

FACILITIES MANAGERS REPORT – 21st November 2017 - FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

5. **FACILITIES MANAGERS UPDATE** – items from the Facilities Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2017 for info.

Fire Alarm

At the time of writing this report the installation of the new category L2 fire alarm in the Public Hall was nearing completion and should be fully operational by the time of the November 21st committee meeting.

Fire Doors

Further advice from our Fire Risk assessor and the Aviva Insurance surveyor has been obtained regarding the Public Hall Fire Doors and the requirement to prioritise their improvement and/or replacement. Please see the item below on the Public Hall refurbishment plans for more information.

Regalia & Silverware

As previously resolved the arrangements for storage of the Town Council regalia and silverware are now complete and approved by our insurers. A procedure document is being drawn up to control access and will be in place shortly.

Aviva Insurance Risk Surveyor

The Aviva Insurance risk surveyor has been on a routine visit to discuss and inspect the various aspects relating to the insured risks associated with the Public Hall Complex. This covers our Health & Safety policies and procedures, maintenance of equipment such as lifts, fire alarms etc. and general 'best practice' guidance for the operation of the Public Hall.

Please see attached Aviva report arising from this visit. The items mentioned are either mandatory, where it is considered immediate action is required, or 'best practice' where a higher level of provision is recommended due to the risks associated with our facilities, these are given longer timescales in which to adopt.

I can confirm that the Mandatory items either have or will be dealt with by the due date and the Best Practice items are either being adopted or considered where they impact on the future plans for the complex, for example the requirements for Fixed Wire Testing. This is referred to in the following item on the Public Hall refurbishment plans.

Public Toilets

Two new, more efficient, hand wash units have now been installed in the Ladies and Gents public toilets in Westbourne Car Park. The old units from Westbourne Toilets have been re-sited at Sungirt Toilets to replace the now redundant units in that block.

Vandalism at the Public Toilets has been minimal this summer, however there continues to be lower level of misuse and abuse causing extra cleaning and blocked drains.

Parks

This summer has been mainly quite regarding issues in Thorn Park and Rapson's Field. There has been an outbreak of graffiti 'tagging' in the skate park as well as other areas of the town including Westbourne toilets. In addition a small number of minor fires have been set in both parks, most recently involving minor damage to a piece of play equipment in Thorn Park on October 27th. Also in Thorn Park part of a picnic bench was removed but has now been recovered and re-fitted.

Anecdotally Thorn Park is largely quiet but it is said that youngsters from the Liskerrett Youth Club are known to congregate and drink in the park.

Autumn Planting

The autumn planting of the Parade flowerbeds and Plymouth Road roundabout is now complete. As some of the perennial planting continues to mature the space for winter bedding is reduced slightly and this year we have planted a number of spring flowering bulbs to enhance the early spring displays.

Allotments

We are currently working on the requests from two plot holders to split their plots into more manageable sizes and this, together with one currently vacant plot, and the assistance of the allotments Association in utilising an area of their communal plot will assist us in satisfying the current waiting list of four applicants.

An informal meeting was held with Derek Turner, Allotments association Chair and Tess Andrew, Allotments association secretary, to discuss various aspects of the Pengover allotments. The meeting was very productive and it was felt that this type of meeting could prove more useful than the more formal bi-annual meetings held as part of the Facilities Committee meetings.

The first of the 'shared' plots (K1) has now been agreed and the new plotholder has been registered.

A meeting with the next person(s) on the waiting list has been arranged for 15th November with a view to offering them plot on H1.

Plot A2(b) is still struggling to manage some issues on their plot, in particular the removal or reinstatement of the greenhouse frame and tidying of item stored behind the shed, and has been given one month's written notice of improvement, failure to comply by December 1st 2017 will result in termination of their agreement.

Ellis Whittam Health & Safety general risk assessment

Asbestos management surveys for the Public Hall, Foresters Hall, Guildhall and Dean Street ladies toilets have now been completed and together with the existing surveys of the public toilets at Westbourne and Sungirt now give us up to date coverage for all Town Council properties.

Health & Safety surveys and management plans for all trees on Town Council land, Thorn Park, Rapson's Field and Eastern Avenue, have now been completed. The report concludes that all the trees on all three sites are generally in good condition but notes that Ash dieback is present and will require monitoring. The report also makes some tree management recommendations over the medium to longer term and these are currently being assessed.

Guildhall main hall ceiling

Following on from a section of plasterwork falling from the main Guildhall ceiling a Structural engineers report has found that the ceiling is generally in sound condition and the section which fell was from a previous sub-standard repair.

Facilities Operating Partnership Trial

The first trial of a facilities operating partnership between the Town Council and the Liskerrett Centre took place on 14th October 2017 and was very successful, attracting over 200 people. Under the terms of the trial the usual upfront fee for the hire of the Public Hall was waived in lieu of a 50/50 profit share with the event organisers, the Liskerrett Centre. With ticket prices held low and a capacity of circa 200, break-even is hard to achieve. However lessons have been learned from the trial and ways to add value and increase margins are being looked at for the next event.

The NET profit from the evening meant that the Town Council's 50% share gave a small additional profit over and above the conventional method of an up-front booking charge.

Land at Eastern Avenue

Phillip Goacher Associates have been instructed to undertake a topographical survey of the land at Eastern Avenue and to prepare a feasibility design of a footpath link between Eastern Avenue and Springfield Road, which, once approved will allow us to proceed with the project and then tender for its construction

8. Westbourne Gardens

James Lockyer Associates have been instructed to prepare a preliminary design for the proposed new vehicle (service) entrance to Westbourne Gardens to facilitate easier access when setting up events within the gardens. The preliminary design is attached for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee **ADOPTS** the preliminary design for the proposed new vehicular entrance to Westbourne Gardens **AND RESOLVES** to obtain a suitably qualified quantity surveyors costing for the completion of the project.

9. Town Council grass cutting tender

The closing date for completed tenders for the Grass cutting and Hedge trimming tender was Friday 3rd November 2017.

THREE completed Tender forms were received.

On Friday 10th November 2017 Councillor Goldsworthy, Facilities Chair and Councillor Ambler, Vice Chair, together with myself, met to inspect and evaluate the submissions from the three contractors. An ammonised comparison chart of the various prices tendered, together with individual evaluation forms are provided in the supporting documents.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee **APPROVES** the Grass Cutting and Hedge Trimming Tender for 2018, 19 & 20 as submitted by **Contractor 'C'**

10. Public Hall Refurbishment Project

The need for improvements to access and catering facilities in the Public Hall have previously been identified in order to improve future usage and therefore the income from the Public Hall Complex. In the summer of 2015 an initial design was prepared, the key features of which were, removal of the dividing wall in the Refreshment Room to improve floor space, provision of a semi-commercial kitchen to facilitate bookings for weddings and banquets etc. in the Main Hall, and provision of a platform lift to the first floor(s) to provide access for those with mobility difficulties.

The project was then progressed and grant funding was sought and applied for by Yvette Hayward, Support Services Manager. Please see supplementary report from Yvette regarding the outcome of the grant application(s) and an associated user survey.

Due to the issues around potential grant funding the project then stalled. However it is still considered that access to the first floor, Public Hall and Council Chamber are simply not acceptable and the provision of a platform lift to those areas should still be progressed as a matter of urgency. This is further reinforced by the findings of survey carried out on hirers of the Public Hall where access issues were repeatedly mentioned.

Referring back to the earlier report items on Fire Doors and the Aviva surveyors recommendations these, together with a number of other issues, are all interdependent on each other and are impacted on by any decision to delay the refurbishment plans.

For example, the main areas of risk regarding fire doors are on the central staircase, with the doors and screens leading off. If a new platform lift is installed this will negate some work on improving the large glass screen and doors in the Refreshment Room. Similarly on the door(s) into the ground floor kitchen.

Also with the fixed wire testing, there are issues around two very old distribution boards, which will require replacing. If the new lift is installed much of this work would be wasted as these boards may no longer be required.

Improvements to the accessibility to the Public Hall are vital and any delay in progressing the provision of the new lift and other items not only leaves us liable to criticism under the terms of the Equality Act but also could ultimately cost more money in making unnecessary changes now only to find they are not needed should the lift then eventually be installed.

In addition, the Rolley Report recommended that the Public Hall booking office should be sited within the Public Hall foyer, a more logical location than now, and freeing up time and space in the Town Council Office. These plans would address this issue.

A provisional figure of £130K was budgeted for the refurbishment plans and £52.5k has already been allocated from reserves and dilapidations. The remaining £77.5k was expected to come from grant(s). As the grant funding is not forthcoming it is proposed that £15.5k is taken from the 2017/18 dilapidations budget, plus £15k from the 2018/19 dilapidations budget along with a further £15k from the 2018/19 Public Hall refurbishment line making a total of £45.5k towards the £77.5k

The remaining £32k would then need to come from general reserves.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee **RESOLVES** to **RECCOMEND** to **COUNCIL** the progression of the Public Hall Refurbishment project, as outlined above, using funds from General Reserves at £32k, Nominated Reserves at £15k and Dilapidations at £30.5k.

11. Objective setting

At the Full Council meeting on 31st October 2017 it was resolved that each service committee draw up a list of three or four SMART objectives for activities and functions that will be implemented in the period up to 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee **APPROVES** the three SMART objectives of the Facilities Committee to be: a) The Public Hall Refurbishment project. b) Provision of a new vehicular access to Westbourne Gardens c) Provision of an accessible footpath linking Eastern Avenue to Springfield Road together with any other items the committee may agree.