

Nith Valley Leaf Trust

Closeburn School Playing Field Asset Transfer

Business Plan

June 2021



www.creetowninitiative.co.uk

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Executive Summary

Nith Valley Leaf Trust (NVLT) is a charitable trust and would like to acquire the Closeburn School Playing Field on behalf of the community of Closeburn. The field is approximately 3 Hectares, adjacent to the current primary school and Closeburn Centre (previously the Wallace Hall Academy) from Dumfries & Galloway Council under a Community Asset Transfer arrangement.

The field contains an old soccer and cricket pitch and is surrounded on 3 sides by trees including mature deciduous species commemorating residents killed in WW2.

NVLT would retain the character of the field but develop it as a recreation and wellbeing outdoor space for the school and wider community with a higher level of maintenance. It would add facilities such as a simple shelter with solar panels on the roof to support lighting and electricity, improve access and pathways, upgrade the playing areas and thus encourage increased usage through events both regular, one off and informal use benefitting with the character of Closeburn.

National Policy Context

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The Community Empowerment Act introduces a right for community bodies to make requests to all local authorities, Scottish Ministers and a range of public bodies for any land or buildings they feel they could make better use of. They can request ownership, lease or other rights as they wish.

The public authorities must transparently assess requests against a specified list of criteria, laid out in the Act, and agree the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.

This project aligns with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

A More Active Scotland: Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan

Outcome 1: We encourage and enable the inactive to be more active.

Outcome 2: We encourage and enable the active to stay active throughout life.

Outcome 3: We develop physical confidence and competence from the earliest age.

Outcome 4: We improve our active infrastructure – people and places.

Outcome 5: We support wellbeing and resilience in communities through physical activity and sport.

Outcome 6: We improve opportunities to participate, progress and achieve in sport.

This project aligns with Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan

Regional Policy Context

Dumfries & Galloway Council Priorities & Commitments- Be an inclusive council

Ensure that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision making.

Empower our communities to make the most of their assets.

Increase equality of opportunity.

This project aligns with the Council's priority to be an inclusive council.

About Nith Valley Leaf Trust (NVLT)

NVLT is a community trust set up to enable the community of Closeburn to:

Manage community land and associated assets for the benefit of the Community and the public in general following principles of sustainable development, where sustainable development means development which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

To provide, or assist in providing, recreational facilities, and/or organising recreational activities, which will be available to members of the public at large with the object of improving the conditions of life and health of the Community and following principles of sustainable development.

To advance community development, including urban or rural regeneration, poverty reduction and wellbeing.

To advance the education of the Community about its environment, culture, heritage and history

To advance environmental protection or improvement including preservation, and conservation of the natural environment, the promotion of sustainable development, the maintenance, improvement or provision of environmental amenities for the community and/or the preservation of buildings or sites of architectural and historic importance.

The Trust is set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status.

NVLT employs a Community Development Officer who supports the board of directors in the management of existing projects and taking forward new projects.

Directors

There are currently 10 directors of Nith Valley Leaf Trust. There are a wide variety of skills and experience from which creates a proactive and professional Board:-

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Trust Membership

The Trust currently has 65 members.

About Closeburn

Closeburn is a small village in Dumfries and Galloway, Southwest Scotland with a population of around 270 people in the village and 800 in the Closeburn Community area.

Closeburn village is surrounded by agricultural land with commercial woodland higher up the valley sides with several smaller settlements situated nearby including Park, Cample and Gatelawbridge to the north and Auldgirth to the south which lies just outside Closeburn's community council area. The Closeburn Community Council area is a relatively large rural area bounded by the River Nith to the West, the Cample Burn to the North extending up to the highest local hill (Queensberry) in the East and Auldgith to the south. Closeburn lies on the main A76 road Dumfries to Kilmarnock and has a number of smaller minor roads leading off it providing road access to both larger regional towns and nearby rural settlements. Around 2.5 miles north of Closeburn lies the larger village of Thornhill which offers a range of services and amenities for Closeburn residents. As such, Thornhill is often seen as a local hub in terms of drawing people across Mid-Nithsdale for work, leisure, healthcare and education.

It is estimated that there are now approximately 115 houses in Closeburn itself with approximately a further 200 across the community council area. The proportion of owner-occupied housing in and around Closeburn village is around 60%, slightly lower than the national level, estimated to be around 62%.

Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation Closeburn, which is included in 3 data zones, scores highly for deprivation for housing, access to services and crime. This index score shows the need to improve activities related facilities.

Closeburn village is home to a shop and post office and a number of other small and medium sized businesses, mainly located at the Closeburn 'Industrial Estate', with a number of small additional businesses located in the more rural parts. Closeburn has its own primary school (3 teachers) located about 1km to the east of the main village which is attended by children from across the community council area. This is where the playing field is located. Secondary school pupils must travel to nearby Wallace Hall Academy in Thornhill which has a wide catchment area given the rural nature of the area.

The original Wallace Hall (established in 1723) was situated in Closeburn adjacent to the playing field involved in this project. The community aim to organise events in 2023 to celebrate the 300th anniversary, with many taking place at the playing field.

As previously mentioned, Thornhill is home to the majority of the community facilities in the area given its larger size and relative proximity, however Closeburn does have a number of community amenities in its own right.

There is very limited public transport from the village to Thornhill so reliance is on own vehicles which means that young people are not always able to access the facilities in Thornhill.

The Closeburn village hall accommodates a variety of activities on a regular basis including dog training classes, youth club, Christmas parties and a New Year's lunch and hosts several annual events run as part of the Gala Week, the Saturday of which features a Children's Gala event on the school field.

There is also the Closeburn Parish Church, an attractive building located adjacent to the primary school, east of the main village which is a significant feature in the local community.

The community orchard with its polytunnel and fruit trees is next to the church.

There is however a lack of a safe, outside space that can be used for sports and other activities such as private hire events, improving the field will encourage more use by various groups in the community in particular the primary school and add to the facilities within the village.

Previous NVLT Projects

Community Owned Houses

NVLT has proven project development and management experience and has carried out some substantial projects which enhance Closeburn and support the Trust.

In 2015 Nith Valley Leaf Trust (NVLT) purchased a new build 3-bedroom semi-detached house that is rented to a local family at an affordable rent level. This house was funded by windfarm community fund grants and a mortgage from The Charity Bank.

In 2020 NVLT completed a terrace of 3 PassivHaus standard (high energy low cost) 3-bedroom homes and also rented these to local families at affordable rents. This involved acquiring surplus land from D&G Council partly under the asset transfer arrangements. Funding was obtained from the Scottish Government (Rural Housing Fund and Scottish Land Fund), SSE Clyde and Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company windfarm funds and a mortgage from the Ecology Building Society. The housing projects allow local families who do not always qualify for housing

association properties to stay in Closeburn and for their children to attend the primary school so boosting roll numbers at the school and so keeping younger generations within the village.

Community Orchard

NVLT leased a Community Orchard from the Church of Scotland in 2017 to refurbish and develop it as a garden and orchard for the benefit of the community. It has cleared the area and planted new heritage fruit trees, erected a polytunnel and is having an outdoor classroom constructed in 2021. The aim is to grow produce but also teach youngsters and residents new skills as well as provide a tranquil place for folk to meet.

Acquisition of the playing field will add to the facilities already available in the village and add value to the other NVLT projects. Key to the Trust is to encourage young people and families to make their home in the village and take part in village life, the field is already an important part of village life but once improved will be significant creating a focal point for the community.

Playing Field Project Detail

The Closeburn community, through Nith Valley LEAF Trust, would like to take over ownership of the playing field through a community asset transfer in order to upgrade the playing field, its natural features and develop facilities that will enhance its community use. Key to the project will be more community involvement to increase the use of the field by residents, the Primary School, and other groups such as the youth club. In addition, the field will be promoted as a venue for other public and private events.

This priority was identified in the recent Closeburn Community Plan.

The intention is to encourage year around use of the field.

Dumfries & Galloway Council elected members and officers are supportive of the asset transfer. The field has been valued at a figure of [REDACTED] however NVLT have received a decision in principal that Dumfries & Galloway Council will transfer ownership for a £1 plus legal fees.

The playing field, adjacent to the original Wallace Hall Academy (Est. 1723) has been a community field for many decades used for holding the annual children's gala, a place to walk the dog, football, village cricket and golf practice. It is also used by Closeburn Nursery and Primary School for outdoor activities, and the Trust would like to see their use expand by improving the facilities. The field has been badly neglected over many years.

Owning the field will allow the community to deliver the improvements required and open up funding opportunities which would not be there if say the field was rented from the Council. Ownership will also encourage a sense place pride and potentially encourage more volunteers to get involved in looking after the field.

This project will have a significant impact on the Closeburn community by empowering it to manage yet another resource and environment.

- Economic—development of the field will add to and secure some employment as local businesses will be used were able to carry out remedial works and ongoing maintenance of the

field such as grass cutting. Creating an outside safe space will add to the appeal of the village to families either living in the village or thinking of moving into the village.

- Social – there will be opportunities for volunteering at the field including organising and running fund raising events. The intention is to also arrange learning opportunities, these will be available to everyone but especially to young people in and around the village. Skills such as arboriculture, dyking and ground work will be shown on site. Building up community owned assets will improve the communities feeling of pride in the village.
- Low carbon and other environmental impacts of the project – The intention is to install solar PV panels and hot water panels on to the new shelter and although the longer-term intention is to connect to mains electricity, solar panels will continue to be used. Consideration could be given to a small wind turbine on site.

The Trust wish to upgrade the playing areas, put in simple paths, refurbish the current tree population, a parking area, and a simple shelter in the form of a wooden gazebo with solar panels on the roof to bring electricity to the site. In future years subject to the usage of the field and funding availability it is envisaged that there will be a need for something a little more substantial with a bigger capacity than the gazebo and an “amphitheatre” style structure would be considered. Toilets when required for events will be hired however different options will be looked at such as composting toilets, an appropriate assessment would be carried out to identify the best options.

The Trust has undertaken several surveys and assessments to support the process and this business plan including:

1. A valuation of the site
2. A technical assessment of the ground area which includes a football pitch for (soil condition/drainage, grass cover/species, playing surfaces) to identify refurbishment options and indicative costs.
3. A technical assessment of the tree population to identify thinning & surgery needs as well as recommendations for new plantings.
4. Community consultation both online through Facebook and paper surveys through house doors.

About the Playing Field

The field contains an old football and cricket pitch. The grass is old and contains a great deal of moss and rabbit holes.

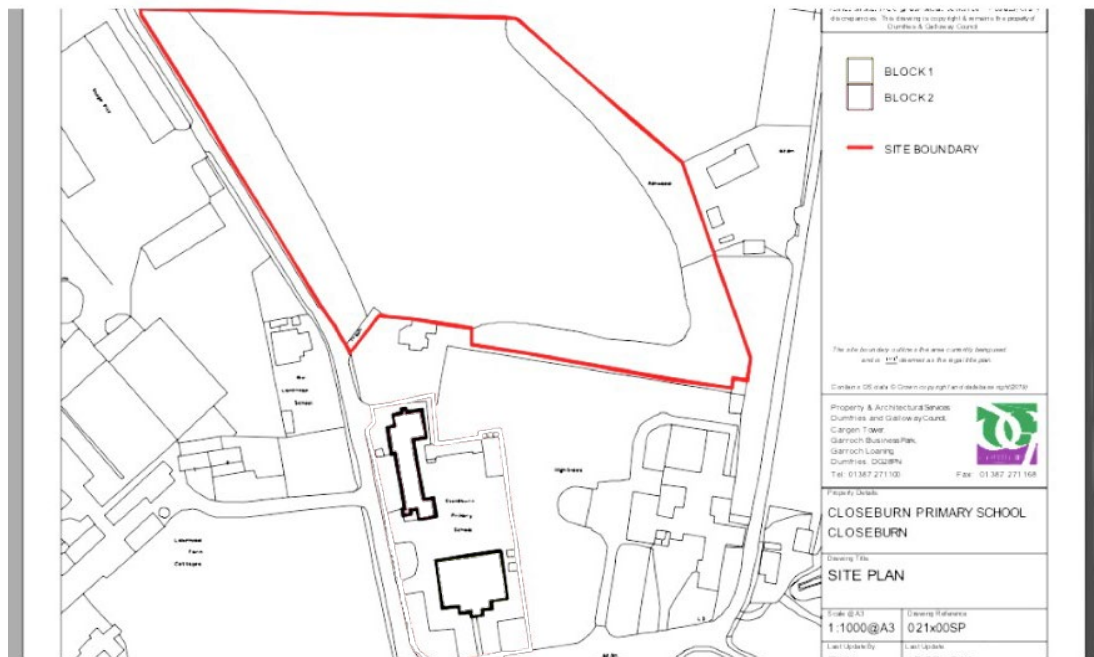
There is currently no shelter, water, toilet facilities or power on site.

The field has mature trees planted around the site to commemorate those lost in World War II.

The nearest neighbours are a farm and a house owned by directors of NVLT, there is also a bungalow at the back of the field and small boarding school for children with behaviour problems.

There are no special conditions connected to the site in the Deeds to impact on Nith Valley LEAF Trust’s proposals for the site.

Site Location Plan



Remedial Work Required

Tree Work

An arboricultural survey has been carried out to give comprehensive details of the tree health and safety located at the field and to give recommendations for priority of work. There are 193 trees on site.

The survey has identified 21 trees requiring work assessed as a low priority which means work should be carried out within 3 years.

47 trees are affected by rabbit damage and the subsequent disturbance to root areas, which should be addressed. Other recommendations are to remove branches overhanging Ashwood. Thin area for future management and planting of understory. Remove all dead trees and those below stem diameter of 422mm. Allow commemorative trees in area to stand out as specimens.

A band of 115 trees growing from the site entrance along the west boundary have been assessed and have been identified as many lying and standing dead. Recommendation is to clear the dead, dying and drawn species to thin overcrowding and make area safe. Removed wood could become habitat piles.

Refer to Appendix 4 for the full survey.

Field Work

The playing field was assessed by Greentech Sportstech who have stated that the condition is not too bad, but some areas need attention particularly those with rabbit damage.

Recommendations are that the sports area of the field be treated with a selective herbicide and subsequent scarification and aerification.

A further detailed survey will be carried out but initially the remedial work that will take place is to take an agricultural approach initially which will be to fill holes and then mow it regularly.

The sports area of the field will need to be kept in better condition than the perimeter.

Stone Dykes

There is some assessment and work required for some of the dykes.

Evidence of Community Support

NVLT produced a community Action Plan in 2017 which shows significant community support for more activities and clubs, a better football pitch and better paths. During Covid shutdown residents have been increasingly looking for places to walk away from traffic and farm livestock which this project addresses.

In 2020 the Community Council approached NVLT to ask it to talk to D&G Council to acquire the playing field under Community Asset Transfer legislation. A stage 2 application will be considered by Nithsdale Area Committee on 8 Sept 2021.

In 2021 NVLT/CCC have run joint community consultations via Facebook, a paper drop and with school pupils. Community ownership is popular. In the Facebook survey 44 residents responded with 96% in favour. (Appendix- Business plan p18). Their enthusiasm comes through the answers given and there are 26 offers of help from physical contributions to social media and fundraising. They like the idea of more community events for fundraising and for social interaction. They express a wide range of ideas for facilities with toilets, bins, benches parking, access, better pitches, a shelter and paths featured.

The paper survey generated 21 responses with 17 in favour (81%). Sports facilities like tracks and pitches featured (Bus Plan p.21) They want more events and picnic facilities.

The Primary School consultation took place on the field and 18 pupils of 6 & 7 drew their thoughts and produced a fantastic series of images. (Bus Plan P27). Golf, biking, a pond, slides, zip wires, a pitch and running tracks featured with toilets and tree houses.

Individual letters of support have been received for the project.

More engagement will take place on the field through the coming summer months with further face to face meetings.

Benefits of the Asset Being Transferred to the Community

Community ownership of the field will ensure the field remains accessible to the community, allowing it to be maintained to a higher standard than in the current Council ownership as the Council has financial budget constraints.

It will be an essential “fit for purpose” resource for the primary school, community sports, other community groups and village events, playing an important role in encouraging physical activity and a healthy lifestyle for residents.

The community through the Closeburn Community Council and Nith Valley Leaf Trust has access to wind farm benefit funds which will help with the fundraising for the improvements. Those funds are:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ownership of the field and the activities being held will allow a modest generation of income that will support the ongoing maintenance of the playing field and its infrastructure. For any capital projects the Trust will find external funding.

Owning the field will help to strengthen a renewed sense of pride and confidence in the community.

The field will be made more attractive and welcoming to the community and anyone visiting the village.

Potential Uses

NVLT understands that The Field is an importance resource for the Primary School which NVLT will protect and enhance. A fuller statement on this is given on page 49 Appendix 5. Although the field is currently used only occasionally by the community it is known from the public consultation recently taken place (See Appendix 2 & 3) that there is scope for a substantial increase in usage once the proposed improvements have been carried out and the field is in community ownership.

The field is the only large flat space in the village big enough to hold outdoor community and private events. It has the potential to provide enhanced activities for everyone in Closeburn community (800) as well as the Primary School (60) and groups like the Youth Club (30) who would have an ideal all-season venue for games and activities.

The field would be a physical space to visit to enhance the well-being of individuals who want a safe place away from roads and traffic to socially distance walk, fly a kite or take part in an outdoor lesson or game. Refurbishment and adding new facilities will also allow year round use for the Primary school.

Development and enhanced care of the field will allow families to reconnect with a treasured and historic community facility which is the nearest venue that Closeburn has to a ‘park’.

The following organisations (not an exhaustive list) have indicated their support and future use of the facilities. We expect that other uses will develop once the improvements have been made to the field.

Closeburn Primary School and Nursery for year round everyday exercise, sports days and other school & education activities.

Closeburn Gala
Sports competitions and matches
Golf practice
Young Farmers events
Thornhill Football Club training
Community events such as outdoor concerts.
Private events such as weddings – NVLT will consider purchasing an events marquee. Toilets would be hired and brought on site for such events.
Fundraiser events.
Income generating activities such as car boots sales and tractor and vintage car rallies.
School reunions (Wallace Hall Academy is 300 years old in 2023 and there are plans to hold a celebration for this)

Operation

The field and bookings will be managed by the Nith Valley Leaf Trust Board and in particular their Community Development Project Officer who is himself a qualified arborist. There is a wealth of experience and skills on the board to ensure the efficient management of the field such as legal skills, retired farmers/agriculturalists, highly experienced treasurer and other transferrable skills.

NVLT have experience of managing several rented houses.

NVLT already have public liability insurance so the playing field will be added to their existing policy.

Marketing

The field will be marketed around the village and outlying residences. Smaller surrounding villages and communities including Park, Cample, Gatelawbridge and Auldgirth will also be included in any marketing activity.

Social media channels such as the Closeburn Facebook page will be used to let people know about the field and the progress being made such as the transfer to community ownership and then the improvements as they are carried out. This will develop the feeling of ownership by the community and potentially encourage volunteers to come forward to help with the ongoing maintenance and improvements of the field.

Budget and Costings

An indicative dynamic budget is given below

Expenditure

Remedial work includes tree and field work.

Capital costs include a new path, wooden gazebo and solar panels as well as an amphitheatre in year 4 assuming the field is used and there is a need for something a little more substantial than the gazebo.

Ongoing annual costs, eg. grass cutting [REDACTED] based on cutting once a fortnight between March and October, inclusive.

Income

Funding for development capital projects will be applied for from, SSE Clyde, Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company, Twenty Shilling Community Wind Farm, Awards for All, Hollywood Trust.

Hire out for weddings other private parties, a conservative estimation is £250 per year until services are added to the field.

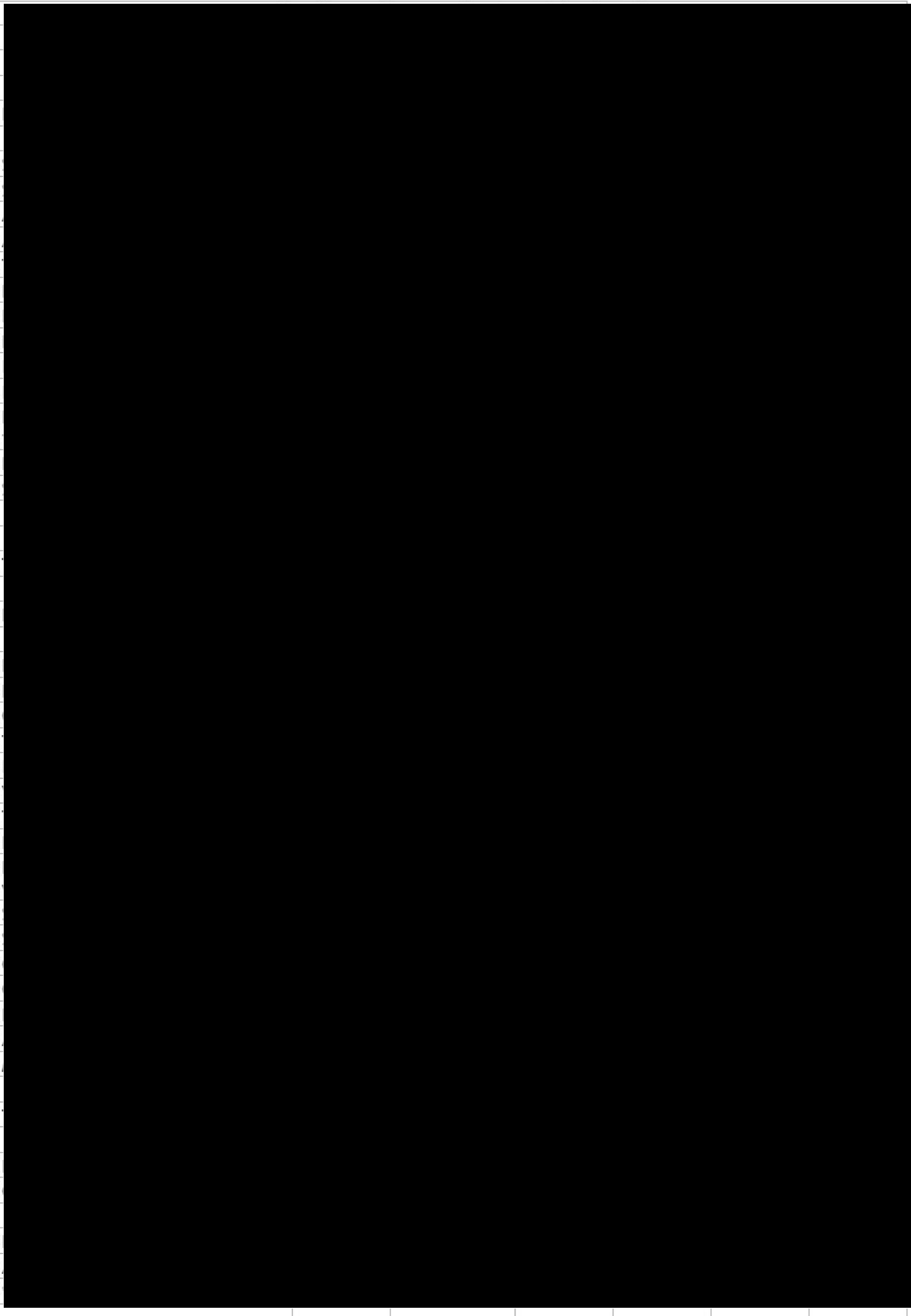
Community hires are a minimum amount.

Fundraising events for the field and initially there will be a launch event.

No charge for school use.

Opportunity to sponsor a tree, maybe new or existing.

Five Year Estimated Budget



Risk Management

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong project management experience • Parking will be available on site • Local support • Experienced and committed trustees • Wealth of local knowledge • Low cost of development • The Trust has access to community benefit funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small village community with small number of volunteers • Low level of income from the asset • Remedial work needs to be carried out
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community development • The ability to host more events and increase visitor numbers to the area • Community has opportunity to develop more community activities • Community will become more resilient through managing another asset • Opportunity for more groups to better facilities for their activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Anticipated low level of income

Conclusion

There is considerable support for the community taking ownership of the field. There is a real feeling of affection towards the field within the community and there are many ideas to take forward in the future in order to increase usage and therefore ensure sustainability.

The estimated budget (see page 11) shows key capital improvements to the field which will maximise usage. Further new ideas for capital projects will be looked at in future years as the field becomes a key part of life in Closeburn.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Facebook consultation

Appendix 2 – Summary of paper survey

Appendix 3 – School pupils feedback

Appendix 4 – Arboricultural Survey

Appendix 1 – Summary of Facebook consultation

Bandstand/pavilion	23
Toilet	35
Parking area	25
Rubbish bins	40
Pathways	22
Benches	38
Storage facilities	21
Maintaining memorial trees	38
Removing fir trees and replacing	12
Better pedestrian / vehicle access	24
Improving sports pitches	30
Other	
	Improvements to wildlife Remove concrete cricket pitch area Rabbit management

Q2. What other facilities would encourage your use?

1. Garden flower beds
2. Picnic area and the bandstand to have somewhere to shelter on wet days.
3. Off lead dog area, secure and fenced with a small fee that goes towards maintenance of the playing field.
4. Power supply for use by groups
5. Running track
6. Benches or picnic tables
7. Dogs allowed.
8. I do not think options matter unless you are in the clique of those that have already decided what they are doing.
9. Section laid aside for local artists, could also include a planted area to bring a bit of colour.
10. Having a skate park area for the older kids
11. Events /galas and somewhere nice for family time
12. Some form of shelter in case of inclement weather.
13. Ice cream van.
14. Outdoor gym facilities.

Q3. What other facilities do you think would increase community use?

1. Community allotment for all to benefit and get involved.
2. Proper football pitch, picnic area, seating, and a bandstand.
3. I think maintaining pitches and picnic area and extra benches. I think the space is lovely as a calm green area, and further fussing will encourage it to become a local kid hangout spot out of sight and it will all become damaged.
4. All the above
5. Outdoor fitness area
6. It depends on the age your thinking of

7. Carpark but we are near enough to walk.
8. Children's play area made using natural materials to fit in with the surroundings.
9. Facilities suitable for children all ages, skate park area, bike track
10. Dog run
11. A lovely new hall
12. Footpaths, cycle tracks and dog waste bins
13. Playground
14. Fruit trees and berry bushes
15. Fir trees, adventure playground
16. Bandstand with regular events happening for the community, picnic benches, toilets, and rubbish bins.
17. If it had a secure gate people with dogs may be interested in renting or small donation for their dogs off the leash time.
18. Outer running marker for children that love to run, fun weekly five a side games for all ages, mats that could come out of storage for gymnastics or some hula hoops, outdoor music events changed about to suit different age groups.
19. Pretty garden benches
20. A running track
21. Better facilities for gala, car parking that the cemetery could use.
22. Toilets, bins, painted pitch
23. Easier access
24. Maybe a few pieces of play equipment
25. All the above
26. Shelter
27. More seating and picnic area maybe a BBQ area
28. Netball or tennis, plus football pitch with a running track round it
29. Nature garden, picnic area, lighting, accessibility, improved sports pitches, running track, bandstand, and pavilion.
30. Under cover seating, picnic benches
31. Multi sports court
32. Solar panels for power
33. Bandstand seating sheltered area.
34. Toilets, but maintenance and cleaning essential.
35. Kick wall, goals and basketball hoops.

Q4. What type of events would you like to see being held?

1. Gala day activities, garden fetes, local car boots or craft tables
2. More fun days, outdoor music days, therefore important it is important to keep nice open green spaces.
3. Sports events, music events
4. Gala fetes
5. Sports day and gala events
6. Sports events for children/adult's football matches
7. Local gala, sports events, community garden, music performances and local arts and craft, displays and sales.
8. Would like the children to be encouraged to help with maintenance of the area, so along side any extra events that will be great for the community. I suggest a monthly maintenance event with prizes to encourage the kids to look after the area.
9. Some evening groups for all ages

10. Music events, farmers markets and stalls for local artists
11. Concert nights, markets, crafts
12. Gala music country activities
13. Events to celebrate fir trees.
14. Music events, events for kids
15. Football games for kids and gala
16. I think this is something you already know from those on Facebook, or a close circuit of friends it is the majority that are not on, secluded and ignored that need to be somehow involved, maybe tea and cake tent for elderly, could knock on doors and ask?
17. Highland games
18. Gala day, sports days, family BBQ, picnic, community celebration
19. Football matches, music venue and other sporting activities
20. Gala, car boot, family days, picnics
21. Information/regional history.
22. Sports events.
23. Pet shows.
24. Walking groups.
25. Community sports days, picnics.

Q5. Are you in favour of the community asset transfer?

Yes 42

No 2

Q6. What suggestions do you have for fundraising to carry out the improvements?

1. Sponsored litter collection walks which would also improve the whole village.
2. Fun days, more walks, raffles, baking stalls, duck race, beetle drives, race night, bingo, other sponsored activities.
3. Sponsored activities, quiz, sponsorship
4. Kids could make crafts to sell.
5. Grants, wind farm money,
6. Coffee mornings, bingo, bring and buy sales.
7. Research into grants
8. Go fund me, local business sponsorship.
9. Music festival
10. Car boot sales
11. Concert nights, market stalls and second-hand stalls
12. Bring and buy, bake sales.
13. Eco friendly projects get more funding.
14. More eco and wildlife related projects which would attract funding.
15. Sponsored fun runs
16. Sponsored 1 foot x 1 foot squares of field and people pay a yearly cost for sponsoring.
17. Car boot and tabletop.
18. Bingo, soups, and teas.
19. Bingo, family quiz.

20. Village lottery, sponsored events, local business support
21. Race night, 100 squares, community book of some sorts, auction, raffle, ceilidh, or ball
22. Bingo, quiz, anagram sheets, car treasure hunts.
23. Lottery funding
24. Car boot sales
25. Raffles, bring and buy sales, sponsored walks.
26. Raffles.

Q7. Would you be interested in volunteering to help?

Yes 26

No 14

Q8. If yes, what skills could you offer?

1. Litter collecting
2. Gardening
3. General assistance
4. Mucking in and getting jobs done
5. Lots
6. Gardening
7. Litter picking
8. Help in any way.
9. Gardening and DIY
10. Nothing manual but would still help in any other way.
11. Could help with social media and fundraising.
12. Help and assistance.
13. Handy with general building and labouring
14. Really good at planting fir trees
15. I could offer knowledge on how to improve the space for biodiversity.
16. A smile and cakes
17. Husband is a Forrester; I can make bunting.
18. I would love to make a willow feature for the children.
19. Logistics
20. I would be willing to give anything a go.
21. Maintenance and litter picking
22. Willing to help with anything.
23. I am friendly and willing to give anything a go.
24. Organisation
25. I would love to say yes, but I do not live locally but would support everything by coming to events.
26. Help with fundraising.
27. Good at making lists and organising things.
28. Fundraising

Q9. What other facilities do you think would attract people from outside Closeburn?

1. Having a proper toilet facility
2. Proper football area, picnic area, try having something on a regular basis.
3. Of the lead dog area, some football pitches, I would question the desire to attract large numbers to an un-monitored area out of the way where things could get damaged. I would be keen to see eco friendly projects and a preservation of the green space and wildlife of the area rather than a pointless toilet for teenagers to damage.
4. Different activities
5. 400m running track 4g sports pitch.
6. Bird/animal hide
7. Small skate park
8. Picnic benches
9. Skate park/ bike track, something that this area does not have.
10. Small playground, something that is suitable for all ages and abilities.
11. A decent place to get quality food.
12. Concert nights, playground, a nice place to visit, markets local homemade produce, second-hand markets.
13. Adventure playground
14. If it was visually appealing, people like to go somewhere that is pretty.
15. An official dog run.
16. Sports facilities
17. Open safe space away from danger and dog poo
18. A wee bit more of the history the memorial trees are for
19. Dog agility
20. Cross-community football matches, fun days, running track.
21. Well promoted event and area kept neat and tidy.
22. Community café
23. Music events, circus skills, boot sales.
24. Open air music.
25. Something different like the tyre minions, people come for miles to see them and take photos.
26. Playpark like Kirton's, folk travel to use it.
27. Plant sale.
28. Summer fair.

Q10 – do you have any further comments or ideas that you would like to put forward

1. I really hope this happens and we can have good facilities for the community I think it would make a massive difference to the community and surrounding area, fingers crossed it all goes well.
2. I think the area should be used to promote eco and wildlife and maintain its green appeal.
3. Do not forget the continued expenses of building, general upkeep, cleaning electricity etc.
4. Some type of ongoing competitions that all ages get involved with that lead up to the gala day.
5. Evening lighting
6. If you want people to visit Closeburn, you need firstly a decent shop and other reasons for people to visit when you drive through the village there's nothing here to grab your attention.
7. Do more for wildlife, it is concerning me you want to remove trees and have not

talked about how you are going to improve the wildlife in the area. We have already lost considerable wildlife we need to do more to boost it.

8. Wildflowers, bug hotels, dead wood piles, pond, raised beds, fruit trees.
9. I just think it is a great idea.
10. They would not be of relevance.
11. I think this is a super idea and you are the perfect people to take it forward.
12. It best to have a few trustees with a range of skills.

There was a total of 46 responses, 41 of these were via Facebook survey and 5 out of 120 written surveys were sent back

Appendix 2 – Summary of paper survey

NVLT Paper Questionnaire: Closeburn Playing Field

Results received 1st June 2021

21 Returned

1. What do you think of having?

Bandstand	10
Toilets	15
Maintaining Memorial Trees	18
Better pedestrian and vehicle access	14
Parking Area	15
Pathways	14
Pavilion / shelter	15
Storage facilities for events and clubs	11
Replacing Fir trees with deciduous trees	5
Improving Sports pitch	14
Rubbish bins	18
Benches	17

2 What other facilities would encourage your use?

All of the suggestions on the front page could be done in the field at the moment

All weather Sports pitch, seats / picnic benches, crazy golf, skateboard park

Picnic tables, all weather sports surface could be great and might encourage use by village kids

Exercise track i.e. path with stations to do exercise

Tennis, football, basketball area. Picnic benches (food and for doing outdoor craft), undercover seating as weather is changeable. Small Picnic area at entrance that youth club could plant with flowers.

The idea of promoting eco & wildlife activities is great. Maybe a section could be for educational facilities all about wildlife such as what good work bees, insects and other tiny animals do to help our eco system.

Running track.

A running track around the field.

Sports events, music concerts, car boot sales.

Allotments for adults and kids.

Tennis court, trampolines, skate park.

Pump track, swings, skate park, picnic tables.

All of the above (question 1) would dramatically change use, solar power socket, solar powered CCTV to protect and deter vandalism to facilities. Storage and other buildings maybe in keeping with scenery e.g. screened or use natural material.

3. What other facilities does you think would increase community use?

Toilets, bins and benches a must, improving access, putting green, undercover seating, eco sculptures, things to improve wildlife, bike track through trees.

Pump track, skate park.

Better football pitch

Youth club

Events and sports.

Bike trail through trees, seats, rubbish bins, better access for pedestrians.

Football/rugby pitch. Wildlife / wildflower garden.

Playground for children with swings and slides. A small maze children would love that. Mountain bike displays (events). Scottish pipers and dancers (events).

Possibly a small garden area for folk to just sit and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Sports surface, skateboard park.

Adventure playground at one end, cricket pitch, football pitch.

4. What other facilities do you think would attract people from outside Closeburn?

Nicer looking area, sign posts so people know it's there, advertising, nature activities and nature watch.

Maybe a picnic area and somewhere to get food and drink, possibly an area for food vans.

Music and sports events.

Colourful stuff added for children.

Sports / games day, 5 a side football, tug of war, caber tossing.

I think a skate park or trampolines would bring more families to Closeburn there's nothing close like this in our area.

Pump track, skate park.

Picnic areas, parking area, signs to help people find it, bug hotels, bird and bat boxes to encourage wildlife. BBQ safe area with access to sand / water to eattinguish. Better sports pitch with goals.

5. What events would you like to see being held?

Motorbike show, car boat sales, craft market, Scottish dance competitions, 5 a side footballl competitions, cricket.

More family fun days

Car boot sales would make some revenue.

Football.

Football Match, running races, gala.

Sports events.

Music, plays and possibly craft fairs.

Motorbike shows, 5 a side events, nature events, picnics, BBQs, family days.

If facilities allow, outside hire for funds, sports events for adults and children.

Pop concert.

School events, inter-village sports matches, family fun days, dog training.

6. Would you be interested in joining in with managing and improving the field?

Yes 6

No 11

6.a if yes, what skills could you offer?

Labour

The gala committee have a wide range of skills and equipment to provide events.

We would give as much help as we could.

Organisation.

Litter picking, taking part in events, planting, pairing, helping nature.

Happy to help out with grass cutting etc but no wish to be involved in communities or the like.

Not sure but would if I/we could? Admin?

7. What suggestions do you have for fundraising to carry out improvements?

Much as we are doing now.

Windfarm, charge for events within the field.

Cake sales, sponsored events, craft sales, car boot sales.

Newspaper

Put it in the newspaper or TV.

Contact turbine company and Council.

Collection jars in all the shops, Cake sales, sponsored walk.

Table top sale.

Pipe band tattoo.

Car boot sales, hosting events, sponsorship (m2 of field), fun runs, plant sales, raffles, tomolas, outdoor ceilidh, fun days.

There is a sport Scotland cycleng facilities fund specifically for this type of project. Deadline to submit EOI is 1st June 21 but continuing funds will be available.

8. Are you in favour of the community acquiring and managing the playing field long-term?

Yes	17
No	2

9. Do you have any other comments or ideas that you would like to put forward?

Utilise volunteers who want to help, better pedestrian access for wheelchairs / pushchairs, operate from vehicle for safety, storage for groups using would make it easier for them to hold activities, rabbits a problem but encourage other wildlife.

Unsure of long-term feasibility of project. Both financially and getting people involved.

A Festival of Dogs: A dog show (annual event) to include competitions, agility training etc. Stall could be rented out to vets, groomers, walkers, insurance companies, pet food suppliers etc. Other stands could be for extra funding such as tombola, raffles, book sales etc, maybe Guild Dogs UK or PDSA could do talks or workshops.

Good idea.

Improvements required to foot-way, access to field. (dropped kerb at nursery gate required).

Involve kids of school and youth club as it will ensure equipment is looked after and they will eventually be responsible in the future.

The field was originally community owned and then taken on by D&G Council. I suggest that the undertaking is considered fully. Memorial trees must be treated with respect as they represent family members. They should never be cut down without consulting me (Jayne Thomas) and the family. They will need replacing with exactly the same tree. Each family chose the species of tree and mean the world to the families.

It is my understanding that the field belongs to the community already. If we could raise money to transform the field that would be good but the general maintenance of the field I.e. grass cutting should be left to the Council.

10. What age groups are in your household?

20 & Under	7
21-35	4
36-45	6
46-55	6
56-65	7
66 & over	10

Appendix 3 – School pupils’ feedback

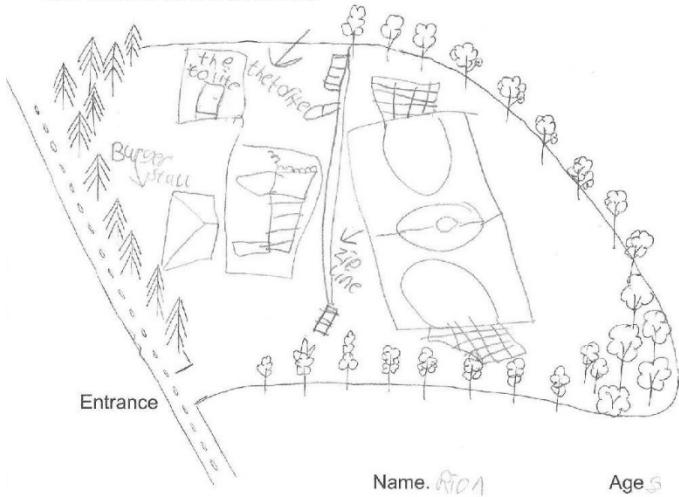
OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



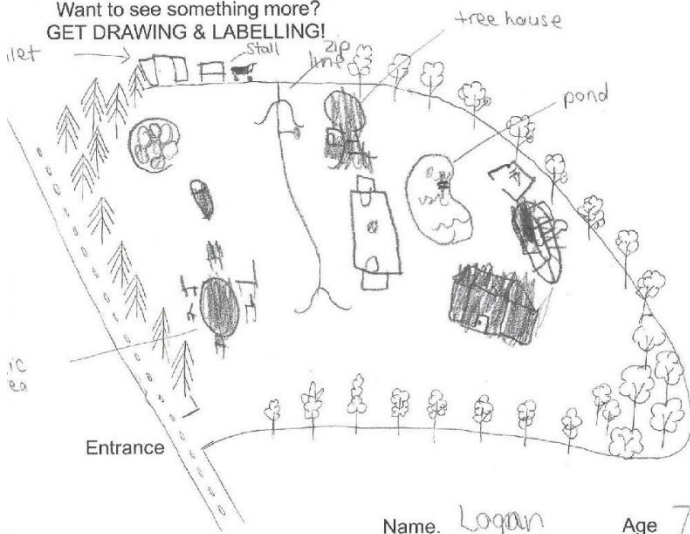
OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
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OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
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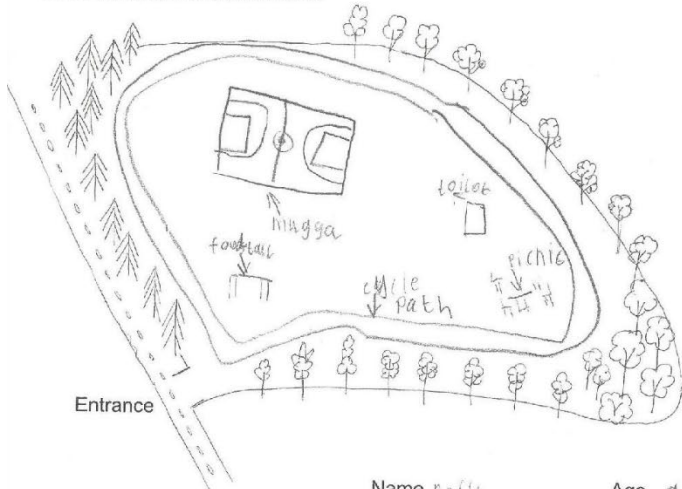


OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



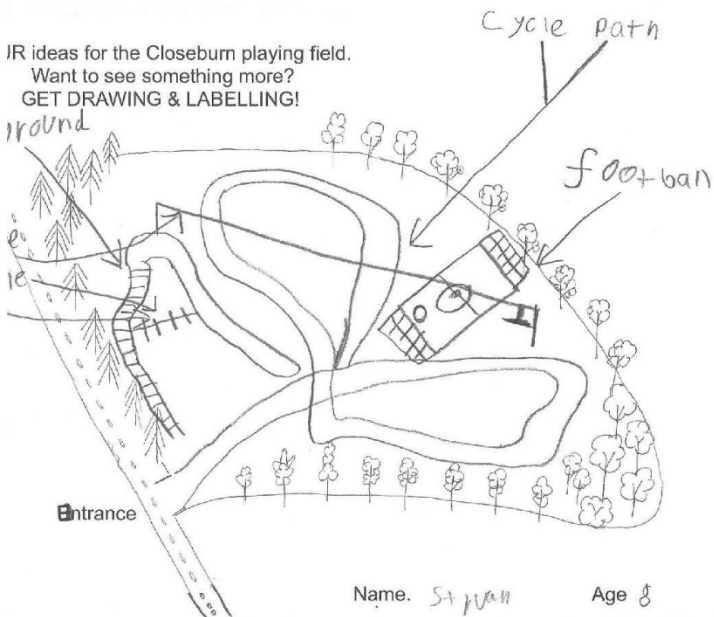
Name. Logan Age 7

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Want to see something more?
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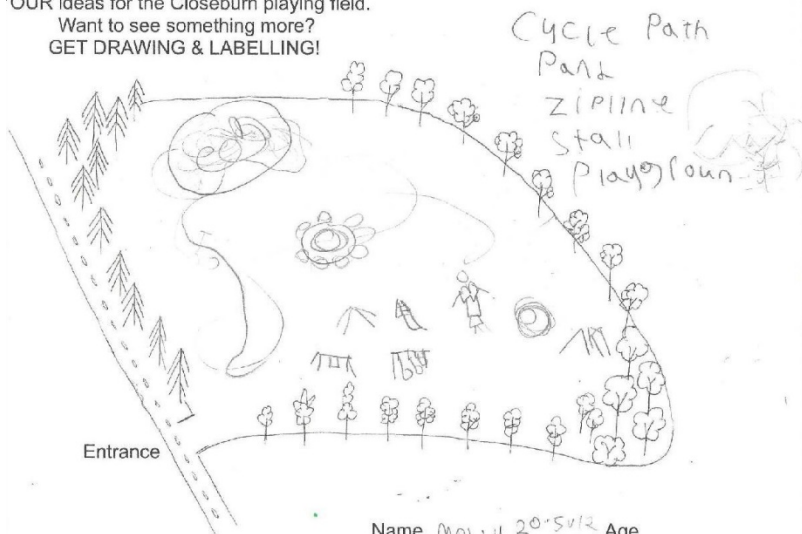
Name. Rofy Age 4

OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
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Name. STUAN Age 8

OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
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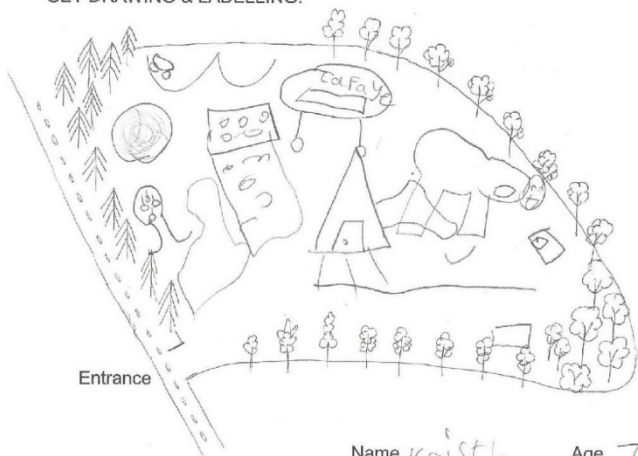
Name. Molly 20.5/12 Age

OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
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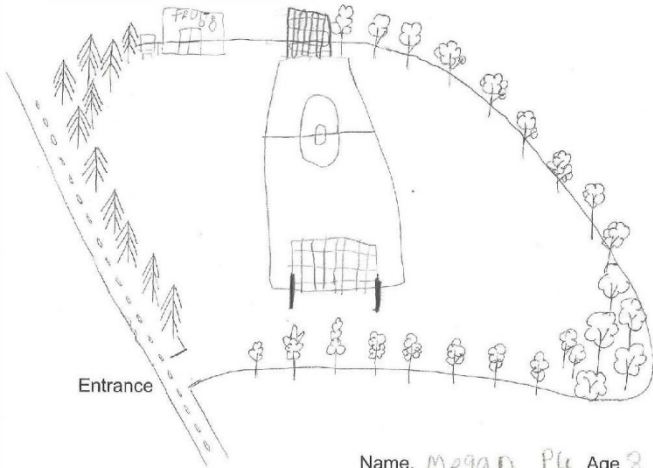
Name. Cole 10/12 Age 8

OUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



Name. Kristl Age 7

YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



Name. Megan P4 Age 8 20/5/21

YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



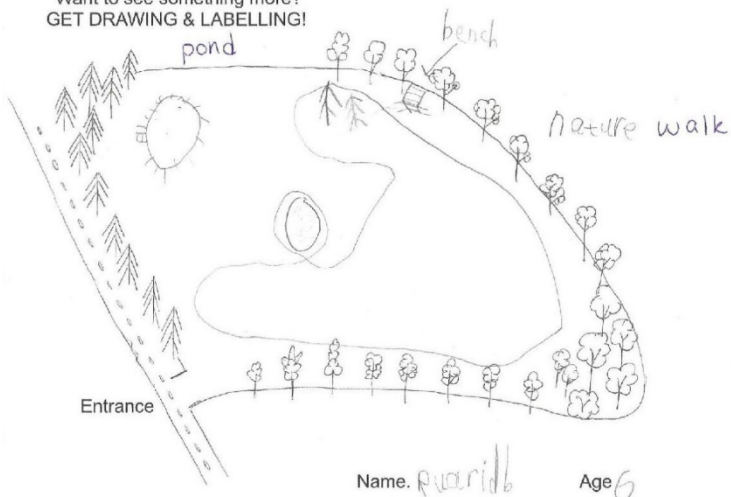
Name. Maxim Age 6 1/2

YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!

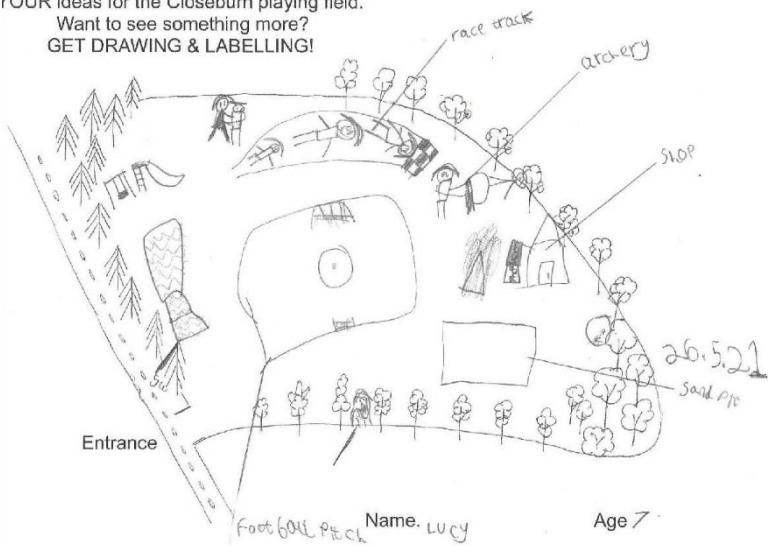


Name. Elenore Age

FOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



FOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



FOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



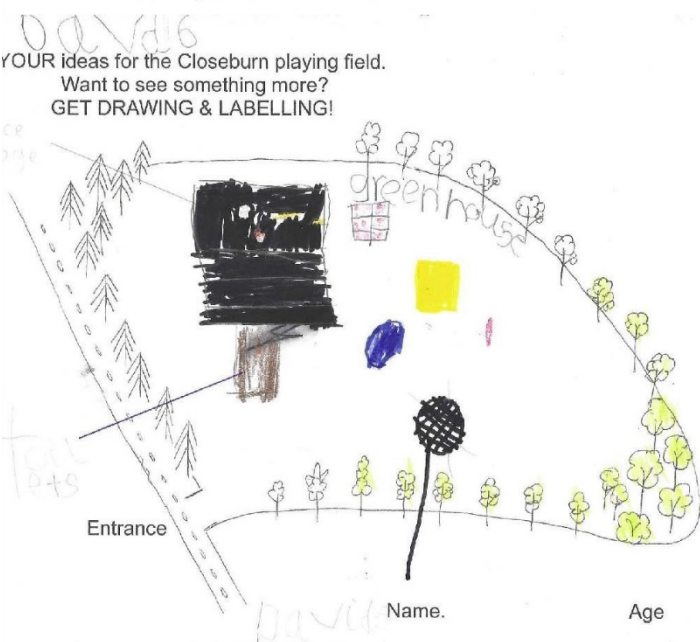
YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!

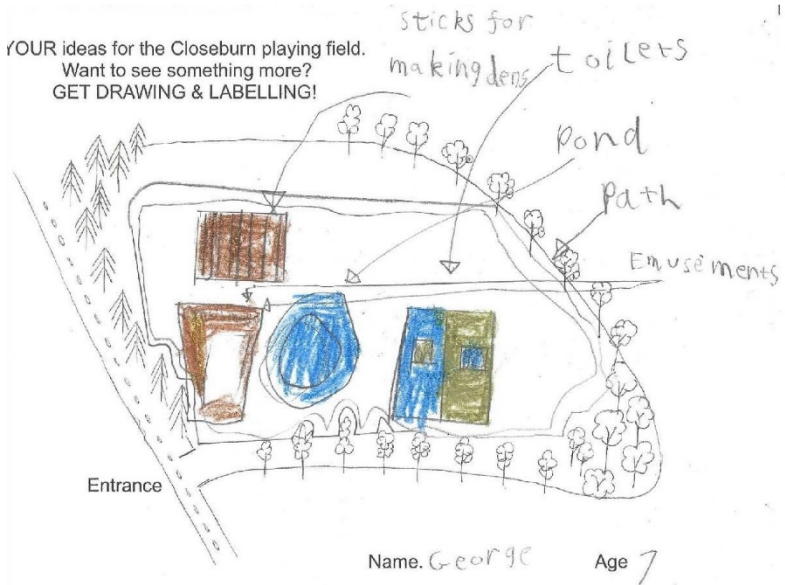


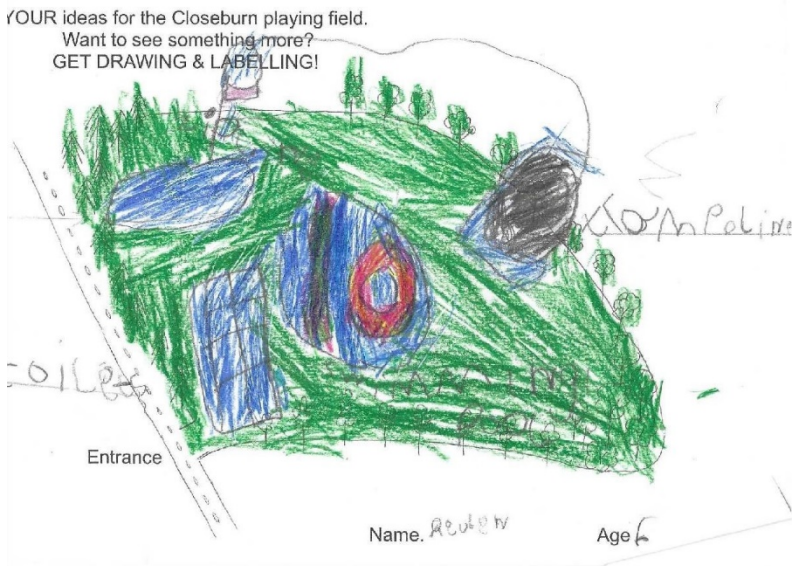
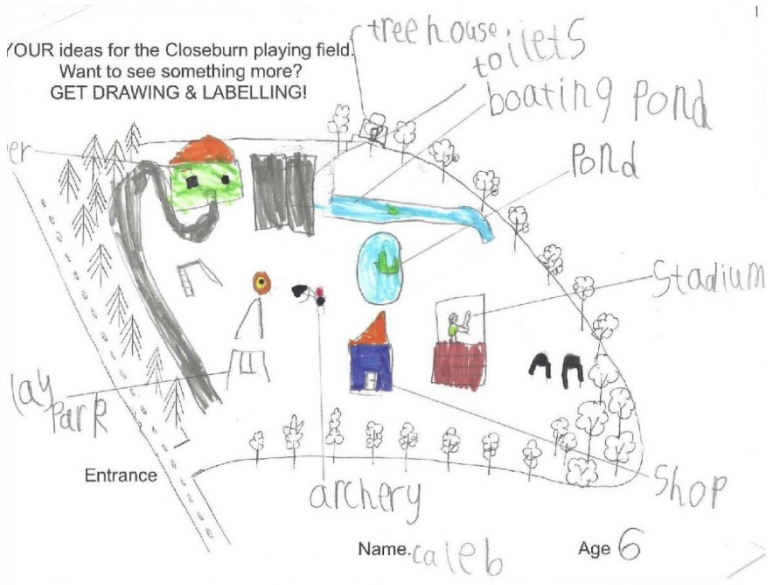
YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
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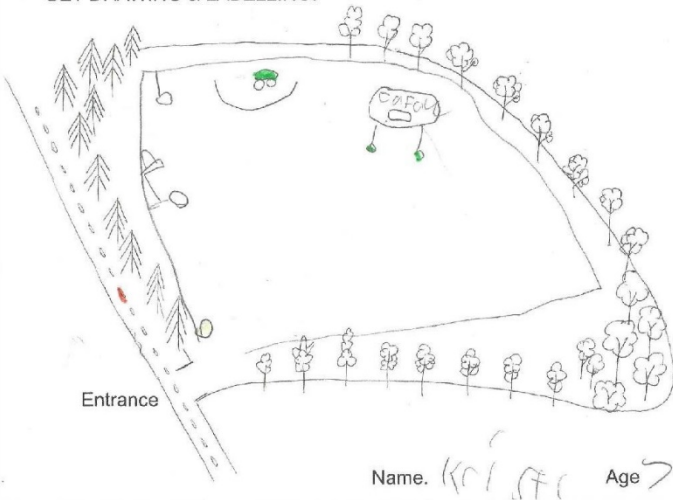




YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



YOUR ideas for the Closeburn playing field.
Want to see something more?
GET DRAWING & LABELLING!



Appendix 4 – Arboricultural Survey

Arboricultural Report

**Arboricultural Health & Safety Inspection
in Relation to Closeburn Playing Field,
For
Mr. Mike Steele, of
Nith Valley Leaf Trust**

Produced by
Richard Gauld, Tree Specialist.



Contents

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. Instructions and References
 - 1.2. Scope and Purpose of Report
 - 1.3. Report Format
2. Site Overview
 - 2.1 Site Location
 - 2.2 Site Use and Vegetation
3. Tree Data Schedule
4. Tree Conditions and Recommendations
 - 4.1. Remedial Works
 - 4.2. Site Information
 - 4.3 Conservation & Tree Protection
5. Tree Related Constraints
 - 5.1. Site Specific Issues
 - 5.2. Retention Categories
 - 5.3. Root Protection Areas
 - 5.4. Tree Canopies
6. Photographs
7. Signature

Appendix 1: Understanding BS 5837: 2012

Appendix 2: Survey Methodology

Appendix 3: Explanation of Tree Terms and General Glossary

Appendix 4: Further Information

Appendix 5: Site Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Instructions and References

██████████ Nith Valley Leaf Trust, to undertake an Arboricultural Survey to British Standard 5837: 2012 guidelines, to the trees within Closeburn Playing Field, and produce the findings in a report.

A plan of the site with tree locations indicated is located at Appendix 5.

██████████, Tree Specialist is a tree surgery and consultancy business, established in 1999 and based near to Thornhill in Dumfries and Galloway. Work is undertaken for both the private and public sectors and includes both practical tree surgery, ranging from pre- development site clearance to management of single or groups of trees with high amenity value to a full range of inspection and consultancy work for the purposes of Development, Safety, Management, Mortgage and Subsidence.

Prior to the establishment of the organisation ██████████ served a four year arboriculture and horticulture apprenticeship with Dundee City Council before attending Askham Bryan College to achieve an NDH, majoring in arboriculture. This followed with two years practical experience with a tree surgery business before establishing himself with Cherwell District Council in Oxfordshire as the Local Authority Tree Officer. He undertook this job for a period of eight years and then moved to Scotland where ██████████, Tree Specialist was formed.

As well as having undertaken the many N.P.T.C. chainsaw qualifications, he is also a fully qualified Lifting Operations & Lowering Equipment Regulations (LOLER) Inspector, 2006, and has undertaken Arboricultural Inspection and Report courses. Richard is a professional member of the Arboricultural Association and the International Society of Arboriculture.

1.2 Scope and Purpose of the Report

This report is designed to give comprehensive details of tree health and safety located at Closeburn Playing Field and identify any recommended works to be carried out on the trees. It is written according to guidelines laid out in BS 5837 (2012).

This report is based on the findings of a survey carried out at ground level on 22 April 2021, during sunnt weather and a light breeze of 6mph S.S.W. No climbed inspections or specialist decay detection were undertaken. Only trees with a stem diameter over 75mm were included (apart from 2652), which lie within the site boundary or in very close proximity to it. The temperature was recorded at 13 degrees celcius.

Where appropriate, potentially hazardous trees have been highlighted and appropriate recommendations made. Where obstacles prevented accurate measurement, dimensions were estimated.

Tags were used for each tree, running from 2651 to 2683, This includes two tree Groups at 2670 and 2683. A total of 193 trees.

1.3 Report Format

The main body of the report contains predominantly site specific information. Generic information can be found in Section 5, and the Appendices 1 - 4. Photographs of the site can be viewed in Section 6, a site plan with tree location indicators can be viewed in Appendix 5.

Site Overview

2.1 Location

The trees surveyed run around the perimeter of Closeburn Playing Field. The survey site is located to the east of Closeburn village, directly to the north of Closeburn Primary School. Access is from highway A76, directly from the minor road which runs from the primary school to Cample village.

Grid reference: NX 901925

Altitude average – 66m above sea level.

2.2 Site Use and Vegetation

The trees surveyed are located along the site boundaries of the playing field to the south, east and west. The trees along these boundaries are all mature, approximately 70/80 years old, except for tree 2652, Sorbus aucuparia, which is semi mature and known to have been planted in 2012.

Within the trees on site are 22 trees planted in memory of former Wallace Hall Academy pupils who lost their lives in World War II. These trees are noted in Section 3, Tree Data Schedule with a * in column 1, and include tree 2652.

There are 2 Groups of trees tagged, 2670 adjacent to property Ashwood on the eastern boundary and 2683 along the western boundary. Mention is also given to the young hedge line / trees (less than 10 years old) along the northern boundary. The site is bounded beyond any trees mainly by dry stone walling, some especially along the west by the road, in need of works.

The rest of the site is laid to permanent pasture.

A site plan with tree location indicators, can be viewed in Appendix 5.

3. Tree Data Schedule

The following pages contain information gathered about the trees during the survey, carried out on 22 April 2021 . A site plan with tree location indicators, can be viewed in Appendix 5.

Each tree surveyed has a numbered tag, running from 2651 to 2683, a total of 193 trees, including two Groups, 2670 and 2683.

All height measurements should be regarded as approximate.

The reader should also refer to the Appendices 1 - 4 in order to correctly interpret the tree data.

Photographs of the site can be viewed in Section 6.

Data Schedule Key:

<p>Tree Number</p> <p>Trees are tagged with metal tags where feasible. Where this has not been feasible or desirable, tree numbers within the Data schedule relate to those marked on any guide maps or site plans.</p>	<p>Tree Species</p> <p>Scientific or common name is presented. For trees within groups the species together with the numbers of each species within the group is presented where appropriate.</p>	<p>Age Class</p> <p>Young (Y), Semi Mature (SM), Mature (M), Ancient (A), Veteran (V).</p>
<p>Height (m)</p> <p>All heights are estimated. Where feasible or appropriate, height estimation is carried out with the aid of a clinometers or similar device.</p>	<p>Number of Stems</p> <p>A record of 1 indicates a tree with a single stem at 1.5m height. Where more than 1 stem is recorded this indicates that the tree is multi-stemmed at 1.5m and diameter has been measured as described to the right. Where more than 5 stems are observed the numbers may be estimated.</p>	<p>Stem Diameter (cm)</p> <p>Stems measured in accordance with BS 5387:2012. (Usually of 75mm or more). Single stems diameters are measured at 1.5m with a diameter tape or callipers. Individual stem diameters for multi-stemmed trees are measured or estimated at 1.5m. All measurements rounded to nearest cm. Measurements may be estimates either due to restricted access to tree stem or due to climbing plant growth about the stem restricting accuracy of measurement.</p>
<p>Crown Height (m)</p> <p>Distance from lowest point of crown periphery or lowest branch union to estimated height of tree.</p>	<p>Crown Spread (m)</p> <p>The crown radius from bole to crown limit identified at the 4 cardinal points (N, S, E, W) in order to allow presentation of the above ground constraints on the Tree Protection Plan. Measurements are approximate and depend on clear access about the crown. May require estimation from aerial photographs.</p>	<p>Physiological Conditions</p> <p>Good (G), Fair (F), Poor (P), Dead (D)</p>
<p>Life Expectancy</p> <p>Useful life expectancy. The anticipated future contribution to the amenity of the site. This may be influenced by the current or anticipated change in site.</p>	<p>Site Notes</p> <p>Tree structural condition / site notes or description relevant to the tree structure or future development works on site. Accompanied with recommendations for remedial works where appropriate.</p>	<p>Recommendations – Priority</p> <p>Works that are required to individual trees in order to ensure that they are in an acceptable and safe condition. Classed as Urgent, Very High, High, Moderate, Low.</p>
<p>Recommendations – Inspection Frequency</p> <p>Trees should be inspected on a regular basis in case their condition deteriorates. Classed from 0.5 to 3+ yearly intervals.</p>	<p>Root Protection Area (m2)/Nominal Circle (m)</p> <p>Calculated as an area equivalent to a circle with a radius 12 times the stem diameter.</p>	<p>Category</p> <p>Tree category as defined within BS 5837:2012. (see Section 5). Categories A, B and C: identified for retention, with sub categories 1, 2 and 3. Category U: identified for removal.</p>

4. Tree Condition and Recommendations

Section 4 concentrates on an overview of the 193 trees surveyed at Closeburn Playing Field, with works recommended and any site information gathered during the survey and pertinent to the growing conditions and future management of the trees. Firstly, though Section 4 highlights any of the more serious safety concerns with a categorised priority scale for works to be carried or further inspections required:

High – within 3 months, **Moderate** – within 1 year, **Low** - within 3 years.

The reader should also refer to the Tree Data Schedule in Section 3 and Appendices 1 - 4 in order to correctly interpret the tree data. A site plan is located at Appendix 5.

The trees surveyed are all within a 20metre fall range of the fence line and are in the majority mature deciduous trees. Those in particular that run along the fence line, the closest being 3 metres away, parallel to the public footpath appear very imposing when viewed from the housing estate. Their average height is 20 metres, but several tower above this and their close growth and canopy mean they work as one group with associated habitats and root structures. This has to be taken into consideration when any recommendations are made for tree removal, as other trees may become vulnerable

in, for example, stormy weather. It is unusual that the properties were built so close to the tree line, and the situation will require regular monitoring of the trees, particularly as there is a public footpath to take into account as well.

4.1 Remedial Works

- The following trees are recommended for remedial works, potential removal or monitoring with a **Low** - within 3 years category:

2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2666, 2669, 2672, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2680, 2682 (neighbouring trees).

As can be seen from the detailed recommendations for remedial works in Section 3, Data Schedule the trees are in the majority in good condition, with nothing urgent required. A management plan for the two Groups tagged and identified 2670 and 2683 should be formulated and the following are proposed by Richard Gauld, Tree Specialist for discussion:

- Group 2670 - A group of 47 trees, *Picea sitchensis* and *Acer pseudoplatanus* on a raised area to E of site on boundary with and adjacent to the neighbouring property Ashwood. Although unknown, it would appear that this raised area and the trees planted were to act as screening for and from the property. The 4 commemorative trees, 2671, 2672, 2673 and 2674 are not included in this Group plan.

There are high levels of rabbit damage and disturbance to root areas, and this problem should be dealt with before any more trees / shrubs are planted.

Recommended works – remove branches overhanging Ashwood. Thin area for future management and planting of understory. Remove all dead trees and those below stem diameter of 422mm. Allow commemorative trees in area to stand out as specimens, attractive understory and screening for / from Ashwood. Understory to include species such as, *Corylus avellana*, *Viburnum sp.*, *Rosa canina*. More spring bulbs could be planted.

- Group 2683 – A band of 115 trees growing from the site entrance along the west boundary. At the north end the band is wider and curves slightly to the east. There are no commemorative trees in this area, and the most attractive trees are just up from the site entrance and a *Quercus robur* in the north west corner, where a potentially raised grassed area is currently hidden from view.

There are many lying and standing dead, dying and light drawn specimens within this band.

There are high levels of rabbit damage and disturbance to root areas, and this problem should be dealt with before any more trees / shrubs are planted. The boundary wall to the road requires attention and is in danger of falling in several places.

Recommended works –

1. Clear dead, dying and drawn species to thin overcrowding and make area safe. Removed wood could become habitat piles. Plant some new specimen species, for example *Pinus sylvestris*, *Tsuga heterophylla* to keep character and underplant with species, for example *Corylus avellana*, *Viburnum sp.* and *Rosa canina*.

OR

2. Fell band of trees, leaving a couple of the best specimens to maintain maturity. A felling license would be required, but the timber could potentially be sold to help pay for the project. Create a wider, shaped band and replant with native species, possibly with a walk through it with benches etc. Species recommended – *Pinus sylvestris*, *Quercus robur*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Betula pendula*, *Prunus avium*, *Fagus sylvatica*. Underplant as in (1). Spring bulbs could be planted.

4.2 Site Information

Future Tree Works

All tree works should be carried out to “*BS 3998:2010 Recommendations For Tree Works*” standards, with correct chainsaw techniques used and sympathetic reductions and re-shapes etc.

Fungi identified

- *Nectria canker* – this is a fungal infection, whose pathogen invades fresh wounds and damaged areas of bark and wood. If a tree is healthy, it can typically seal off the infection and recover by forming a callus. Weaker trees may eventually die.
- *Poplar canker* – are a series of microscopic organisms, entering the tree through wounds and breaks in the bark and can be observed through physical deformities such as dark or sunken areas on a branch or trunk. Canker diseases in poplar cannot be cured, but, if for example contained to a branch, removal may eradicate it from that individual tree. However if widespread through a tree it can spread to others and death is likely.

- *Pseudomonas savastanoi pv. fraxini*, “Bacterial Canker of Ash Trees” – a bacteria that kills bark and cambial tissue and results in excessive tumour – like growths of the bark tissue. This condition can cause an increased incidence of branch failure and on finding it, trees should be risk assessed with this in mind in relation to, for example, public access, vehicles etc. Care should be taken when carrying out tree works as cross infection is easy.

Reference “*An Arborists Field Guide – Fungi on Trees*” – *Arboricultural Association*.

Girdling Roots

Some of the trees included in this survey have girdling roots. These are lateral roots that emerge at or slightly below the soil surface and cut into at least one side of the main trunk. These roots restrict the movement of water and nutrients to the leaves as they put pressure on the stem. Affected stems eventually become weakened and may cause the tree to die.

The usual cause of girdling roots is triggered by nursery and transplanting methods. Future tree planting in the Park needs to be carried out by ensuring any circling roots observed from the container are loosened and spread out in the planting hole. Planting at the correct depth is also very important.

Rabbits

There is very evident rabbit damage throughout the site, but especially amongst the trees surveyed along the boundaries. Apart from the obvious potential dangers to humans with rabbit holes, the burrows amongst the tree roots may cause some damage and stability issues. It is recommended that for the area to become enhanced with higher school and public use this issue is addressed.

Upon completion of any recommended works, the trees shall be in an acceptable condition from a safety perspective. However, in consideration to the location and use of the site, the trees should be inspected on a regular basis in case their condition deteriorates, and especially after storm or periods of very windy weather.

4.3 Conservation & Tree Protection

- All bats are protected under European legislation. It is an offence to kill or disturb bats, or to destroy their roosts. All species of bat use trees to some extent, and many use cavities within which to roost. The mature trees within this survey area may support bats, and it is recommended that a bat survey is carried out by an experienced person in this field before any works are carried out.
- Work should not be carried out on any of the trees during the bird nesting season and explorations into possible red squirrel nesting sites should be carried out before any tree works commence.
- It is understood that none of the trees have been placed under a *Tree Protection Order* or are in a *Conservation Area*.

. Tree Related Constraints

5.1 Site Specific Issues

This Section of the report offers general advice for designers when dealing with tree related constraints. Nothing within this Section is specific to Closeburn Playing Field.

5.2 Retention Categories

The Tree Data Schedule indicates the BS 5837 Retention Categories for each tree. These should be taken into account during the design stage of any development proposals according to the following criteria:

Wherever possible, Category **A** trees should be retained. These are usually large trees with a relatively high amenity value. They are generally in good condition, well suited to their surroundings and with a significant life expectancy.

The majority of Category **B** trees should also be retained, as these are also substantial trees or smaller trees of particular merit.

The retention of category **C** trees should be seen as optional. These are usually small trees or trees of no particular merit.

Category U trees have been recommended for removal due to their poor condition, and should be removed regardless of development proposals.

5.3 Root Protection Areas

The root protection areas of each tree do not represent the maximum extent of rooting activity; rather, it defines the area within which the majority of roots are expected to be confined. Wherever possible, this should be left undisturbed for all trees to be retained. Significant disturbances such as changes in ground level, soil compaction caused by vehicles, excavation of trenches, or interference with oxygen and rainwater exchange may have a significant impact on the health of the tree.

Some disturbance of the RPA may be acceptable but must be kept to a minimum. Construction methods should be adopted that are sympathetic to root requirements:

Concrete strip foundations should be avoided except at the very extremity of the RPA. Instead, pile/pier and beam foundations or raft foundations should be utilized. These will minimise root severance.

Hard surfaces should be installed with the minimum of excavation. The majority of roots lies within the upper soil horizons and are relatively fine. Roots do not need to be as thick as branches, since they do not have to combat gravity and high winds etc. A root as thin as a finger is able to transport a lot of nutrients. Thus, excavation as shallow as 30cm can have a significant impact on the health of a tree even though large roots might not be severed. Cellular confinement systems help to reduce the amount of excavation required to give a driveway adequate strength.

Hard surfaces should ideally be porous to allow rainwater and oxygen to pass into the soil. Gravel is the ideal medium and can be retained in a cellular system to prevent rutting. Block paving and flagstones with mortar joints are a good alternative. Tarmac is not very porous; the use of a no fines tarmac is preferable.

Trenches for underground services are commonly overlooked but can cause major damage to trees. Further arboricultural advice should be sought if underground services are to pass within Root Protection Areas. Trenchless techniques can sometimes be utilized but are not usually practical for installing drains.

If ground levels are to be raised, this should always be done with a loose granular material such as gravel or coarse sand. Ground levels must never be raised against trunks of trees as this may cause them to rot.

It is sometimes possible to mitigate against root disturbance, by above ground pruning or by improving root conditions for existing roots. The introduction of mycorrhizal fungi and earthworms significantly improves rooting conditions, as does the removal of competing vegetation such as grass.

Soil compaction occurs when vehicles repeatedly pass over rooting areas without some kind of structure to disperse their weight. Healthy soils will contain approximately 25% airspace. When soils become compacted these air spaces disappear and roots are unable to respire. It is possible to de-compact soils but this is an expensive operation. It is preferable to avoid compaction, by spreading the load of traffic passing over Root Protection Areas with the use of metal road plates or suitable boards.

5.4 Tree Canopies

Where trees are to be retained, adequate space should be allowed between buildings and tree canopies. A minimum distance of 3m is recommended. For high quality trees (Category A or B) which have not yet reached maturity a further allowance should be made to allow the canopies to mature without the need for extensive pruning.

For residential dwellings, the shade cast by trees should also be taken into account. Particularly where buildings are located north or north-east of sizeable trees. Some species e.g. birch, have light airy canopies so shade is less of an issue. Commonly occurring trees which cast dense shade include beech, oak, ash, chestnut, sycamore, lime and most ever-green species. Shade constraints are less of an issue for garages and other non-residential buildings.

The shade constraint defined within BS 5837 which is determined according to the existing tree heights. This represents the approximation of the areas most affected by shade throughout the year. It does not reflect the actual shade cast at any one time of the day or at any one time of the year. Ideally, the windows of high occupancy living quarters (kitchens, living rooms and dining rooms) should be located outside of the BS 5837 shade constraints. Where they are located within the shade constraints it is advised that a more detailed assessment is undertaken to ascertain the availability of skylight and sunlight available at key windows. Consideration should also be given to allowing adequate amenity space within gardens that will enjoy some sunshine.

More sources of information regarding the above points can be found in Appendix 4. Richard Gauld, Tree Specialist will gladly offer any further advice.

6. Photographs

Photo 1: Trees along the south boundary.



Photo 2: Trees along the east boundary



Photo 3: 2658, Fraxinus excelsior showing storm damaged lost stem to NE



Photo 4: 2659, 3 competing leaders to south, lowest is dead.



Photo 5 & 6: 2672 with Ash Canker which can cause branch / stem failure.



Photo 7: Trees along the west boundary – Group 2683



Photo 8: Understory of Group 2683 on west boundary

Photo 9: One area of damaged wall to west boundary.



Photo 10: West boundary from north road side.



Nith Valley LEAF Trust - Asset Transfer Request for Playing Fields at Closeburn

NVLT and the Community recognise Closeburn Primary as a major pillar of our community and want to enhance our children's opportunities to learn, enjoy and prosper by supporting the School. We understand that the playing field constitutes a valuable resource to the School, a resource that if refurbished and developed could bring a much better asset for both school and community to use. We would hope that development would allow the school to have greater access, especially in the winter months for sports and outdoor learning with the addition of a shelter and toilets.

Sports

The current pitches are unfit for organised games and currently constitute a danger to players.

We want to make sure that sporting facilities are improved and have had conversations with a number of organisations including SportsScotland, D&G Leisure (Culture and Wellbeing) and Fields in Trust to seek support and advice in developing a sports strategy and plan for the pitches that cover both soccer and cricket. They are all supportive and will give concrete assistance to NVLT once the CAT is complete. We would like to encourage greater access and use by providing well maintained pitches with appropriate facilities for both School and community.

We would like our plan to fit within the D&G Council priority of *providing a better start in life to all children* as well as supporting a healthy and active lifestyle for everyone in our school and in our community by having a better outdoor space that provides good quality sporting and activity options.

Improving sports skills through coaching is also important to us as currently there is no such provision out of school.

By developing the Closeburn playing field sporting facilities we will also address issues including health and well being as well as rural isolation and poverty that comes like lack of private transport and lack of income and thus lack of access to facilities further away.

Events: We would like to see new and more events held that could include: • Regular community fun/Fundraisers/events. Sports competitions, dog agility shows. • Income generating car boots sales, tractor and vintage car rallies, family gatherings like weddings, school reunions • Outdoor learning & training.

The field thus has the potential to provide more and better activities, learning opportunities and social interaction for both Primary School and Community. NVLT can access funds unavailable to the Council and having consulted with the community believe asset transfer will allow this potential to be realised.

