

## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 11 January 2021

**Title:** Radio-controlled car track for 1066 Racing

**Report of:** Anna Evett, Neighbourhood Services Team Leader

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Brewerton

**Ward(s):** Sidley, Bexhill

**Purpose of Report:** To approve plans to construct a radio-controlled car racing track at St. Mary's Recreation Ground for exclusive use by 1066 Racing.

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

### Officer

**Recommendation(s):** It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) by virtue of Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Council gives formal notice of its intention to dispose of a small parcel of land at St. Mary's Recreation Ground as public open space;
- 2) subject to the above, a lease of five years term at a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum be granted to 1066 Racing for land on which to construct and operate a radio-controlled racing car track at the club's own cost with other terms and conditions to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive; and
- 3) to grant a licence to the club allowing a designated area of the Recreation Ground to be used for parking at specified times in connection with the permitted activity.

### Reasons for

**Recommendations:** To provide 1066 Racing with an outdoor base in Bexhill thus enabling the club to develop and expand its membership, whilst increasing the community value of an under-used public open space.

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### Introduction

1. 1066 Racing is an off-road radio-controlled car racing club founded in 2013 to give local enthusiasts a place to race locally instead of making a 100-mile round trip to the nearest track.
2. Currently between 40 and 80 competitors meet and compete once a fortnight at an indoor track at the Horntye Park, in Hastings, but this is a temporary venue and the club wishes to establish a 'permanent' base in Bexhill.

3. The activity of racing has no barriers to age, gender or ability and is one of very few sports where everyone can compete on equal terms. Membership of the club is open to all.
4. Discussions with 1066 Racing have identified St. Mary's Recreation Ground as being a suitable site for the required facilities, which will consist of a small astro-turf track within a fenced area no bigger than 40 meters by 40 meters along, with a rostrum and a designated area for parking - see Appendix A attached.

### **Proposal**

5. It is proposed to award 1066 Racing a non-secure full repairing and maintenance lease for a five-year term at a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum to enable 1066 Racing to hold regular club meetings and occasional larger events.
6. 1066 Racing aspire to using St. Mary's from the spring of 2021 and officers are keen to facilitate this timing by moving the process forward expediently.

### **Impact on residents and Environment**

7. The area of land required is sufficiently small that its loss would have no significant impact on the recreational value of the site to other users who at the current time are primarily dog-walkers.
8. The racing cars are electric 1/10th scale radio-controlled cars which generate very little noise and zero emissions. 1066 Racing have no intention of racing internal combustion model cars and this will be stipulated in the lease.
9. A demonstration of the cars held by 1066 Racing at St. Mary's Recreation Ground in August 2020 afforded residents and Members the opportunity to witness the cars in action. This was well received by attendees, and residents commented that they would be supportive of the site being better used for such activities.

### **Impact on alternative site uses**

10. Officers are in discussion with Sidley Cricket Club with a view to the club relocating to St. Mary's Recreation Ground from their existing temporary ground in Hastings. Plans are at an early stage and it is not yet clear whether this will be feasible financially or practically.
11. Initial discussions between Sidley Cricket Club, 1066 Racing and Officers have concluded that if the racing track is positioned towards the site edge, there is adequate room to accommodate both facilities without creating conflict. This may in fact bring about mutual benefits.

### **Conclusion**

12. The introduction of a radio-controlled car racing track at St. Mary's Recreation Ground will increase the use and enjoyment of this under-utilised public open space to residents across Rother, but particularly those in Bexhill at no additional cost to the Council and without detriment to the possibility of a cricket facility being accommodated at the site in the future.

13. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted for officers to proceed with disposing of a small area of public open space within the recreation ground for use as a racing track, in accordance with the provisions of Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

### Financial Implications

14. The costs to create the proposed racing track and rostrum are low and would be funded entirely through 1066 Racing, as would the initial costs associated with the disposal of public open space and any on-going maintenance costs. As this open space does not generate any income for the Council currently, disposing of part of the open space in this way does not cause any additional financial burden and there would be no additional on-going costs to the Council.

### Legal Implications

15. In order for a lease to be granted to 1066 Racing, the proposed demised area must be disposed of as public open space.
16. The site is subject to a Fields in Trust (FiT) 'Deed of Dedication' under the QEII Playing Fields scheme. FiT have advised that a short-term lease does not require consent from FiT's Land and Planning Committee and that there is no reason why the proposed track should not be permitted when the Heads of Terms are formally submitted for approval.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

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Appendices:	A Plan showing area to be leased
Relevant Previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A