

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
01 FEBRUARY 2022**

BI/2122

1ST FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 6 i) – 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

3. **Castle Grounds Ruin.** Since my last report in January 2022, we have received a Structural Engineering Report from Alex Evans a member of the Structural Engineering Team at Historic England dated January 2022. The conclusion of that report states that in essence, the overall keep structure is considered to be stable, but established vegetation is causing problems in some areas. A recommendation of the report was that a conditioning survey should be undertaken by an experienced architect and remedial works proposed. I have recommended that this initial survey should be included in the forthcoming quinquennial inspection. Copies of the Historic England structural report are available at the Council offices.
4. **Stoneway Steps.** The majority of the handrail for much of the steps is in very poor condition or completely missing. This fact has been forwarded to Shropshire Council for their consideration and action.
5. **Castle Hall Repairs and General Decoration.** General decoration, minor repairs, and work to encapsulate all of the exposed areas of asbestos fibre board continue. Most of this work will be carried out by the maintenance team during periods of inclement weather.

6. **Cemetery Canteen and Entrance to the Lodge.** The new retaining wall has now been built and the slabbed area will be relayed by the maintenance team as the weather improves.
7. **Town Hall Roof Timber Pest Infestation.** Awaiting a report from the next quinquennial inspection report.
8. **Town Hall Interior and Exterior Decoration.** A full report will be presented to Council post quinquennial.
9. **Street Lighting Maintenance Contract.** Tender invites have now been sent out for the streetlighting maintenance contract with a closing date of Friday 4 March 2022.
10. **5 Yearly (Quinquennial) Building Surveys.** The tender closing date is Friday 21 January following which there will be confidential opening and recording of documents will take place and be presented to Council for their consideration.
11. **Christmas Lighting Contract.** We are still awaiting responses to the tender for the Christmas Lighting Contract, and these will be presented to the Events & Christmas Committee for consideration in the near future.
12. **Commemorative Oaks Information Board.** The presentation board inside the Castle Grounds has now deteriorated beyond economical repair and Council are requested to consider commissioning a replacement notice board. A conservative estimate would be in the region of £300.
13. **Tree Works.** A recent inspection of Council owned trees has identified a hung-up branch in the large Ginko tree on the Quayside that needs to be removed as a matter of urgency and also a number of branches of a tree on Well Meadow that are overhanging a building on Sabrina Drive that require pruning. There are sufficient funds in the tree works fund to carry out this work now and should be addressed as soon as possible.
14. **Community Garden Group.** The Town Council has been approached by a Community Gardening Group wishing to adopt a parcel of land behind Foundry Court to maintain as a community garden. This matter will form a separate agenda item for discussion.
15. **Bridgnorth Juniors Football Club.** The Bridgnorth Juniors Football Club has approached the Town Council with a view to discussing the reconfiguration of the football pitches in their current form. This matter will also form a separate agenda item for discussion.

16. **Potholes.** This element of the report is specifically relating to potholes and the poor condition of some of our roads, pathways, and car park in general. I will cover each of the main areas under separate headings below and present what I consider needs to be done and how we might achieve this in the most cost-effective way. Something to bear in mind is that the going rate for tarmac repairs by a reputable contractor is £5,500, per 100m². A separate report is being produced by the Town Clerk to engage a more detailed discussion with Council and in turn make decisions and it is envisaged that this will appear on the next Town Council agenda on 15th February.

- a. **Severn Park Car Park.** The car park has a compacted stone surface that is prone to flooding and the high-water table means that the sub structure is disturbed and unbalanced every time there is a significant rainfall. It is quite often the case that the car park will be under water long before the river bursts its banks causing puddling and eventually creating potholes which progressively worsen the more that it is driven on. One repair option would be to tarmac the whole area which would allow us to properly mark out parking bays and potentially increase the volume of users. However, as the main problem is the rising water then the softer areas below the tarmac will still be prone to sinking as the ground water tries to find a way to the surface and the tarmac will follow the contour of the ground below forming small hollows and eventually potholes. Please also bear in mind that the going rate for tarmac surfacing at approximately £55 per 1m² and the stone car park is approximately 3,000m². Even with a heavy discount for the size of the project there would be little change from £100K. Alternatively, Council might consider interlocking heavy duty gravel grid made from recycled plastics at a cost of approximately £33,750 for the grid and a further £500 for 5 tonne of pea gravel. The benefit of choosing the grid option is that it is the least likely to be affected by the rising water table as it is the most permeable option and even if small areas of the soil below the grid were to sink it is unlikely that the interlocking grid would be affected and any hollows that might form below the grid can be backfilled with more pea gravel. Not sure how it would stand up to the anti-social behaviour of dough-nutting that we are periodically plagued with currently. The last and by far the cheapest option is to continue to have the car park stone regraded and roller compacted every 2-3 years at a cost of approximately £1,500 to £2,000 a time.

- b. **Bandon Lane.** 5-years ago I invited quotes to level and regulate the existing lane surface with type one hard-core stone (85m x 3m). To supply and fix 6" edging kerbs to each side set in concrete. To supply and fit two new road gully's and two new gully gratings and pipe to existing drainage and to surface the road with 60mm of dense binder course and 40mm of SMA surface course. The best price quoted back then was £12,169.00. I would estimate today that it would be circa £15 to 20K. Alternatively, the Council may consider continuing with regrading and compact rolling every 2 to 3-years at a cost of approximately £500 - £1,000.

- c. **The Cemetery.** Resurfacing the whole road in the cemetery is likely to cost a similar amount to Severn Park, However, concentrating on repairing the worst of the potholes and replacing broken kerb edging is likely to cost in the region of £2,500.
- d. **Castle Grounds.** Much of the surface tarmac in Castle grounds is sound. However, there are several areas measuring up to 3m² that will need repairing. Some are worse than others and will require a base course of MOT, a new binder course and 6mm surface course for pathways. There is approximately 22m² of the worst area to repair at a cost of approximately £1,210.
- e. **Access Road to Crown Meadow.** The majority of the tarmac is in fairly good state of repair but there are some potholes at the entrance of the road that need repairing. The outside edges of the road would benefit from some additional MOT infill. To replace the total length of the road is likely to cost £13,300 or to cut out and repair the damaged area at the entrance £2,200.

17. **Cemetery Usage.** Attached to this report is a summary of interments over the past 2 years. The works undertaken last year and the year before to re-landscape to the top part of the cemetery has (we estimate) given us 5-10 years capacity. In addition, we are looking to infill some other areas which should further increase capacity. It is our intention to use the small infill areas in the first instance. This will allow more time for the re-landscaped area to settle and compact in order that there is minimal risk of land slippage when we come to dig individual graves.

18. **Severn Park Concessions** – We have advertised the availability (including on our website) of a number of concessions available on Severn Park from 1 April 2022. In recent years the concessions have been an ice cream van and a hot refreshments van/trailer. We invite sealed bids and subject to suitability we provide a licence to trade to the highest bidder.

19. **Caring For Gods Acre (CGFA)** – Caring for God's Acre works nationally to support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy churchyards and burial grounds. CGFA have provided similar volunteer support over the course of a number of years. At the time of writing this report we have arranged for volunteers co-ordinated through CGFA to carry out some winter jobs such as sapling/ ivy removal and create some habitat piles on Thursday 27th January. The CGFA co-ordinator will also spend some time with our grounds supervisor to talk to us about our conservation wildflower meadow areas and management plans.

20. SUMMARY.

21. There continues to be much ongoing work across the wide sphere of property and ground maintenance tasks.
22. A number of the items that require decisions from the Council are the subject of separate agenda items at the 1 February 2022 Council meeting.

FINANCIALS

23. Castle Grounds Commemorative Oak Tree Information Board– There are insufficient funds in the grounds maintenance budget (250/4204) for the current financial year. We will look to obtain a number of quotes and programme the works (subject to cost) in the early part of the next financial year.
24. Castle Hall Repairs and General Decoration – Asbestos encapsulation and general decoration referred are affordable in current year budget and included with the projected spend.
25. 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.

26. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Barry Ince
Outdoors & Properties Manager

Enclosure:

1. Summary of cemetery usage 2020 and 2021.

Cemetery Statistics

Provided for indicative purposes to show rates of use.

January 2021- December 2021					
<u>MONTH</u>	<u>BURIAL- NEW</u>	<u>BURIAL - RE-OPEN</u>	<u>CREM-NEW</u>	<u>CREM-REOPEN</u>	<u>MEMORIAL PERMITS ISSUED</u>
JANUARY 2021	1	1	0	0	6
FEBRUARY 2021	3	1	1	0	3
MARCH 2021	1	0	0	1	7
APRIL 2021	3	3	3	1	3
MAY 2021	1	0	2	2	2
JUNE 2021	0	2	3	2	5
JULY 2021	3	1	3	2	6
AUGUST 2021	1	2	0	0	1
SEPTEMBER 2021	3	2	1	2	0
OCTOBER 2021	2	0	0	3	7
NOVEMBER 2021	0	2	0	0	2
DECEMBER 2021	2	3	0	1	1
TOTAL:	20	17	13	14	43

Total interments: 64

January 2020-December 2020					
<u>MONTH</u>	<u>BURIAL- NEW</u>	<u>BURIAL - RE-OPEN</u>	<u>CREM-NEW</u>	<u>CREM-REOPEN</u>	<u>MEMORIAL PERMITS ISSUED</u>
JANUARY 2020	3	1	0	0	1
FEBRUARY 2020	1	2	0	0	2
MARCH 2020	1	2	1	0	2
APRIL 2020	2	2	0	0	1
MAY 2020	1	3	0	0	2
JUNE 2020	3	3	0	2	2
JULY 2020	1	3	0	1	5
AUGUST 2020	0	0	1	1	1
SEPTEMBER 2020	3	2	1	1	5
OCTOBER 2020	0	1	0	0	3
NOVEMBER 2020	1	1	0	0	8
DECEMBER 2020	0	3	0	1	1
TOTAL:	16	23	3	6	33

Total number of interments: 48