

Property Sub-Committee – 2nd March 2022

Underlease of Car Park, Church St, Burntwood WS7 3QL

Recommendations by Cllr Mark Deaville- Cabinet Member for Commercial Matters

Item Title

Underlease of Car Park, Church St, Burntwood WS7 3QL to Chasetown Football Club

Electoral Division

Burntwood South

Local Member

Cllr Mike Wilcox

Recommendations

Underlease of car park to Chasetown Football Club for a period of 20 years at £1pa

Transaction Summary

1. Current Arrangements

- The car park is adjacent to Chasetown FC and has been used on match days under an informal arrangement between the Football Club and SCC for many years.
- Over the past couple of years, an arrangement has also been in place (originally run by Burntwood Town Council but currently overseen by the Football Club) to allow the car park to be open for community use during daylight hours, with the car park being opened and closed by volunteers.
- The Football Club had a change in its operational set-up during 2021, and the new Board of Directors have aspirations to expand the Club's community offer and associated facilities.

2. Proposals

It is proposed that an underlease is granted to Chasetown Football Club for the car park, so that match day parking and other Club activities are provided through a formal arrangement. This will provide some certainty to the Football Club as it looks to develop its expanded community offer, as well as helping to alleviate local parking difficulties.

The use is restricted to the parking of motor vehicles belonging to players, staff, visitors to / guests of and spectators attending football matches and other events hosted at Chasetown FC. Whilst the Football Club state they have no intention in doing so, in the event the lessee imposes charges for parking of motor vehicles on the site in future, SCC is to approve the level of charges and charging policy. SCC may demand a proportion of fees be paid as rent. The proposed term is 20 years from 1st January 2022 at £1pa if demanded, with a mutual break at the end of the 10th year. The Underlease is to be outside of L&T Act protection.

SCC wishes to encourage additional community uses of the car park outside of Chasetown FC matchday and event provision, therefore subject to annual review of previous and proposed community uses, will also allow the Football Club to continue to open the car park for wider community use. This additional arrangement will be reviewed on a 12-month basis between Chasetown FC and SCC, and SCC retains the ability to restrict the car park's use by other members of the public not attending Football Club activities.

3. Undervalue Transaction

The transaction is at an undervalue in order to assist the Football Club and alleviate parking difficulties for residents on match days.

Supporting Details

4. Background Information

4.1 The site forms part of the Chasewater Country Park estate and sits within the landholding SCC leases from CISWO (formerly the Coal Board). There are over thirty years left to run on the head lease. Originally a more conterminous part of the leasehold, the site has since been separated from the Chasewater estate by the A5195, constructed around the time of the M6 Toll Road. The Country Park is now accessed from the car park by a footbridge over the A5195.

4.2 The site is tarmacadam surfaced and gated. Due to the positioning of the car park being separated from the main body of Chasewater Country Park, it has rarely been used which has been the cause of anti-social behaviour. The Football Club, being opposite the site are better able to monitor and police the situation. There have been difficulties for residents on match days with competition for parking spaces in the area.

4.3 The site will be restricted to the parking of vehicles belonging to supporters and those attending matches with hours restricted to a close of 6pm or 1 hour after the end of a match up to a maximum of 10.30pm. The car park must be secured overnight to avoid anti-social behaviour.

4.4 Any additional community uses of the car park outside of Football Club activity must be agreed with SCC on a year-by-year basis, with responsibility for this arrangement, and associated opening and closing duties, sitting with the Football Club. Indicatively, this would be that the car park would be open on a daily basis until 6pm (aside from Football Club commitments) between April and October, with winter opening being during daylight hours only at the Football Club's discretion. Again, the car park must be secured overnight beyond 6pm / sunset (whichever is earliest).

4.5 The local Member, Councillor Wilcox, has confirmed his support for the lease.

4.6 The nominal rent is to assist the club and alleviate parking difficulties for residents.

4.7 The value will show an increase if it can be shown drivers are being asked to pay to park to use the site by the Football Club. Although the Club states it has no intention to charge users to park, SCC requires that any funds generated from Football Club parking fees on the site (whether that be on match days or otherwise) are to be divided equally between SCC and the Club.

5. Alternative Options

Not discussed.

6. Implications of transaction for County Council (Risks)

Operational: that the club are able to police the site efficiently.

7. Community Impact

Priority Outcome for the people of Staffordshire: To feel safer, happier and more supported in their community.

The underlease will help facilitate the Football Club's aspirations to develop and expand its offer to the local community and will also support community access to Chasewater Country Park.

Whilst there have been a small number of local residents who have expressed concerns about the car park causing anti-social behaviour since its opening for community uses, SCC is not aware of any significant issues of anti-social behaviour caused by the voluntary daytime opening to date. The annual review of arrangements to open the car park during daytime hours (outside of Football Club uses) provides the opportunity for review if this situation changes.

8. Comment by Local Member

Cllr Wilcox has been consulted and is supportive.

9. Proposal supported by by Assistant Director for Commercial and Assets

Signed:



Name: Ian Turner

Date: 15/2/22

10. Valuer/Officer advising on this transaction

Signed:



Name: P Townley

Date: 11th February 2022

11. Background Documents

Site Plan

