

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	09 April 2019
Report Subject	Greenfield Valley – Six Monthly Progress Report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Andrew Farrow Chief Officer (Planning & Environment)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The six monthly update on the work carried out to deliver the audit recommendations and the current operational position at Greenfield Valley.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members note the update and progress in addressing the recent audit report recommendations.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
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 (currently under renegotiation) with the Council. Under this agreement the Trust receive a management fee. The total annual Council budget for the site is in the region of £300k.
1.02	In April 2015 the Trust engaged a company 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 governance of the site. Progress in implementing the recommendations in

	that report were slow.
1.03	The audit of Greenfield Valley Museum and Heritage Park was included in the 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 are in place to manage Greenfield Valley
1.05	<p>Areas highlighted which required improvement were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic decision to be made around the short and medium term management arrangements at Greenfield Valley; • Clarification required around the task and reporting structures, responsibility and lines of accountability within Greenfield Valley; • Consideration of a review of the competency and management style of the Operations Manager; • Decision to be made around Trust compliance with the Council's 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 have been completed with the exception of signing the Management Agreement.
1.07	The Management Agreement has been drafted by FCC Legal Service. Both parties have commented on drafts of the Management Agreement with the Trust now committed to signing the Agreement at their Board meeting on 7th May. The delay from the revised September 2018 date is as a result of the Trust wishing to seek legal advice before they sign a new Agreement
1.08	<p>Site operational highlights for the last six months:</p> <p>Events and activities</p> <p>Greenfield Valley had a successful close to the 2018 season with its Christmas event. The event was fully booked with 228 children visiting Farther Christmas over the weekend. The positive trend continued with the February half term holiday showing a five-fold increase in income when compared to 2018. The increase was attributed to the unseasonably good weather experienced during half term and also the St David's Day celebration event that received a footfall of 440 people over two days.</p>
1.09	Revised Admission Fees

	<p>Greenfield Valley Trust have simplified the pricing structure this year. Passes will now be valid for a year from the date of purchase, rather than limited to the season. The aim is to encourage people to buy annual passes throughout the year. A recycled plastic membership card with a bar code has been introduced to facilitate entry administration.</p>
1.10	<p>Outdoor Learning Conference</p> <p>An Outdoor Learning Conference for 125 education professionals is to be hosted in the Valley on the 4th of April.</p>
1.11	<p>Active Travel</p> <p>Flintshire County Council's Streetscene Service has been successful in securing almost £700,000 through the Welsh Government Active Travel Grant for the Valley. Greenfield Valley staff have been involved in the preparation work for the scheme. The first phase will resurface the path along the old railway line to the coast road car park. Further applications are to be submitted which will include proposals to improve the links from the Valley to Ysgol Treffynnon and also from the Valley to Greenfield Dock.</p>
1.12	<p>Woodland Management</p> <p>Following the approval of the Greenfield Valley Woodland Management Plan by Natural Resources Wales, a significant amount of tree clearance has been undertaken during the winter months. The schedule of work was brought forward to assist the Active Travel Programme and has opened up the woodland canopy structure.</p>
1.13	<p>Fly-tipping</p> <p>The Valley has experienced a number of fly-tipping issues at the Coast Road Car Park, Bryn Celyn Car Park, by the Strand and Holywell High School. The Ranger Team have started to work with the fly-tipping Wales group to learn from the experiences of others and follow good practice. The fly-tipped material has been cleared from the Car Parks. A contractor will be used to clear the fly-tipped material from the Strand area due to the nature of some of the waste. The Valley are aiming to work with the local school to produce a short film about waste and to get messages out to the local community.</p>
1.14	<p>Development and Maintenance Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new tractor shed has been erected with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund; • Work is nearing completion on a new railway exhibition in the Lower Cotton Mill. The exhibition will be open for Easter and then on the first Sunday of every month whilst the museum is open. The Lower Cotton Mill will be staffed by volunteers; • Vegetation has been cut from around the Museum pond which will improve the habitat for Great Crested Newts and also facilitate education pond dipping activities; • Steps and kick-boarding have repaired in the woodland trail. Brash removed from pathway and leaves raked. Ivy removed from entrance;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is underway to create a new area for staff and volunteers at Basingwerk Abbey; • The play surface outside the softplay barn has been renewed.
1.15	<p>Volunteering</p> <p>The success of the Valley is dependent on the regular volunteers that help with the management of the site. The Community Garden Team and Historic Garden Volunteers continue to meet every Thursday. Other volunteers also attend during the week to help with various tasks.</p> <p>A Volunteer Day was held to help get the Valley ready for opening for the February half term week. An incredible amount of work was completed by staff and volunteers that included sweeping mountains of leaves; weeding; cleaning of the museum buildings / activity room; preparing the Visitor Centre and creating large cardboard daffodils to decorate the museum for St David's Day.</p> <p>K.I.M Men in Sheds (based in Holywell) have started to work in the Valley and have been undertaking maintenance work within the Wire Mill area, including the cutting back of vegetation; clearing invasive bamboo from flower beds; weeding, sanding and painting metal work and the removal of ivy from walls.</p> <p>Coleg Cambria placements have been provided by the Valley, the students have assisted with the care of the animals in addition to general site maintenance.</p> <p>Greenfield Valley has now registered to distribute Timecredits to volunteers. The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government as a part of a specific project in Flintshire and Wrexham for the next two years. The initiative enables volunteers to receive paper credits in exchange for their time. The credits can be spent in registered facilities and businesses, for example, entry to Cadw / National Trust sites and leisure facilities across the UK.</p>
1.16	<p>Animals</p> <p>Large blacks (pigs) have returned to Greenfield Valley, two sows are currently on site, with the aim of introducing younger piglets later in the year. A meeting has been held with Coleg Cambria – Northop to discuss the possibility of borrowing Bagot goats, which are the rarest breed in the country, during 2019. Sheep, hens and ducks will return to the Valley ready for opening in April. The meet the duckling events were very popular with local families over half term. The Valley is currently awaiting the outcome of the Tesco Community Grant Scheme which would provide support towards improving the hatchery.</p>
1.17	<p>Fire Alarm / Electrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotes have been secured by Flintshire Property Service for rewiring Basingwerk Abby, it is hoped that the work will be completed between

	<p>the half term holidays and Easter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotes are awaited for a new fire alarm system.
1.18	<p>Green Flag</p> <p>Green Flag Application Submitted.</p>
1.19	<p>The Trusts Accountants, Gardiners, have completed their own internal audit of accounting at the Valley and has given a positive report with no recommendations for action</p>
1.20	<p>The Greenfield Valley is delivered via a partnership with the Greenfield Valley Trust.</p> <p>The Chair of the Trustees, Gwladys Harrison provided the following quote in relation to progress in the last twelve months:</p> <p><i>“On behalf of the Greenfield Valley Trustees I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team for the excellent work they are doing in the valley. This last year has made a massive difference, and the works that have been carried out show that someone cares.</i></p> <p><i>This in turn will make the users of the valley also care about the fantastic facility that is on their doorstep and empower them to look after what belongs to the local community and which, we are happy to share with our visitors from far and wide.</i></p> <p><i>Thanks to all Gwladys Harrison”</i></p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None, 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 identifies a five high and three medium priority actions to be implemented. The only outstanding priority is the signing of the Management Agreement.

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.