

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE  
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF  
PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LESTER QUERPEL**

Thank you sincerely for the response to my previous set of Rule 14 questions submitted to Education, Sport and Culture, which was issued last month: March 30th. The response I received raised further questions, which I now submit to you below.

**Question 1**

In response to Question 2 in that previous set of Rule 14 questions, I was told by ESC that the Outdoor Trim Trail at Beau Sejour was removed due to ongoing maintenance costs and limited public interest. So, in relation to that, I ask the following three-part question: How often was the use of the Trim Trail monitored, at what times was the use of the trail monitored and how was it monitored to enable the department to come to the conclusion that there was limited public interest in the facility?

**Answer**

The Outdoor Trim Trail at Beau Sejour Leisure Centre was a free and unsupervised facility, in some respects akin to a park playground. The Trim Trail has not been in operation for many years (approximately two decades). Staff turnover during the intervening years combined with the fact that the facility was neither ticketed nor supervised means that it is not now possible to provide any robust information regarding the use, or monitoring of the use, of the Trim Trail at that time.

However, the Centre's grounds team and other officers had reason to visit the Trim Trail area frequently when it was operational and as such gained a good understanding of usage trends over a lengthy period of time. This helped to inform the conclusion that there was little interest in the facility and thus a weak argument for its continued maintenance at the point of its closure.

**Question 2**

Can you please tell me what the annual maintenance costs of the Trim Trail were and what the annual budget for sport was at that time?

**Answer**

This information is not available. Historically, much of the maintenance at Beau Sejour has been undertaken by its in-house staff, who would not normally allocate their time and

material costs to discrete outside areas within the Beau Sejour estate. This is particularly so in respect of facilities that would not require this information in order to inform a charging policy.

### **Question 3**

Question 3 to ESC in my previous set of Rule 14 questions was as follows 'Can you tell me please if ESC has any plans to reinstate the Outdoor Trim Trail at Beau Sejour?' I was told in response to that question that the committee have no plans to fund the reinstatement of the trail, or any similar facility at Beau Sejour. Yet in response to Question 5a) which was 'Do ESC have any plans to improve current outdoor sports facilities?' I was told that one of the ambitions of Active 8 – A Plan for Sport, is to make open spaces accessible and connect the community with its' natural surroundings, inspiring individuals to use the great outdoors to get active, immersing themselves in the natural world.

Yet the answer I received to Question 3 seems to totally contradict what ESC told me in response to Question 5a). So, bearing that in mind, do you agree with me that reinstating the Outdoor Trim Trail at Beau Sejour would align with all of the ambitions Active 8 – A Plan for Sport?

### **Answer**

The Committee does not agree that the previous responses were contradictory. The Active 8 Ambition referred to is "Connect the community with its natural surroundings, inspiring individuals to use the great outdoors to get active, immersing themselves in the natural world to do so" and it contains three specific actions:

- 6.1 Establish a 'Natural Guernsey' development plan, working alongside the community and local organisations.
- 6.2 Establish improved signposting, communication and support mechanisms for clubs and associations to develop and host outdoor sporting activities and events.
- 6.3 Develop and easy to use on-line 'Toolkit' enabling Community Groups to plan and manage their own outdoor activities and events more easily.

When progressing the 'Natural Guernsey' development plan, consideration might well be given to the provision of an Outdoor Trim Trail, or similar, at Beau Sejour. However, working in partnership with the community to establish the priorities, the Committee will take a holistic view in respect of this workstream and does not want to pre-empt its outcomes.

#### **Question 4**

In response to Question 4 of my previous set of Rule 14 questions, ESC informed me that it's difficult to see how the area of land that was previously occupied by the Outdoor Trim Trail can be used, due to the terrain. But in response to that, I say that the Trim Trail was perfectly suited to the terrain in the past, so do you agree with me that it would still be perfectly suited for use as a Trim Trail now?

#### **Answer**

The reference to the terrain in the previous response was made with the limited attractiveness of the site for other sporting or recreation activity which, in very general terms, usually requires large and even surfaces, in mind. We agree that this area remains suitable for a Trim Trail-like facility, should there be a proven demand for, and funds to install and maintain, such a facility.

#### **Question 5**

ESC also said in response to Question 4 in my previous set of Rule 14 questions, that should an individual, or organisation, propose a specific use for the land that was complementary to the facilities at Beau Sejour, then that would be seriously considered by ESC. So, with that in mind, coupled with the response to my Question 2, reminding me that private funding has paid for an outdoor fitness facility to be put in place at Delancey Park, it appears that ESC have adopted a 'sit and wait and hope' type of approach when it comes to outdoor facilities being provided for the community. I sincerely hope that that isn't the case because I'd expect, and I'm sure the community would also expect, ESC to be a lot more proactive than that: especially when you're mandated to maximise opportunities for participation in sport. So, are you able to give me an assurance that your department and committee haven't adopted a 'sit and wait and hope' type of approach when it comes to future provision of outdoor sporting facilities here in the island?

#### **Answer**

The Committee takes a strategic and holistic approach to work across the breadth of its mandate - which is far removed from a 'sit and wait and hope' approach. For sport, as set out above, the Committee partners with the Guernsey Sports Commission and details of its Action Plan, including its 2022 Action Plan update, can be found on its website<sup>1</sup>.

We are currently liaising with a number of organisations regarding the potential development/improvement of outdoor and indoor facilities; however, we do not consider it

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<sup>1</sup> [2022 Action Plan update | Guernsey Sports Commission](#)

an appropriate use of our limited resources to install and maintain facilities without there being a robust business case in terms of the use, benefit and capital and revenue implications of any such plans.

### **Question 6**

Bearing in mind the fact that education has dominated the focus and the attention of the committee since you were all elected to office in 2020, are you able to give me an assurance that you are all applying sufficient political oversight to sport, as determined by your mandate?

### **Answer**

The Committee is able to provide the assurance that you seek. Although matters relating to education rightly occupy a significant part of our focus, we are still able to focus appropriate time and energy on every aspect of our mandate.

Our stated purpose is to encourage human development by maximising opportunities for participation and excellence through education, learning, sport and culture at every stage of life. Under the 'reshaping government' priority of the Government Work Plan, 'new ways of working' include further development of the commissioning model.

With that in mind in the context of your question, the Guernsey Sports Commission is the body via which the Committee fulfils certain elements of its mandate. The Commission, with the assistance of a grant from the Committee, employs no fewer than 25 Sports Development Officers and Coaches. We are confident that we provide sufficient oversight of the Commission through regular dialogue and the application and monitoring of service level agreements.

We also work with the Policy & Resources Committee to assist sports wanting to access a loans facility, in line with a Resolution of the States in August 2020<sup>2</sup>, where otherwise those sports would be unlikely to be able to upgrade their facilities; and we actively monitor the progress of Active 8: A Plan for Sport 2021 – 2030.

### **Question 7**

This next question focuses on maintenance of our current outdoor sporting facilities, as opposed to focusing on providing new outdoor sporting facilities. As you know, the outdoor Netball facility at Beau Sejour also serves as a Tennis Court. The playing surface is uneven

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<sup>2</sup> [Active 8: A Plan for Sport - 2021-2030 - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](https://www.guernsey.gov.gg/active-8)

and due to that fact, a multitude of large puddles is always left on the playing surface every time it rains. These large puddles take a long time to 'drain away', which obviously means the surface is extremely dangerous to play on in the meantime. So, with that in mind, can you tell me please if ESC have any plans to 'level up' the playing surfaces on those courts?

**Answer**

The acrylic courts you refer to are usually resurfaced every 7 to 8 years by specialist sports surfacing contractors in accordance with recommendations from the relevant sporting bodies. Some puddling is common on this type of surface and the courts at Beau Sejour are not exceptional in that there is some puddling in wet weather.

The surface of the courts is approaching the end of its lifespan and we anticipate that an application will be made for capital funding to enable resurfacing work to be completed in early 2024.

**Question 8 a)**

I presume Beau Sejour lose revenue due to cancellations when it's been raining and the courts are too dangerous to play on until the puddles 'drain away', so can you please tell me if that is the case?

**Answer**

In general terms, it is not uncommon for outdoor sports bookings to be cancelled due to adverse weather and outdoor sports leagues build in contingency bookings to allow for this. The courts are maintained and cleaned appropriately and as such they are not dangerous to play on in wet weather, albeit users might well prefer not to use them in the rain.

**Question 8 b)**

If it is the case, then can you please tell me how much revenue was lost in the last year the data was compiled?

**Answer**

As indicated above, although there are weather-related cancellations there are also contingency bookings and budgets are set taking into account these booking trends. The automated booking system does not currently retain the level of detail that would be needed to answer your question in relation to outdoor area booking cancellations.

## Question 9

Can you tell me please how much of the ESC budget is spent on sport annually and also provide me with a breakdown of where the money is spent?

### Answer

Beau Sejour receives an annual grant of a maximum of £700,000 per annum from the Channel Islands Lottery (Guernsey) Fund Appropriation Account as well as £72,000 of general revenue funding. Beau Sejour caters for a wide range of activities in addition to sport (cinema, theatre, events etc.) and therefore it is difficult to apportion the cost of running Beau Sejour between the different sports and leisure activities.

Outdoor Areas which include Delancey Park, Footes Lane and Beau Sejour Park receive a budget of £197,000 per annum.

There is a general grant to the Guernsey Sports Commission of £268,000 per annum and, although perhaps not thought of as 'sport' in the context of your questions, you might like to note that there is an additional grant to the Guernsey Sports Commission in relation to PE in Schools of £212,000 per annum, one of the aims of which is to foster a life-long connection with sport and fitness activity more generally.