Fields in Trust, the operational name for the National Playing Fields Association, is a Scottish registered charity and is primarily concerned with the safeguarding and encouraging greater use of outdoor spaces for sport, recreation and play.

Few, if any, sports professionals start their sporting pathway on a formal sports facility. Parks, playing fields, outdoor recreational spaces and play spaces have a crucial role in facilitating outdoor activity and developing physical literacy which is a forerunner to sporting activity.

Fields in Trust has made a significant contribution to Commonwealth legacy across Scotland through partnerships with local authorities and others across to safeguard more than 150 outdoor green spaces covering the equivalent area of 2,500 football pitches. A case study outlining our partnership with Glasgow City Council as part of Commonwealth Games legacy programme is attached.

Fields in Trust is concerned that:

- Far too many green spaces are being developed in contravention of local developments plans and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)
- There is been no authoritative study on the extent of developments on green spaces in Scotland in recent times.
- Sportscotland no longer produces an annual report on the loss of playing fields in Scotland.
- That more than 1,000 schools in Scotland do not have access to outdoor playing fields.
- That too many new schools in Scotland are being development in contravention of the School Premises Regulations (that govern outdoor space at schools).
- That many grass roots playing fields are in poor condition as a consequence of pressure on local authority budgets.
- That is far too easy for local authorities in Scotland to grant planning approval on green spaces in contravention of both their own local authority’s development plan and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).
There is a wealth of evidence that individuals who have easy access to and are regular users of green spaces lead healthier and longer lives see link:

https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?q=green+space+poverty+scotland&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholart&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj0mN6VvsnRAhWErxoKHxugDOAQgQMIGDAA

The corollary being, that those who are irregular user of green space or suffer green space poverty (poor access to green spaces) live less healthy and shorter lives. The Scottish Household Survey (2014):

- Reports that more than 30% of households do not have easy access (within 5 minute walk) to a useable green space.
- Reports that adults in deprived areas and areas that are perceived to be poor have greater distances to travel to their nearest green space.
- Reports that adults who said their health was very good or good are more likely to live with 5 minutes of their nearest green space.

**Fields in Trust recommends the Health and Sports Committee use their influence to ensure a study on the loss of green spaces is commissioned recognising that a study of that nature is long overdue.**

Fields in Trust believes that the cessation of the annual report on ‘Loss of Playing fields in Scotland’ published by Sportscotland is a retrograde step.

**Fields in Trust recommends that the Heath and Sports Committee use their influence to ensure Sportscotland publishes an annual report of the loss of playing fields in Scotland.**

Fields in Trust is deeply concerned that a programme recently broadcast by BBC and fronted by John Beattie where it was reported that as many as 1,000 schools in Scotland do not have access to outdoor playing fields. **Fields and Trust recommends that the Health and Sports Committee use their influence to ensure that a study is commissioned to establish the extent of the aforementioned problem.**

Following dialogue with Scottish Government officials Fields in Trust has been made aware that no one in the Scottish Government has responsibility for monitoring the School Premises Regulations (the regulations that govern the amount of outdoor space that should be provided at schools in Scotland) and as a consequence new schools are being developed that do not meet the regulations.
Fields in trust recommends that the Health and Sports Committee use their influence to ensure a much more rigorous application of the regulations is enforced and that the government should only allow waivers to the regulations as a last resort. FIT believes that the Scottish Government should monitor and a report on breaches of the aforementioned regulations should be published on an annual basis.

Fields in Trust is concerned about the deteriorating maintenance of playing fields and green spaces as a consequence of budgetary pressures on local authorities. Fields in Trust is concerned that ten years have elapsed since that last time Sportscotland commissioned a national audit of Scotland’s sports facilities.

Fields in Trust recommends that the Heath and Sports Committee use their influence to ensure a national audit of Scotland’s grass roots sporting facilities is commissioned at an early date.

9 February 2017