

Agenda Item	12.
Report No	SCC/17/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Sutherland County Committee

Date: 23 August 2018

Report Title: Centenary Fields – Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens.

Report By: Director of Community Services

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the aims of the Centenary Fields initiative to commemorate World War 1. It recommends Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens for nomination as a Centenary Field.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Recommend that the Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens are nominated for Centenary Field status.

3. Background / Main Issues

- 3.1 Centenary Fields (CF) is a partnership programme led by Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion to commemorate World War 1 through protecting green spaces. It was launched by HRH The Duke of Cambridge in 2014 to mark the centenary of World War 1 and will close in 2018.
- 3.2 CF aims to protect at least one site in each local authority area across the UK and the Council has been asked to nominate one or more parks or other key green space with a link to World War 1. In Highland Cavell Gardens in Inverness has already been nominated, however the Council has been approached by the Royal British Legion Scotland (RBLs), Creich and Kincardine Branch seeking to nominate the Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens as a Centenary Field.
- 3.3 The main benefits of taking part in the initiative are to:
- contribute to a UK initiative to commemorate those involved with World War 1.
 - raise awareness of both the initiative and the Council's commitment to providing for public access and recreation.
 - raise the profile of the nominated sites
 - recognise the commitment of local groups and communities who contribute to the upkeep and maintenance of the nominated sites
- 3.4 A disadvantage to the Council is the need to obtain consent from CF in the event of any management change to the site. However given that the area is a War Memorial and surrounding gardens any change of use or management is unlikely
- 3.5 Nominated sites are subject to an application process including a site visit by CF. If accepted, the Council is required to undertake legal processes, including signing and registering a Minute of Agreement (MoA). The MoA ensures the Council does nothing to detract from the amenity value of the site, and in the event of disposal, that the MoA is transferred to the new owner. In Addition to Cavell Gardens, the Council has existing designations for 6 King George V Playing Fields, including King George V Park in Golspie. Thereafter, the Council will be required to install a commemorative plaque supplied by CF and arrange an unveiling ceremony. The site name will not change and there are no funds associated with CF status.

3.6 Selection of Eligible Sites

Although any site within Highland can be nominated, the landowner must complete the application form. For simplicity, and especially due to the legal undertaking required, it is recommended that the Council should nominate sites in its ownership and management. Council records identify that Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens belong to Highland Council with Community Services as the owning service. There are no resource implications arising from the nomination of the site.

- 3.7 In addition to the conditions covered above in relation to ownership, connection with World War 1, and its recreation function, CF specifies that eligible sites must:
- be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community.

- should have local managers who are responsible for the quality of the facilities, maintenance and development, improving participation, and financial and operational sustainability.

3.8 Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens satisfy these criteria. With regards to the maintenance and development criteria, the Council provides routine maintenance to the gardens (including grass cutting), The flowerbeds and hedges are maintained through the efforts of the local branch of the RBLs. They have also raised significant sums to restore the War Memorial and its bronze statue, and to renovate the railings and gardens. Their efforts have been recognised and celebrated including winning Best Kept War Memorial Small Community with Garden in Highlands and Islands and have come 2nd and 3rd nationally. Securing Centenary Field status will be another way to recognise the efforts of the local RBLs branch.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens have been identified as an appropriate site because of the strong link to WW1 (location of a war memorial) as well as the gardens providing an area for recreation in the centre of the community.
- 4.2 If the proposal is approved, the community will be consulted regarding the proposed nomination through contact with Creich Community Council and the Royal British Legion Scotland, Creich and Kincardine Branch. Depending on community response, which is anticipated to be favourable, Bonar Bridge War Memorial Gardens will be nominated.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Resource
There are minimal resource implications limited to the costs of erecting a plaque and of hosting an unveiling ceremony as well as the costs of local community consultation.
- 5.2 Legal
The Council will be required to register a Minute of Agreement and any future change to management arrangements will require consultation with CF.
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)
No implications
- 5.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever
No implications
- 5.5 Risk
No implications
- 5.6 Gaelic
No implications

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 25 July 2018

Author: Phil Tomalin, Ward Manager, Sutherland

Background Papers: