

How Can Local Authorities Get Involved?

We would like Local Authorities across the country to nominate a number of outdoor recreational spaces in their area that they would be happy to protect as a Queen Elizabeth II Field which can then be put to a public vote in 2011. The eventual winner will be protected and designated a Queen Elizabeth II Field.

Local Authorities can submit their nominations to the Challenge by contacting Fields in Trust on info@fieldsintrust.org or on 020 7427 2110.

What Do Local Authorities Gain?

The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is a fantastic opportunity to be part of a high profile national campaign that has a real impact and benefit on local communities. It represents an excellent and cost effective way for Local Authorities to mark both the Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics in their area whilst also securing a platform to help achieve key targets around increasing physical activity and promoting the sustainability agenda.

What Are the Benefits of Protecting Fields?

The Challenge aims to protect outdoor recreational spaces and facilities for communities now and for generations to come whilst providing a focal point for celebrations in 2012. It is not a grant aid programme though some funding will be available and Fields in Trust will ensure that it is distributed according to the wishes of the donors.

In brief, the benefits of protection are:

- Making an express and recognizable commitment to local people to safeguard land, facilities and opportunities for sport, play and outdoor recreation both now and forever
- Protecting public access to outdoor space
- Providing reassurance to potential investors regarding viability and sustainability
- Ensuring that in the case of sale proceeds are reapplied to replacement facilities, with a priority on new outdoor facilities
- Raising awareness of the importance of such facilities in the context of quality of life, health, the environment and amenity

What Flexibility is Built Into Protection?

Fields in Trust has developed a range of options for long-term protection. Flexibility allows for measures to be put in place which are:

- Charitable or non-charitable
- In the case of freehold land, protection in perpetuity
- In the case of leasehold land, protection will of necessity be time limited to the length of the lease preferably not less than 99 years
- Specific to safeguarding the actual or foreseeable type of sport, play or recreational or usage involved including indoor facilities where appropriate

What is the Minimum Criteria for Queen Elizabeth II Fields?

Fields in Trust would like to emphasise that they will welcome a wide range of sites as candidates for nomination to the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. This range includes gardens, children's play areas, bicycle trails, nature reserves, sports pitches and many more.

As further guidance, when selecting sites to go forward, Local Authorities should bear in mind the following criteria – criteria in line with Fields in Trust's general policy on protection:

- The site must be owned by the organisation putting the field forward to become a Queen Elizabeth II Field.
- Evidence of title permitting site use for outdoor, sport, play and/or recreation must be produced.
- Sites may be provided with facilities and equipment or used as general open space, and established for that purpose by way of planning requirements.
- Each site's principal use should be outdoor sport, play or recreation. We aim to be flexible and therefore dedications including village halls and indoor leisure, heritage, cultural facilities that promote community recreation will be considered.
- Satisfactory evidence that the use or proposed use is a lawful use in planning terms.
- Generally the minimum size is 0.2 hectare (0.5 acre).
- Sites need to be accessible in terms of location.
- Sites need to be affordable for the local community.
- Sites should all be open to the public and either established charitably, held by a sports club under the CASC regime or held as Public Open Space.
- All sites will need local managers, who will be responsible for the quality of the facilities, their maintenance and development, improving participation and use and financial and operational sustainability.
- Sites must be compliant with existing legislation relating to sport, play or open space.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 What is the initiative all about?

The QEII Fields Challenge aims to safeguard hundreds of outdoor recreational spaces in perpetuity for future generations in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee and as a permanent tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. The initiative has particular pertinence given the other landmark event scheduled to take place in the UK in 2012: the London Olympics.

2 Why is access to green space such an important issue at this time?

Access to outdoor space is vital for communities and plays an important role in providing a place for both physical activity and relaxation. Sport and play are essential tools for developing confidence, self-esteem and learning the importance of team work. It is well documented that community recreation reduces alienation, loneliness and anti-social behaviour whilst also promoting ethnic and cultural harmony.

The recent Inverdale report published in May 2010 states that there is evidence that the number of playing fields has reduced from 26,000 in 1992 to 20,000 in 2009 and so it is vital that we take action.

3 Are you creating any new fields? Or are they all existing fields?

It is anticipated that the vast majority of the fields commemorating The Queen's Diamond Jubilee will be existing fields – where they are valued and supported by the votes of local people it is very important that they are protected. However we also hope to help protect some brand new fields by safeguarding outdoor space within new housing estates, persuading private landowners to donate land for recreational use – especially in rural areas – and potentially through the conversion of public wasteland.

4 Aren't you just re-naming existing fields after The Queen?

Absolutely not, Fields in Trust exists to safeguard fields through legal means by placing covenants on the land, meaning they have to remain fields forever. Decades of urban development have seen the stock of fields reduce substantially. Once lost, playing fields are lost for good. FIT's aim is to safeguard existing fields for the future. The QEII Fields Challenge will boost *existing* numbers of safeguarded fields for the benefit of future generations.

5 Once the 2,012 target is reached, will the programme end?

It's too early to say. At the moment, the target is for 2,012 fields, but Fields in Trust has an ongoing programme of saving and enhancing outdoor recreational space, so we would always be interested in more.

6 Is there a deadline for acquiring the 2,012 sites - 2012?

FIT will be working to secure as many Queen Elizabeth II Fields as possible by 2012 but some fields may come on line after this date if negotiations are protracted. As the Challenge heralds the beginning of an exciting decade of sporting events in the UK we are very happy that the project may extend beyond 2012.

7 What is the role of the UK Government in this programme?

The previous and current governments have both been very broadly supportive of this initiative to protect outdoor spaces for sport, play and recreation in the landmark year of 2012. An endorsement of the campaign from Hugh Robertson, Minister for Sport and the Olympics is on our website.

8 Who are you targeting with this initiative?

FIT aims to engage the whole nation with this exciting legacy initiative. At the outset we are chiefly targeting the larger local authorities as their support for the project is absolutely the key to its success. We want each Local Authority throughout the United Kingdom to nominate a series of fields in their area that they would be happy to protect as a Queen Elizabeth II Field (to be known as a Queen Elizabeth field in Scotland). We will then target the public at large by putting these fields forward to a vote allowing the general public to express their support by way of a vote for their favourite local field. We hope that the public will be excited by the chance to be involved in creating a permanent and tangible legacy to benefit their community both now and in the future. We also hope that Local Authorities will see the great benefits that protecting these spaces will have in terms of addressing some of their key agendas around increasing physical activity, promoting social cohesion and improving the environment, alongside celebrating Her Majesty's 60 years on the throne in a long-lasting way for their communities.

We also want to encourage any town, parish or community council; sports club, recreational charity; voluntary body or private landowner who might want to get involved with the initiative and so will be accepting submission of individual fields to the scheme providing they meet the set criteria. This will provide a great opportunity to create some brand new fields.

9 Why should Local Authorities get involved with this initiative?

Local Authority elected members and officers take many important decisions and The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge presents an opportunity to safeguard a community facility that will not only benefit people today but also generations to follow, securing for communities access to outdoor spaces for sport, recreation and play. At a time when one in three children under 12 is overweight or obese, protecting and encouraging greater use of local parks and playing fields is vital.

10 How will people vote for their nominated field?

The public will vote and indicate their support for their favourite outdoor space through www.qe2fields.com. All outdoor recreational spaces nominated by Local Authorities will be uploaded to this site so that people can search for their area and cast a vote for the field they would like to be protected as a Queen Elizabeth II Field. We are hoping to provide a mechanism to enable the public to cast votes by phone and text. Voting will commence in 2011.

11 How can the public support the Challenge?

The public can support the Challenge in a number of ways including by actively voting for outdoor recreational spaces to be protected and encouraging their Local Authority to sign up to the initiative. Donations from the public to the Challenge would, of course, also be welcomed!

12 Does Fields in Trust lobby Government for a change in the law?

FIT's primary aim is to secure better access to outdoor space for sport, play and recreation for everyone, and so part of their core work involves campaigning to strengthen the statutory protection of outdoor recreational space. FIT have had considerable success lobbying government over the years and helped to secure greater protection for both school and community playing fields and will continue to seek enhancement of this legislative protection.

13 Does FIT try to influence Local Authorities in their decision making?

Fields in Trust has worked very closely with Local Authorities since its formation in 1925, and continues to do so. We recognise fully the contribution made by many Authorities in terms of providing and managing playing fields and other forms of open space for local communities. We have had a positive impact in terms of recommending facility standards for sport and play, recreational planning matters including the widely used *Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play* (aka *The Six Acre Standard*), direct protection of sites owned and managed by authorities (about 50% of the 1362 we protect) and indirect protection through planning and educational legislation.

14 Why are you putting this to a public vote? Why not protect all the nominated fields?

We want to create a real sense of public awareness and engagement around the project so that communities not only feel that something relevant and tangible is created as a legacy but that they have played a part in helping to create it. FIT's model works very much on the basis of local ownership and management and so we are pleased to be able to extend this community involvement to the new campaign. Our goal is 2,012 fields protected by 2012 but, with sufficient funds, we'd be delighted to include more fields in the overall tally.

15 How is a field defined for this programme? What criteria need to be met?

Fields in Trust would like to emphasise that they will welcome a wide range of sites as candidates for nomination to the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. This range includes gardens, children's play areas, bicycle trails, nature reserves, sports pitches and many more.

As further guidance, when selecting sites to go forward, Local Authorities should bear in mind the following criteria – criteria in line with Fields in Trust's general policy on protection:

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- All sites will need local managers, who will be responsible for the quality of the facilities, their maintenance and development, improving participation and use and financial and operational sustainability.
- Sites must be compliant with existing legislation relating to sport, play or open space.

16 What is the legal process for protecting these sites?

With the larger local authorities we aim first to agree a Memorandum of Understanding governing our joint commitments to matters relating to site identification, nomination and protection. Our objective is to protect sites in perpetuity.

17 How flexible is the process?

FIT has developed a number of options which we hope will suit all landowners. These include establishing the site on charitable trusts or protecting it as a non-charitable site; protecting the land for general open space purposes, specifically for sport or games, or for outdoor an indoor recreational purposes, depending on present and foreseen circumstance.

18 Will the specific field always be protected?

Fields in Trust does accept that on rare occasions communities change and land use changes accordingly. Parts of sites, or very rarely, whole sites can therefore be disposed of provided the disposal is of clear advantage, and in the best interests of the community, from a recreational perspective. The criteria which FIT applies to replacement facilities are that they should be of:

- at least equal size
- better quality
- serving the same community in terms of catchment area.

Additionally, and very importantly, the entire proceeds of any disposal should normally be re-applied to new sport, recreation and/or play facilities, with priority given to outdoor prior to indoor facilities

19 Can previously dedicated fields be included?

It depends on the terms of the dedication but where any site is dedicated as a memorial to one or more deceased people, FIT regards it as inappropriate for inclusion in the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

20 Will FIT take over the management of a field?

No, all the sites protected by FIT are locally managed. Local communities, landowners and users are in a far better position to know how local facilities can best be provided, used and enhanced. All aspects of management and maintenance are determined locally. FIT's role is custodial and advisory. We see protection by these means as having a light touch but being absolutely effective. We ensure that the fact of protection of these sites is in the public domain and that any change of use or any buildings which fall outside the terms of protection need our specific advance consent.

21 Can the site retain its current name or does it have to be renamed the Queen Elizabeth II Field?

It is not necessary for the sites involved in the scheme to change their names. We are very aware that so many sites already have names that are instantly recognisable within the community through their long usage. Our recommendation is that the site would acquire Queen Elizabeth II Fields *status*, and receive any badging associated with this which would ensure there was no requirement for any actual name change. The King George V Fields are a good template for this. Many local authorities will be familiar with the King George V Fields in their area still being known by other names whilst also having the King George V plaques at their entrances.

www.ge2fields.com

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