

Memorial Bench at Coltsfoot Green

In February 2020 a recently bereaved family approached the parish council to ask if they could place a memorial bench on Coltsfoot Green. The matter was considered by the Estates Committee at its March meeting (**Min. 20.03.08 refers**) where it:

- agreed that in principle it had no objections to memorial furniture on Parish Land; and
- asked the Clerk to report back with a range of options for consideration at a future meeting; and contact the family who requested the memorial to explain the decision and likely time-scales for decision making/agreements.

A policy for memorial seating in the parish was subsequently recommended by the Estates Committee (**Min. EC.20.10.11 refers**) and adopted by the parish council at its November Meeting (Min. 20.11.18 refers) and a specification for Memorial Seating was approved by the Estates Committee at its December meeting (**Min. EC.20.12.10 refers**) and subsequently published to the parish council website.

Oral advice to the bereaved family about progress of the policy and asking them to contact the clerk had also been provided.

In early March the clerk received complaints that a small bench had been installed at Coltsfoot Green (by the bereaved family) which was not consistent with the memorial seating policy. The clerk has subsequently written twice to the bereaved family advising that:

- the bench doesn't meet the specification under the memorial bench policy
- nor has it been installed on a base which meets the council's requirements from a health and safety perspective and that
- the parish can't accept this particular bench as a gift to the parish, and there is no other mechanism for such a bench to be installed on a parish green.

No response has been received.

At its June meeting (Min EC.21.06.05), the meeting asked the clerk to look at options for a replacement of the bench (there being concerns that possible further deterioration of the bench through weathering might present a longer term safety issue) which might be funded by the parish council and offer the family the opportunity to add a plaque.

FSC Approved wooden benches are available at a cost in the region of £100 - £200 and a concrete slab base has been quoted at £

There is a budget for Greens (after the grounds contracts costs) of £930.00, and £450.00 in Earmarked reserves under the Grounds Maintenance line. The parish council has power to maintain open spaces under Public Health Act 1875 s.164 and Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10.

Recommendation:

The parish council agree to fund a sustainable memorial bench and base to be sited on Coltsfoot Green between the two Cherry Trees at a cost of not more than £450.00 plus VAT in place of the existing bench (to be returned to the bereaved family) and invite the bereaved family to arrange for a memorial plaque consistent with the current published memorial policy.

Work to Culvert at Coltsfoot Green

In spring 2020 former Cllr Townsend drew the clerk's attention to the need for remedial work to the banks of the culvert on Coltsfoot Green, there being a concern that the banks were at imminent risk of collapse, which would be likely to block drainage from the green.

Having sought advice, the Environment Agency confirmed in the summer that it was the responsibility of the landowner (the parish council) to maintain the culvert. Quotes were sought from drainage companies, there being a substantial delay in responses due to the pandemic situation.

The clerk received an initial quotation for work to the banks of the culvert from D R King & Sons in March 2021 (Min. EC.21.03.11 refers), and the meeting asked the clerk to continue to seek comparative quotes.

At its meeting in June (Min. EC.21.06.8.2.1) the clerk had (incorrectly) a proposal for minor remedial work to the right side of the Culvert (from the bridge). The proposal at 8.2.1 above was withdrawn and the meeting asked the clerk to investigate alternative options to supporting the bank on the culvert at Coltsfoot Green.

The proposal had been based on an invoice from D R King and Sons (No.1137). This work had not been approved at any previous Estates Committee, and no purchase order for the work had been issued to the supplier. Mr King has subsequently advised that this work had in fact been completed in the spring of 2020 (a slab has been laid there, the clerk having an image of it from March 2021) on the basis of an on-site conversation (though not with the clerk). He reported that he had previously undertaken work which had been identified where he considered that there was a degree of urgency to the work. He reported a delay in submitting the invoice.

The clerk has advised Mr King that the invoice can not be paid without authority from the parish council (and that work should not be undertaken without a purchase order).

Recommendation

That invoice 1137 in the sum of £105 plus VAT be authorised for payment on this occasion.