

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**1<sup>st</sup> February 2022**

LJ/2022

8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 14 – FOOTPATHS AND ROADS

AIM

1. To provide an update on the possible upgrade to roads/paths/carparks owned by Bridgnorth Town Council.

BACKGROUND

2. Following recent inspections, the Outdoors and Properties Manager (OPM) has identified a number of surfaces that require maintenance/ repair. The matter was referred to in the OPM in the report to Council on 1 February 2022. We have looked to obtain quotes from reputable contractors to undertake the works. At the Town Council meeting on 1 February 2022 the OPM indicated that a further report would be presented at the 15 February 2022 Council meeting.
3. Regrettably at the time of writing this report we have yet to receive any quotes for the work.

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

4. It is the officers view that there is some need to undertake some relatively prompt work to improve the condition of a number of roads/surfaces and that the cost could be significant. Improvements in the spring, ahead of the busy tourist and outdoor pursuit busy periods of the spring through to late Autumn is likely to be of benefit to the community.
5. Should the indicative costs mentioned for the various options in the previous OPM report for tarmac and complete refurbishment of the roads and pathways (Bandon Lane/ Severn Park Car Park/ The Cemetery/ Castle Grounds/ Access Road to Crown Meadow) are deemed to be prohibitive, the Town Council might wish to consider identifying funding for the lower end option of regrading and patching i.e. circa £9k, and delegating to officers the decision on the most appropriate options best on obtaining best value. Some of the patching works might be able to be undertaken by our own staff and might only incur direct costs of materials.
  - a. Any works commissioned to an external contractor (e.g. regrading and large scale patching) would of course be subject to procurement procedures laid

out in standing orders and financial regulations (e.g. the requirement for 3 or more quotes above certain levels).

- b. The estimates provided by the OPM in the report to Council on 1 February 2022 (to undertake low level patching and regrading) are summarised below:
- i. Severn Park Car Park (regrading) £1,500 to £2,000
  - ii. Bandon Lane (regrading) £500 to £1000
  - iii. Cemetery Internal Road (patching of potholes) - £2,500
  - iv. Castle Grounds (patching repairs) - £1,210
  - v. Crown Meadow Access Road (patching of potholes) - £2,200

6. Should the Town Council consider that it might be willing to accept the significantly higher costs e.g. tarmac for Severn Park and some major resurfacing then it is recommended to wait until we have received comprehensive quotes before deciding on a course of preferred action. The level of indicative costs when all areas are combined might break the threshold for obtaining 3 quotes and require a formal tender process.

## FINANCIALS

7. We are making the assumption from observations of previous discussions on financial matters that the Council would be unwilling at this time to fund a significant and major resurfacing works programme as the indicative costs estimate a spend of well over £50k.
8. There are some potential underspends within a number of budgets that might together provide the estimated £9k to undertake the low-end works suggested above (paragraph 6bi). However, many of these savings were taken into account when preparing the budget for 2022/23 and the projected end of financial year 2021/22 general reserve. With a fair wind some of these underspend estimates might prove to cautious (or not). Furthermore, there is some realistic anticipation that there will be some very small underspends in a wide range of individual and unrelated budgets that might enhance the predicted level of the General Reserve for 31 March 2022. However, the virement of £9k of funds from lots of unrelated budgets is seen as unpracticable when we are so close to the year end.
9. Alternatively, the Town Council can realistically spend from the General Reserve to fund the £9k (low-key works) by merely increasing an appropriate budget to absorb the costs e.g. Grounds Repairs (Cost centre 250 Nominal ledger 4170). This would place some pressure on the General Reserve reaching its predicted level (as per the draft budget when setting the precept).
10. The Council has an earmarked fund (EMR 325 Equipment Repairs/ Maintenance) which stands at £34,326 (less £7,850 of committed funds from the last Town Council meeting for the Quinquennial Surveys) however much of that remaining total was transferred across for specific purposes over a number of years. A total of £4,450 might legitimately be used for the proposed repairs. An indicative summary

of EMR 325 and its component parts is enclosed. Notwithstanding that, the Council can review the intended purposes of EMR 325 at any time (as it is not a restricted fund). The Council might therefore consider transferring £9k to the Grounds revenue budget to undertake the (low-key) repairs discussed above (either in the current year budget or the 2022/23 budget, depending upon when the work can be undertaken). Should that be the case then it is recommended that serious consideration be given at the beginning of the next financial year to replenish the EMR 325, if the projected general reserve at the time of setting the precept is exceeded.

11. Next years budgets for Severn Park and Grounds repairs/ maintenance are £5,000 and £1,020 and insufficient to cover estimated costs and using these budgets entirely for surface repairs would leave no funding for ad-hoc maintenance (e.g. repairs to furniture (benches and bins), fencing, paint for railings or the band-stand.

## SUMMARY

12. A number of road/pathways/hardstanding repairs are required to a number of areas: Severn Park Car Park; Bandon Lane; Cemetery Internal Roads; Castle Grounds and Crown Meadow Access Road.
13. A long-term and near complete resurfacing project is likely to be unrealistic in the current financial climate.
14. A low-key/ short to mid-term solution is affordable for a cost in the region of £9k and would provide some reasonable improvement to all areas discussed
15. Funding the low-key/ short to mid-term repairs can be achieved in a number of ways.

## OPTIONS

16. Options include:
  - a. Agree not to repair any of the works unless they are affordable out of existing approved budgets.
  - b. Defer any decision until sufficient quotes have been received for all areas with a variety of costed solutions.
  - c. Increase the appropriate grounds budget(s) (through use of the General Reserve) by circa £9k
  - d. Transfer from £9k EMR 325 to the appropriate Grounds/ Severn Park budgets.

## RECOMMENDATION(s)

17. It is recommended that the Town Council **RESOLVES:**

To transfer £9k from EMR 325 to the appropriate Grounds/ Severn Park budget(s) to undertake (low-key) surfacing repairs to Severn Park Car Park; Bandon Lane; Cemetery Internal Roads; Castle Grounds and Crown Meadow Access Road.

Lee Jakeman  
Town Clerk