

HEARTLANDS WARD FORUM, 10TH MARCH 2020

THE POD, GERANIUM GROVE, BORDESLEY GREEN

UPDATE PROVIDED BY JAMES GOSS, PLANNING AND REGENERATION DIVISION

On 24th February 2012 a licence was granted to Our Community CIC to occupy the Pod and the adjacent skateboard park.

The Pod is a steel container and was used to house I.T. equipment, and provided recreational activities and training for young people within the area. Whilst Our Community ran this facility it provided an important resource for local young people.



THE POD



SKATEBOARD PARK



At the last Heartlands Ward Forum Meeting on 29th October 2019 it was noted that the facility had been closed for 12 months. Our Community were in attendance at the meeting but they could not say when the facility would re-open, as they did not have access to funding and could not say when they would have.

Clearly, the Pod is a valuable asset, but it is currently not being used for the benefit of the local community. At the meeting it was noted that there may be local groups who would like to make good use of it.

Given that Our Community have no funding and cannot state when they will have, and as there may be other community groups who are interested in using the Pod, Council officers have now given notice to Our Community to terminate their licence for use of the Pod and the adjacent skateboard park. James Goss has asked them to make arrangements for the return of the keys.

Planning's preference is for the retention of the existing use on a permanent basis. (In the past it has had a number of temporary planning permissions).

Therefore, if the Forum are in agreement, Council officers are going to market the site to local community groups for the resumption of the existing use. Councillor Shah is to forward details of any known groups to James Goss.

James Goss will then obtain the necessary approvals and Council officers will market the site to local groups for the retention of the existing use. This would be done on a renewable licence basis.

Any community group will have to meet all outgoings arising from the use of the Pod (e.g. payment of utility bills, obtaining public liability insurance, etc).

Karen Cheney in the Council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit has stated she will provide support to ensure that any chosen community group is viable and fit for purpose.

Should there be no interest from community groups the Council would have to review the position and report back to the Forum.