

Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 9 January 2024
Report Subject	Bailey Hill, Mold
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bailey Hill in Mold is a Council-owned green space in the heart of Mold incorporated the remains of Mold Castle. Previously overgrown and under-used, the site has been restored to be a valuable community resource through a tripartite partnership between the Council, Mold Town Council, and the Friends of Bailey Hill. This report provides a summary of the project that has been undertaken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members are asked to note the successful completion of development at Bailey Hill in Mold.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the project at Bailey Hill, Mold
	<u>Background</u>
1.01	The Bailey Hill in Mold incorporates the remains of a Norman motte and bailey castle, a public park, a custodian's cottage, and a former bowling green and playing area. The Council owns the site. The site had become very overgrown and unwelcoming, little-used by Mold residents and subject to anti-social behaviour. Most of the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

1.02	Stakeholders in Mold had been championing Bailey Hill for some time as an underutilised asset in the town capable of playing a more positive role in the town centre as a recreation and cultural asset for local people.
1.03	As part of the Council's transformation programme, the concept of a tripartite partnership arrangement for Bailey Hill was agreed; bringing together the Town Council, County Council and Friends group to develop the site and better manage it. This partnership is embodied in a written but non-binding agreement between the parties.
	<u>The development of Bailey Hill</u>
1.04	<p>The partnership agreed a major redevelopment proposal for the site which would restore its physical appearance, improve facilities for users and enable the site to better host events and activities. To deliver these aspirations, the partnership developed a series of funding bids which resulted in over £1.7m of funding being secured for the site. The funding included:</p> <p>Heritage Lottery Fund £1,138,688 Welsh Government £123,740 Landfill Tax £49,600 Cadwyn Clwyd £157,575 Mold Town Council £15,080 Mold Mayoral Charity £9,000 Friend of Bailey Hill £2,809 Flintshire County Council £225,000</p>
1.05	<p>The development work on Bailey Hill included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The redevelopment of the Custodian's Cottage – retaining residential use upstairs and creating lettable community and interpretation space downstairs together with kitchen, tool store, accessible toilet, and office space. 2. Improving the entrance to Bailey Hill to create accessible routes, enable limited vehicle movements for events and improve the setting of the war memorial. 3. Improving the walking routes to the two main open spaces on the site. 4. Installing an electricity supply into the site to support events. 5. Replacing the play area. 6. Repairing the boundary wall. <p>In addition, a programme of community engagement activities and events was supported to re-engage the people of Mold, especially schools, in their site.</p>
1.06	<p>The headline breakdown of costs for the project, as of the time of writing, include:</p> <p>Capital works £949,932 Fees £189,654 Staff £137,000 Activity costs £186,406 Play area £138,300 (due on site imminently) Boundary wall £100,000</p>

1.07 The works on site were competitively procured with TG Williams appointed to undertake the works with Harrison Design Development from Mold appointed to manage the construction project. The Museums Officer from Aura managed the overall project including the complex funding package as well as providing expert advice on the sensitive archaeology of the site and liaising with CADW throughout delivery. Mold Town Council employed the project officer for Bailey Hill who co-ordinated the work of the different partners, recruited and supported volunteers, promoted the site and the activities, and developed an imaginative events programme and school engagement. The improvements to the boundary wall were delivered by the County Council Streetscene team. The replacement of the play area is currently being managed by Aura.

1.08 Work started on site in 2019 and was significantly delayed due to the Covid pandemic. The contractor TG Williams provided a high level of flexibility and responsiveness through the constraints that the pandemic brought. In addition, a number of important archaeological finds on the site, outlined below, also created significant delays and design changes. Except for the play area, all other construction works on site are complete.



1.09 All works on the site have been subject to consent from CADW and have been closely monitored by archaeologists from the Clwyd Powys

Archaeological Trust. This resulted in a number of very interesting and unexpected discoveries:

1. Possible defensive wall and floor levels of a building were found at the base of the motte. This was dated by associated Twelfth / Thirteenth century pottery sherds. We hope to get funding for radiocarbon dating the charcoal content of the mortar. Large ash deposits indicate the building was likely to have been a kitchen range.
2. Elsewhere on site, a large defensive three-metre-thick wall was found, again probably Norman. Due to its size and thickness this is likely to be the outer defensive wall of the castle. Historically it was believed that a stone structure had been erected on the top of the motte but the rest of the site would have had wooden palisade defences and buildings. The large number of stone structures indicate that the Bailey Hill site played a far greater role in the history of the area than previously thought. Considerable time, effort and money had been spent to fortify the site.
3. Seven historic skeletons were found lying east-west (so possibly Christian) in the area developed for the outdoor stage. The skeletons are from both men and women and include a child. All remains have now been removed from site. Historical records mention skeletons being found in the past, but it was always believed that these were disarticulated and in a ditch or pit, having been dumped post battle. The skeletons have been sent to Durham University for analysis to identify their sex, height, health, and age at death. We are unsure of their historical date as there were no associated archaeological features / finds. Radiocarbon dating will hopefully tell us when they lived and further analysis may tell us their origin.



4. Other important finds include early Medieval arrowheads.



1.10 The interpretation for the site has been delayed to reflect the exciting archaeological finds and what they may mean in terms of our understanding of the history of Bailey Hill.

1.11 The Centre is open to the public on Thursday each week and is used, on a prebooked basis, by a variety of local community groups. It is also available as a base for the Friends group to use when they undertake their volunteer days.

1.12 The Friends of Bailey Hill (Ffrindiau Bryn y Beili) have played a significant role in improving the appearance of the site. They have undertaken a major planting programme throughout the park, in close liaison with the Council Streetscene team, have erected bird boxes and planters and undertaken general site improvement works above those that the Council has been able to manage. The group has also been an invaluable set of ears and eyes on the ground and undertake much of the day-to-day liaison with the public. The volunteers from the group have attended the site most weeks with over 150 practical sessions now completed.





1.13	In addition, Mold Town Council recruited a pool of volunteers who have done vital work in researching the history of Bailey Hill. Other volunteers have also helped to keep the Centre open, support events and deliver guided walks.
	<u>Future arrangements</u>
1.14	The tripartite arrangement remains in place and is now responsible for the ongoing management of the site. Flintshire County Council remains the landowner and is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the site as a whole. Mold Town Council operate the Centre on site and support volunteers and events on the site. The Friends of Bailey Hill are providing additional services to further enhance the appearance of the site, improve biodiversity and liaise with local people. A detailed management and maintenance plan is in place to define the roles of the three partners which is currently being refreshed.
1.15	The site has now been awarded the annual Green Flag award three times by the awarding body. It is a condition of the Lottery funding that this status is retained for seven consecutive years.
1.16	The site is now host to a weekly Men's Sheds project which supports men who might otherwise face isolation and loneliness. A number of youth organisations are also keen to use the site on a regular basis as an accessible and safe "wild" green space.
1.17	No further major projects are planned for Bailey Hill once the play area investment has been completed. The Friends will continue to improve the quality of the garden environment and biodiversity on site and the site will be marketed by the Town and County Councils as a resource for local people and visitors.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Centre, even once the income from residential and community lettings has been considered, runs at a deficit each year and will always do so. At present, Mold Town Council have been bearing this cost. The tripartite partnership will need to review the operation of the Centre and more fairly distribute the operation and costs of the Centre between them in line with the original concept for the site.

2.02	The costs arising from the arrangement cannot be quantified at this stage but are likely to be sufficiently small as to be able to be absorbed within the Enterprise and Regeneration service budget.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td rowspan="5">This project was conceived in line with these principles. It has been a community-led project with close involvement from local stakeholders throughout. The project has been working towards long terms solutions to improving a problematic and underused urban site and creating a valued community resource.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td rowspan="7">The site has the potential to play a role in supporting footfall in the town centre. It is a valuable resource for informal recreation in the town and now is well-used by local people. It is also a valuable education and cultural resource with most local schools having used it at least once. A number of groups use the site for well-being activities. The site is also being improved as a biodiversity resource in an urban area.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vibrant Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Globally responsible Wales</td> </tr> </table> <p>Risk management</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Risk</th> <th>Mitigation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Costs of operating the Centre</td> <td>The tripartite relationship will look to minimise and fairly apportion costs between the partners.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Long-term	This project was conceived in line with these principles. It has been a community-led project with close involvement from local stakeholders throughout. The project has been working towards long terms solutions to improving a problematic and underused urban site and creating a valued community resource.	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement	Prosperous Wales	The site has the potential to play a role in supporting footfall in the town centre. It is a valuable resource for informal recreation in the town and now is well-used by local people. It is also a valuable education and cultural resource with most local schools having used it at least once. A number of groups use the site for well-being activities. The site is also being improved as a biodiversity resource in an urban area.	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Cohesive Wales	Vibrant Wales	Globally responsible Wales	Risk	Mitigation	Costs of operating the Centre	The tripartite relationship will look to minimise and fairly apportion costs between the partners.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	The Bailey Hill project was extensively consulted upon with local stakeholders including the schools in Mold.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Niall Waller Enterprise and Regeneration Manager Telephone: 01352 702137 E-mail: niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>Bailey – an enclosed space within a castle</p> <p>CADW – The Welsh Government department charged with protecting and celebrating the Welsh built environment.</p> <p>Motte – an artificial mound forming part of the defences of a castle.</p> <p>Scheduled Ancient Monument – a designated site of national importance protected from unauthorised change.</p>