

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
18 JANUARY 2022**

BI/2122

12th JANUARY 2022

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 10 – OUTDOOR AND PROPERTIES MANAGER REPORT

AIM

1. To provide a general overview of estate management matters and consider budgetary recommendations where appropriate.

BACKGROUND

2. This report is a general overview of the ongoing outdoors and property maintenance issues.

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

Some new, but mainly ongoing projects and tasks are listed below.

3. **Castle Grounds Ruin.** Following a consultation meeting with the Technical Conservation Officer from Shropshire Council Cory Lane on 1 November 2021 and a subsequent meeting with the Principal Inspector Bill Klemperer and Structural Engineer Alex Evans both from Historic England on 9 November 2021 to discuss the structural integrity of the monument. It was agreed by both parties that there was no immediate need for action however all concerned agreed that a closer inspection and survey of the ruin especially towards the top where some crumbling was evident, and the removal of the vegetation growth would help reduce the natural deterioration of the mortar between the stone brickwork. The main advice given was that this survey should form part of the overall quinquennial property inspection to be conducted in early 2022 and that an aerial survey of some sort should be included. That way the Council would be presented with a full structural report and be able to consider how any repairs might be funded. Bill Klemperer was quite clear that there would be very little if any funding from Historic England as current funding has been diverted to support sites already suffering as a result of the Covid -19 pandemic over the last 2-years.
4. **Stoneway Steps.** All work was completed on the retaining well on Stoneway Steps (opposite the Theatre on the steps) by the end of November 2021.

5. **Castle Hall Repairs and General Decoration.** A recent inspection of documented asbestos materials in the stage area has highlighted that facility users are continuing lean tables and other items against the asbestos cladding contrary to advice given. Although the cladding was sealed previously and harmless if undisturbed continued interference may result in damage to the cladding which in turn has the potential to release dangerous asbestos particles into the atmosphere. To completely remove all the asbestos cladding would require specialist contractor involvement at considerable expense and the complete closure of the Hall for the duration of the work. A more cost-effective measure would be to encapsulate all of the exposed areas of asbestos with ply-board so that the asbestos is safely sealed inside. Approximate materials cost of over boarding and painting is circa £250 including VAT. Minor surface repairs to the interior walls and general decoration continues in the remainder of the building with costs for paint and materials to be circa £300.
6. **Lodge Lane (the Grove) Woodland Trail and Play Equipment.** The play park is now open to the public and we continue to receive positive feedback.
7. **Cemetery Canteen and Entrance to the Lodge.** The new retaining wall has now been built and the slabbed area will be relayed when the weather improves.
8. **Town Hall Roof Timber Pest Infestation.** Following the consultation meeting at the castle ruin I then invited Cory Lane to inspect the wood worm problem in the Town Hall roof. We should all be relieved to hear that the extent of the infestation witnessed was in his opinion quite normal in a building of this age and style and there was no immediate cause for concern. His advice was to continue to monitor the situation and include the roof structure in any future quinquennial inspection report.
9. **Town Hall Interior and Exterior Decoration.** Several years have lapsed since the interior and exterior was last decorated. It is more obvious on the outside that a coat of paint is long overdue and there is evidence that some of the exterior rendering will require some fairly urgent attention. The full extent of the work required will likely become more apparent in the next quinquennial survey report. However, any work to the exterior of the building will require scaffold and contractors with specialist knowledge and previous experience of working on Grade 2* listed properties. A full report will be presented to Council post quinquennial.
10. **Street Lighting Maintenance Contract –** We have just begun the tendering process for our streetlighting maintenance contract.
11. **5 Yearly (Quinquennial) Building Surveys –** We are currently awaiting responses to the tender for the quinquennial building surveys and these will be presented to Council for consideration in the near future.
12. **Christmas Lighting Contract – –** We are currently awaiting responses to the tender for the Christmas Lighting Contract and these will be presented to Events & Christmas Committee for consideration in the near future.

13. **Ride on Mowers** – Our 3 ride on mowers are currently in for service ahead of the grass cutting season. The oldest machine is in a little better condition than we had envisaged and while we have budgeted for a new mower, it is our opinion that some slightly more expensive repairs than we would normally expect are necessary it is a better value option at this stage (despite the fact that it will overshoot slightly the repairs budget) than dipping into the funds set aside for a new mower.

14. SUMMARY.

15. There is much work being undertaken across the wide sphere of property and ground maintenance tasks.

16. The Council is asked to consider the quotation

FINANCIALS

17. Castle Ground Ruins – There are insufficient funds in the grounds budget for any significant works here and dependent upon the outcome of the next quinquennial report, it is likely that tenders will be invited.

18. Castle Hall Repairs and General Decoration – Asbestos incapsulation and general decoration referred are affordable in current year budget and included with the projected spend.

19. Town Hall Interior/ Exterior Decoration. – There are insufficient funds in the grounds budget for any significant works here and dependent upon the outcome of the next quinquennial report and as such there might be a need to dip into the general or earmarked reserves to undertake significant works.

20. RECOMMENDATIONS

21. It is recommended that the Town Council notes the report and the activity being undertaken.

Barry Ince
Outdoors & Properties Manager