

## Agenda Item 13 – Asset Transfer Expression of Interest

With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon in Devon, Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) has been considering the possible transfer of local community assets, to protect the local benefits derived from them and to promote social, economic or environmental benefits. As such a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy has been developed. It was approved by Mid Devon's Cabinet on 7 April and approved by Full Council on Wednesday 22 April. A copy of the MDDC report and Asset Transfer Policy accompanies this paper.

The report states that ***“The Council will normally prefer long-term leasehold transfers. Freehold transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis where there are objective reasons why a lease is not the most appropriate form and where this provides clear additional community benefit.”***

The Parish Council already leases several play and recreation areas from Mid Devon on 25-year leases, the Clerk had already approached MDDC to see whether the freeholds of the Gables Lea side of Jubilee Field and the Orchard Way play and recreation area could be transferred to the Parish Council and what this would entail. No formal response was forthcoming but there is now a process to follow.

The MDDC report also states: ***“A transfer may be at a nominal or reduced rent/price. This is known as a disposal at less than best consideration. The nominal or reduced rent/price will reflect the value of the asset to the Council and the benefits it delivers to the community”***. The Parish Council would therefore be looking to acquire these assets on this basis.

The policy is clear that The Parish Council would be responsible for its own legal costs: ***“The requesting party to bear all legal costs incurred in the preparation and completion of the transaction.”***

Expressions of interest in acquiring assets are invited by the 30th of June. The expression of interest is per asset and must set out the reasons for wishing to acquire the asset, the aims for the asset, evidence of resilience, expertise and a record of maintaining and developing similar assets. The Parish Council has invested significant funds in improving these open spaces for the local community and already manages and maintains them so has a clear track record in running this type of asset, allocating a budget within the precept and holding earmarked reserves as appropriate to improve and carry out additional work or maintenance. The Council appoints contractors to carry out maintenance and repairs. If the freehold is acquired the Parish Council would ensure that these facilities are maintained and improved as necessary for the continued enjoyment of the local community in perpetuity as areas of open space and recreation. Given the limited amount of open space within the village this is particularly important.

The Council is asked to decide whether it wishes the Clerk to submit formal expressions of interest to acquire the freeholds of the currently leased land at Jubilee Field (Gables Lea side) and the Orchard Way play and recreation area.

**Debbie Bird, Clerk to Willand Parish Council  
June 2026**