

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Common Good
(40,800m²)

Not Common Good
(11,400m²)

Track (340m)

Track (143m)

Track (84m)

44.0m

**Bignold Park
Common Good Plan**
Scale 1:1000 @A3



Proposed track 567m total (424m in Common Good area and 143m in Not Common Good)

