

ATTACHMENTS

Item 8.1 Attachment A VPSCT and GUCC update report

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Grafton United Cricket Club,
The Pavilion, Victoria Park, 203 - 271 Victoria Street West, Auckland 1011

7 May 2020

Update to the Waitematā Local Board 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Waitematā Local Board with an update on the Grafton United Cricket Club and highlight some issues that we would like to work with the Local Board on in regard to our home ground Victoria Park.



Thank you

Grafton United Cricket Club (GUCC) and the Victoria Park Sports and Cultural Trust (VPS&CT) acknowledges that this Board has been very supportive over the years.

- Funding for the outdoor nets
- Funding to expand the Number 1 wicket block
- Some action on tree management
- Irrigation of Victoria Park
- Resurfacing and drainage upgrade of shared access way
- General support and wise counsel when requested.

We welcome and look forward to continuing this positive relationship with recently elected Board members.

Background

GUCC was founded in 1862 making the club one of the oldest in New Zealand. Our mission is to be the best cricket club in Auckland at fostering, playing and administering the game of cricket. The club enables more than 1,700 Aucklanders to experience the social and physical benefits of cricket. We are one of the biggest senior clubs in New Zealand with 24 teams. This past season our Premier team achieving promotion into the top grade of Auckland club cricket, which will allow us to further showcase Victoria Park. Interestingly almost half of our membership at senior level are proudly made up of people with South Asian heritage. GUCC plays an important part in encouraging new Aucklanders wellbeing and connectedness to the community.

The GUCC junior club has over 450 junior members and has helped a further 700 school children enjoy cricket in 2019/20. Our biggest area of growth and opportunity is girls in cricket. In addition to our girls' club sides, our Cricket Blitz programme delivered 96 sessions this season at eight primary and intermediate schools, the majority in the Waitematā catchment, helping girls develop new skills and enjoy learning the game of cricket.

Victoria Park is the most well recognised sport and recreation destination in the Waitematā Local Board area. It has been the home of GUCC for nearly 70 years, and cricket has been played at the park since 1906, including first-class matches. Victoria Park offers a unique opportunity for central city residents and visitors to experience organised sport.



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GUCC is also part of the Victoria Park Sports and Cultural Trust (VPS&CT). The VPS&CT administers the clubrooms that are the focal point for the users of Victoria Park. The membership includes GUCC, Auckland Districts Pipe Band Association and the Auckland Football Referees Association. Over the last five years over \$40,000 has been invested into the clubrooms and indoor school – providing a great asset for our community.

The club and trust play an important part in providing sporting opportunities for the growing central city community and inner-city residential suburbs, particularly on the western fringe. Sport contributes to the community's wellbeing and connectedness - this is even more important for our community given the unprecedented post-COVID-19 environment we all find ourselves in.

Therefore, GUCC and VPS&CT strongly believe that Victoria Park should continue to be used for organised sports and recreation for the local population. This will require continued investment to keep the park in the best possible condition, as well as the continued support of the Waitematā Local Board.



Access and parking

GUCC and VPS&CT would like to request effective consultation with the Local Board and Auckland Council before further changes are made to access and car parking at Victoria Park.

Background on this issue: There have been recent issues with parking on the grass berms and occasional partial blocking of access to the shared access way, often by non-members (refer **figure 1 and 2 in Appendix**). Members of the public have made complaints to the Council on social media. Without consultation, the Council placed chains across the first and second set of bollards (refer **figure 2**). We were advised with one days' notice that the chains must remain up at all times, and that if they didn't, we could lose access to the parking around the clubrooms and could have ground bookings cancelled.

It is our view that the Council actions have been out of proportion with the issues and impact, lacked effective consultation, and put Victoria Park's viability as a place for organised sport at risk. In addition, the chains represent an increased health and safety risk for the community.

Historic access rights for trust members to the trust parking, and to the other parking areas surrounding the clubrooms on match/event days, are well-established and have operated with minimal issue.

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Removing parking would severely impact the ability for the club to provide attractive and accessible organised sport to our community, particularly on weekday evenings and weekends.



We acknowledge the changing face of the central city. We are custodians of the park and have operated well alongside other sport and recreation activities, particularly as informal usage has grown.

We have addressed the recent issues with trust members and our visitors by:

- ensuring there is no parking on the grass;
- increasing the monitoring of access to the trust parking;
- ensuring free flow of pedestrians beyond the first set of bollards on the shared access way; and
- ensuring that the second set of bollards/chain remain in to prevent public car access.

Additionally, as part of good traffic management practices and a result of car parking being removed around the Victoria Park boundary, we continue to encourage our members to use a variety of transport methods.

To ensure ongoing access for organised sport and the free flow of pedestrians, we propose the following solutions:

- in consultation with us, the Council mark the car park surrounding the clubrooms;
- the public car park alongside the club is designated as a trust car parking for use by organised sport, and incorporated into the terms of the lease renewal;
- the Council replace the first set of bollards and chain with an access code-operated automated gate as a robust and reliable method of managing vehicle access, while continuing to allow pedestrian and cycle access.

We request the Local Board:

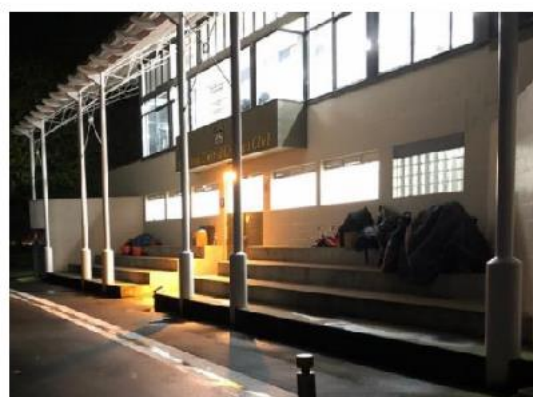
- consider / advocate for our proposed solutions;
- consult and work together with us, in conjunction with relevant Auckland Council agencies, on any proposed changes to access and parking. This could be incorporated into the lease renewal; and
- take actions that consider Victoria Park's primary purpose as a sport and recreation destination.

Safety concerns relating to homeless residents

GUCC and VPS&CT would welcome your guidance and support relating to homeless residents in Victoria Park.

Over the past year, a number of incidents have raised concerns for the safety of our staff, members and other park users. Six to eight homeless residents were living rough on the grandstand steps of the pavilion. There was a fight between residents, an intoxicated man entered the indoor school during a junior coaching session and would not leave, and alcohol and needles have been found in the changing rooms.

In October 2019, we met with local MP, Nikki Kaye, Auckland City Mission, Lifewise Housing First, and Auckland Central Police to discuss this challenge. The Auckland City Mission was nominated as the key agency, and subsequently increased outreach at the park.



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The Auckland City Mission worked with residents to find suitable accommodation. This reduced rough sleeping on the grandstand steps, however from time-to-time we still encounter residents in the changing rooms, which are supposed to be locked when not in use. We have raised concerns with Auckland Council about cleanliness and security of the changing rooms.

We recognise that homelessness is a challenging issue that involves people with multiple and complex needs. We would like the homeless people to be in warm and safe accommodation receiving the right support, not in a park.

We want Victoria Park and our club to be safe, welcoming and clean. Sadly, this is not always the case.

We request the Local Board:

- continue to advocacy and contribution towards the Auckland City Mission, including the HomeGround project. This has never been more important.
- consider the possibility of the VPS&CT taking responsibility for the changing rooms so that they are secure, clean and in the best possible condition for organised sport. This could be incorporated into the lease renewal.

Trees

GUCC and VPS&CT supports the upkeep of the London Plane Trees that provide an oval frame of the sports fields at Victoria Park. However, it is important that there is a balance so that player and community safety is considered. For example, branches do protrude onto the playing area and can also cover lighting infrastructure. These branches do require regular pruning so that a cricket sightscreen can be used. Auckland Cricket require this of Premier grade cricket grounds, with expectations increasing as a result of our promotion into the top grade.

We request that the Local Board:

- support a balanced approach to the upkeep of the trees; and
- consider paving a small area to safely position our sightscreen alongside the path.

Cox's Bay Reserve

Cox's Bay Reserve is the second official ground of GUCC.

With the continued growth of junior membership, GUCC has increasingly utilised the Cox's Bay grounds and facilities. This is particularly the case on Thursday and Friday evenings when junior cricket is played to help alleviate congestion on Saturday. This provides a local cricket experience to busy parents and carers, frees up Saturday mornings, and reduces the traffic and parking demand in and around Victoria Park.

GUCC thanks the Local Board for the facilities, however, would like to raise the possibility of an upgrade in the future to prepare for future growth and demand.

Summary

GUCC and the VPS&CT would like to continue our excellent working relationship with the Waitematā Local Board. We are a club that is at the heart of the Waitematā community and believe that working together we can get the best outcome for the members and community.

In summary, we request that the Local Board:

- consider / advocate for our proposed access and parking solutions;
- consult and work together with us, in conjunction with relevant Auckland Council agencies, on any proposed changes to access and parking;
- take actions that consider Victoria Park's primary purpose as a sport and recreation destination;

- continue to advocacy and contribution towards the Auckland City Mission, including the HomeGround project;
- consider the possibility of the VPS&CT taking responsibility for the changing rooms;
- support a balanced approach to the upkeep of the trees;
- consider paving a small area to safely position our sightscreen alongside the path; and
- consider the possibility of a future upgrade of Cox's Bay.

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Refer next page for Appendix: Victoria Park aerial images

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Appendix: Victoria Park aerial images

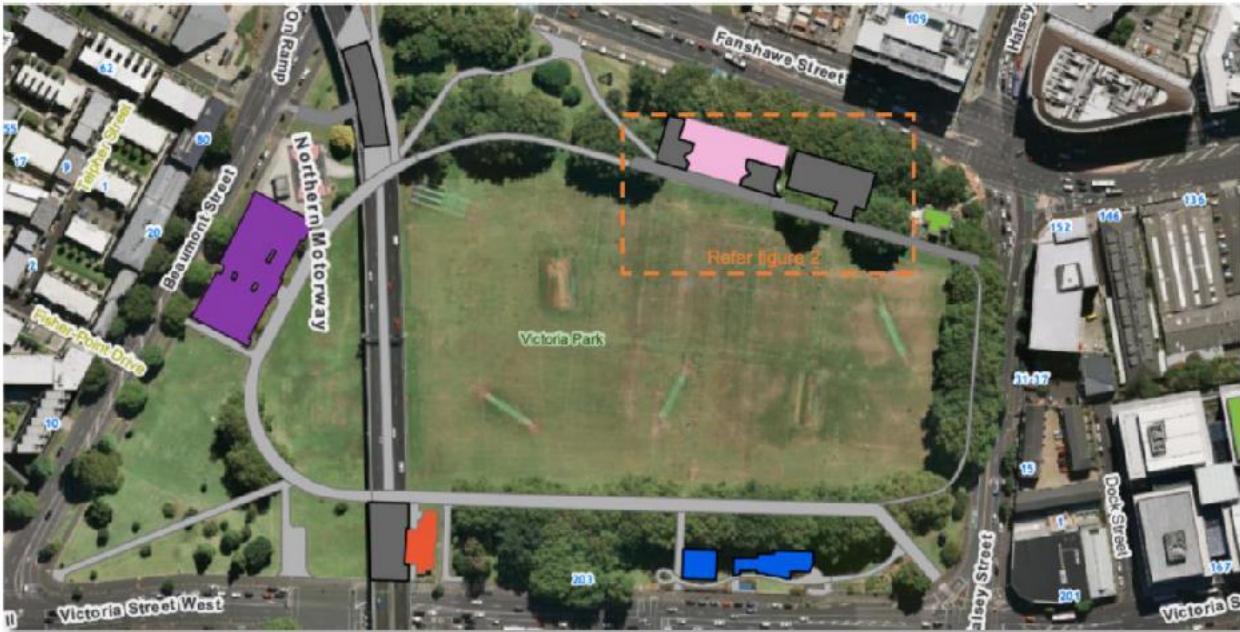


Figure 1: Aerial picture of Victoria Park, with shared access way and parking in dark grey and pedestrian paths in light grey. Source: Auckland Council GeoMaps.



Figure 2: Aerial picture of Victoria Park shared access way and parking surrounding clubrooms. Source: Auckland Council GeoMaps (labels added).

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