

New Community Café in Victoria Park, Newbury

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL TO RAISE A LOAN

Victoria Park is regarded as “The Jewel in the crown of Newbury Town Council.” The provision of a new community café in the Park has been the number one priority of this Council for the past 10 years. The Council expects to be granted planning permission for this proposal in early July. The full details and drawings submitted with the planning application, Ref. No 20/02294, are available [here](#).



Since it was established in 1997, Newbury Town Council has continually improved and expanded the leisure and recreation facilities available to the community in Victoria Park. This includes the skate Park, the splash Park, the outdoor gym, the children’s playground and the much-improved tennis courts and floodlighting for the courts. The Bowls Club in Victoria Park and its surrounds have also been enhanced. In recent years, the Park has been awarded Green Flag status, recognising the high quality of the park and its facilities.

In the Interim, the Parkway Development & other residential developments have been built around the Park, making this the central open space for these residents.

The Park is also an important part of the Council’s active travel routes, especially for cyclists and pedestrians going from east of the A339 to the town centre.

The community café has been designed to meet the highest environmental standards, to target BREEAM excellent and minimise carbon emissions. The Council believes that the community deserves a café facility at the heart of the Park to complement the wide range of leisure and recreation facilities which it provides. The current kiosk and the adjoining boatshed are outdated and out of character with the surrounds of the Park.

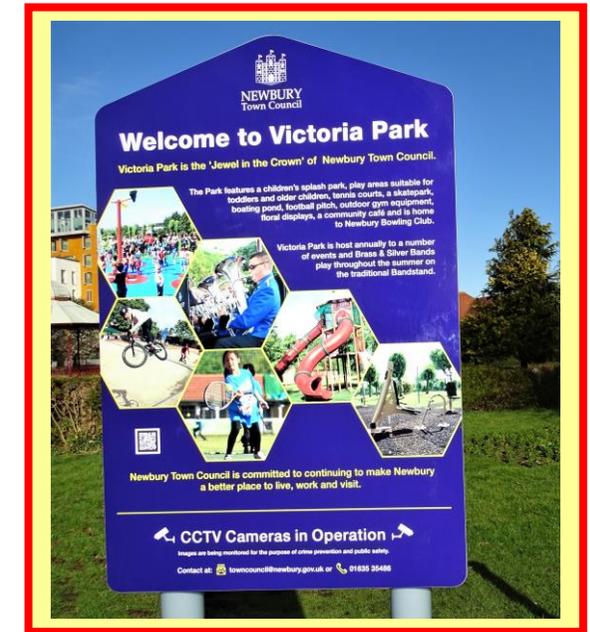
The community café is intended to operate all the year round making it a community hub and focal point in the Park. The plans include a Toilet block with disabled access, Male, Female, and baby change facilities as well as a small storage space for the Tennis facility in Victoria Park along with a separate bin & chair store for the Bandstand chairs.

The footprint has been kept to the current kiosk and former Air raid shelter to minimise the loss of green space in the Park. New planting will hide as much of the raised build area which forms the Disabled access ramp and void required by the Environment Agency for the flood alleviation works. It will also house the infrastructure for the Council's CCTV coverage of Victoria Park, new enhanced lighting around the café, thereby enhancing public safety in the Park and deterring anti-social or criminal behaviour.

The Council has received a lot of interest from operators wishing to run the new café and when deciding on the successful operator the Council will have regard to the inclusivity of the proposals and the arrangements to encourage community involvement.

The proposed community café is estimated to cost from £400,000 to £450,000, of which £150,000 will be provided from the Council's reserves and accumulated Community Infrastructure Levies. The balance of the funding will be provided through a loan from the Public Works Loan Board. Part of the loan application process requires the Council to consult the public on the proposal and to advise on the outcomes of that consultation.

The Council aims to achieve a rental income which would be sufficient to cover loan charges and the ongoing maintenance costs of the new building. Any shortfall in these amounts would be met from projected Community Infrastructure Levies, so that this facility should have no impact on the town's Council taxpayers or the precept.



Consultation Options:

The public are invited to choose between two options: Option A, that the Council should borrow up to £300,000 towards the costs of building a new community café in Victoria Park, or, Option B, that the Council does not construct this café but instead uses its reserves and the accumulated Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL) for other services which the Town Council provides.

For Option A, the Council can borrow at very competitive rates and at current rates the loan charges on £300,000 would be up to £15,240 per annum over 25 years. The Council will add its own reserves and accumulated CIL towards the construction costs, so that the costs of the new café will not result in any increase on Council taxpayers in Newbury.

For Option B, a full list of Town Council services can be found on our [services page](#).