

Liskeard Town Council – Strategy for Castle Park

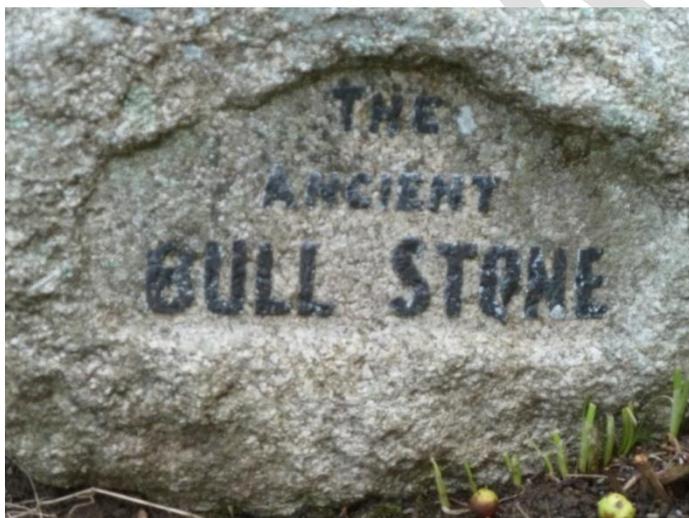
The Setting



Castle Park is a large open space close to Liskeard Town Centre fronted by the War Memorial, close to the parish church and surrounded by Liskeard housing estates. The park is 2.65 hectares and has both open spaces, children's playgrounds with equipment and a wooded area with some fine tree specimens. To its SE boundary the local scouts have a hut. There is disabled access available at most points around the perimeter. It is a peaceful location but can be subject to vandalism and misuse at night.

The freehold of the park is owned by Cornwall Council who are also responsible for all maintenance including grass cutting. The Town Council facilities dept does carry out regular inspections for damage and litter and advises Cornwall County Council accordingly.

History



Though named Castle Park there is now no evidence of a former castle, though it is believed that a form of medieval castle or fortified manor house once stood in the grounds. It is an historically and archeologically sensitive site and was shown as Castle Pleasure Grounds on 19C OS Maps. The old Bull stone stands near the entrance to the park which has a long historical connection Liskeard. Many of the fine tree specimens including Oak and Monkey Puzzle were originally planted as civic memorials.

Current Uses

The park is popular with dog walkers and children of all ages either playing on the playground area equipment or on the small football pitch to the rear. It is used by strollers as a quiet park during the day but unfortunately by less desirable users at night. [Late evening and night there is also a drug users problem]



Wider Use & Future Events

Of all the open spaces in Liskeard Castle Park is probably the most versatile. It is located close to the town centre, has a variety of uses and presents semi woodland and open grassland. It has good access for people and vehicles and children's play areas, though not all well maintained. There is adequate open space for events to be held with room for several hundred people at a gathering, Tents can be erected and service vehicles like burger vans can access the park. An annual Party in the Park has been held along with Autumn lunches by the Real Junk Food Team.

Management of such events would necessarily be best undertaken under the control of the Town Council who can ensure all the appropriate management requirements including risk management is met, rather than the more remote Cornwall Council.

There is a Facebook friends of Castle Park page who support the greater use of the park.

Services

Some services are available at the park.

Electricity - Some sections mainly around the play areas are lit at night and there is a Substation on the edge close by Castle Gardens.



Water – Not known

Drainage – not known

Current Maintenance Budget (Cornwall Council)

The annual routine maintenance cost of the park as notified by Cornwall Council is £5,500.

Maintenance tasks include:

- Grass cutting
- Fence repair
- Litter picking
- Playground equipment serving and repair
- Removing graffiti

There has been no significant capital investment for at least five years but around £500 per year is spent on defect repairs. There are several play areas which currently are in disrepair, mainly broken surfaces. All play equipment appears functional.



Devolution

The park is close to the town centre, within walking distance though up some quite steep narrow roads but nevertheless offers an open space town centre facility of value to Liskeard.

The Park is listed on the Town Councils proposed set of devolution properties, that are intended to come over into the town's ownership. However, the council is also looking for revenue earning opportunities to pass with open spaces like Castle Park to meet their operating cost or the burden will fall on the precept.

Grant Opportunities

This park could become a Green Infrastructure for Growth scheme site which would bring capital investment to the site and this could be pursued with the CC Environmental service.

Economic Development

The question arises as to whether the Town Council can leverage the use and ownership of Castle Park in its overall aims for economic development of the Town. It can help to make the Town a nicer place to live, it can undertake events which are both attractive to year round residents and tourists, and thus help to draw tourism into Liskeard by providing feature which are attractive to them to visit, maybe for children or just for relaxation. It could be a draw to entice tourists to other parts of the Town such as the museum and Stuart house and to other heritage locations around Liskeard.

Recommendations

1. The Town Council adopts this strategy paper and its recommendations
2. The Town Council proceeds to seek full devolution of Castle Park to the Town Council from Cornwall Council on a proactive timeframe.
3. The Town Council seeks a property suitable for devolution which can provide a revenue stream to support the operating costs of CASTLE Park
4. The Town Council investigates planning some initial events at Castle park with a programme to be fully developed for summer 2020.
5. The Town Council sets aside an investment budget in the 2020/21 year's budget to further improve facilities within the park, on such items as children's play areas, gardens, quiet areas for reflection, dog walking area, nature trails, hosted events.
6. The Town Council applies for green space and green infrastructure grants to further develop the park.
7. The Town Council plans some form of annual festival for the future 2021 onwards as a major summer attraction to Liskeard.

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