

**Embargoed - 23/01/12**

## Local people to help decide future of sport on The Forest Recreation Ground

Local people will be asked how the sports area on The Forest Recreation Ground on Gregory Boulevard can be improved, as part of a plan to create a 'Sports Zone' on the 77-acre site.

The community consultation, which will also include talking to over 100 sports clubs in the city, will be led by the Radford-based Partnership Council charity.

Nottingham City Council, Partnership Council, Castle Cavendish Foundation, neighbourhood group Friends Of The Forest and hundreds of local people, have successfully secured funding worth £5.1 million to restore The Forest to its former glory.

The funding includes £3.2 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund and £1.9 million from Nottingham City Council, Castle Cavendish Foundation and local development contributions.

The funding was awarded to The Forest for restoration purposes and so sadly can't extend to the creation of new purpose-built sports facilities, although it will fund the refurbishment of the existing changing facilities located in the middle of The Forest.

The organisations behind the restoration project are keen to do more than simply restore the changing facilities, which is why they're launching a widespread consultation campaign to find out what local people want and their ideas for how the Sports Zone could be sustainably funded.

### **Councillor David Trimble, Nottingham City Council's Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Tourism, said:**

*"Our ambitious restoration plans for The Forest Recreation ground are acting as a catalyst to renewing the recreation facilities in the Sports Zone which are currently in a poor state of repair.*

*We are exploring a number of ways in which we can secure the necessary funding required to transform the Sports Zone and ensure its ongoing maintenance. We're keen to hear what sort of facilities people would like to see there so that we can factor the ideas into our plans.*

*The restoration of The Forest and investment in the Sports Zone are examples of two major green spaces projects, which will ensure that Nottingham's parks continue to attract visitors from the city and beyond. I look forward to the restoration project kicking off in the spring of 2012."*

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## **Ruth Greenberg, Chief Officer of the Partnership Council explains:**

*“For many local people who don’t have gardens, The Forest is an essential green space for playing, enjoying sports, walking or simply getting out in the fresh air.*

*We want to ensure that The Forest continues to provide people with both formal and informal opportunities to take part in a range of different sports. For example, many families enjoy playing cricket on the Forest during the summer and it’s used for both organised football tournaments and friendly kick-arounds.*

*The best way of making sure that The Forest offers the right kind of sports provision is to ask the people who use it.”*

At present, formal sports facilities on The Forest include floodlit astro-turf football and hockey pitches on the Mansfield Road side of the site and an outdoor gym on the Gregory Boulevard side. There are also grass football pitches marked out in the centre of The Forest.

## **Possible ideas for the Sports Zone include:**

1. The private sector working with the community to improve, run and maintain the Sports Zone.
2. The community working to improve it with money coming from national and charitable sources.
3. A combination of the two above

At present, the formal sports facilities on The Forest are managed by Nottingham City Council but public sector funding cuts mean that there is no money available to carry out much needed physical improvements at present, which is why the consultation plans include forming partnerships with either private or voluntary sector organisations that can provide new sources of money.

## **Ruth says:**

*“We are open to all ideas and suggestions about the types of activities people would like to see offered and the days and times they’d like to access the Sports Zone.*

*We’re also keen to find out what sort of financial commitment individuals and groups may be able to make and identify any potential sources of grant funding.”*

The Forest has a prestigious and long-standing connection with sport. For example, Nottingham Forest Football Club played and practiced on the Forest in 1865 – when they were known as Forest Football Club. The site was also home to Nottingham Racecourse, before it moved to its present location at Colwick Park.

The consultation and campaign will be officially launched on the 23rd January from 1pm to 2pm on The Forest Recreation Ground with special guests including a player from Nottingham Forest Football Club and Councillor David Trimble and lots of other stakeholders too.

**Anyone is welcome to go along to the launch to find out more about the consultation.**

**Alternatively, please visit the Partnership Council's website [www.partnershipcouncil.co.uk](http://www.partnershipcouncil.co.uk) where you can take part in the consultation online or call Ruth Greenberg on 0115 970 8200 or Felicity Walker, Parks Development Officer, Nottingham City Council on 0115 915 2709 email - [felicity.walker@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:felicity.walker@nottinghamcity.gov.uk).**

**For media enquiries please call Stephanie Robertson on 0115 970 8200 or Nadine Hilliard at Nottingham City Council on 0115 87 63404.**