

**The Chairman and Members of
North West Area Committee.**

Meeting: 18th January 2022

Item No: 6

Poppintree Sport and Community Facility

The Poppintree Sport and Community Facility located on Balbutcher Lane, Ballymun, Dublin 11, offers a number of facilities to the community of Ballymun and the surrounding areas. The facilities include a sports hall, studios, youth facilities, crèche, boxing club, catering kitchen and astro pitch.

The Facility has at times been subjected to criminal activity, antisocial behaviour and intimidation that is affecting the staff and the members of the public. This activity has escalated in recent times and includes –

- The roof being accessed and damaged resulting in leaks.
- Regular dumping occurs, following which fires are set at different locations around the building resulting in extensive damage.
- Youths are forcing entry into the facility through windows, and fire exit doors, throwing stones and other items at the participants of activities. Participants of activities have stated that they don't feel safe and will not be returning to the facility.
- There is a recurring issue concerning one member of the public who attends the facility and is continuously abusive and aggressive to staff.

It is essential that the health and safety of staff, the anchor tenants and the members of the community using the facility are safeguarded at all times and to ensure this we intend implementing a number of actions in 2022 as follows -

1. It is intended to temporarily reduce the opening hours to the centre by opening later in the day on Tuesday and Thursday and closing earlier on Monday, Wednesday and Friday as follows;

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9am - 5pm	1pm - 9pm	9am - 5pm	1pm - 9pm	9am - 5pm	10am-4pm	closed

The reduced opening will allow us to consolidate all staff onto one shift so they can support each other during operational hours and respond to incidents in a safe manner. The new timetable will enable the facility to cater for both morning and evening activities. This will have no impact on well-established anchor tenants such as the Aisling Project, the Poppintree Early Educational Facility the Ballymun, St Pappins Boxing Club and the Poppintree Youth Centre who have their own access to the building.

2. We intend completing a full health and safety and security audit to identify H&S and security risks to staff and users of Poppintree in early 2022. This assessment will identify and quantify the risks and put forward recommendations as to how to eliminate or minimise the risks. The actions will likely include security improvements, building design, management, communication etc. The implementation of these actions will be prioritised.
3. Establish a working group made up of relevant stakeholders to discuss and agree actions and strategies to be implemented in order to ensure ongoing use of the centre in a safe and appropriate manner.
4. To organise open days and events in the coming months to highlight the facilities and activities and encourage greater community use/participation.
5. To work with the Elected Representative, community groups and representatives, the area office etc to address the issues occurring in a collaborative way.
6. To request additional support from An Garda Síochána to deal with the current situation and feed into recommended changes in the future.
7. Review the current use of the facility and examine which services could be expanded and others reduced to increase community use of the facility.

It is important to recognise that the resolution of the issues highlighted will require a comprehensive and rounded approach, not only in terms of security, but also attendance, appropriate activities, better communication, engagement etc. We have been in discussion with the Area Manager and we held a special meeting with local Councillors on the 6th of January last, to discuss in more detail the issues and agree a way forward as outlined above. An update on progress will issue to the February North West Area Committee.

Donncha Ó Dúlaing,
Senior Executive Officer