

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
15 NOVEMBER 2022**

BI/2122

15<sup>th</sup> November 2022

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

**AGENDA ITEM 12 – 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. **Hanging Baskets and Floral Displays.** You will be aware that from the last report that all of the Town Hall and Clock Tower hanging were removed for safety reasons. Subsequent load-test examinations found that all but two hanging brackets had failed, and it was recommended that new brackets and fixing points would need to be installed before the company would attempt to re-examine. From a safety perspective I have some real concerns about the potential risk of reintroducing the baskets that each weight 25kg plus when full and fixed above head height to such old buildings where the fixing point integrity of the old brickwork cannot be guaranteed. Even an annual stress test will only guarantee performance at the time of testing. I am not aware of any adverse comments about the removal of the baskets to date and a considerable saving could be made at £25 per basket which could well go towards decorating the building in another way. We would still be required to carry out an annual load test on the poles of course, but they are a much more robust structure.
4. **Listley Street Toilets.** Continues to be the focal point of youth anti-social behaviour especially around lunchtime and school closing times; resulting in damage to taps, toilet seats, door locks and handles. To deter groups from gathering after school we have asked the cleaner to clean Listley Street at 3.30pm and secure the building on departure. However, during December we have traditionally closed the toilets at 7pm to allow for late shopping etc. Is this something Council would be content with given the recent behaviour?
5. **Castle Hall Work.** Work identified in the latest Quinquennial report continues as well fixing some minor repairs at Listley Street toilets.
6. **Interpretation Board at the Grove Park Wildflower Meadows.** Like me you may well be saddened to hear that the newly installed Wildflower Meadow Interpretation Board installed by Buglife at considerable expense has already been trashed. Apparently, from a witness source, by two 12- to 13-year-olds. Incident reported to the police.
7. **Bus Shelter Repairs.** Bus shelter repairs on the Smithfield Relief Road are unlikely to happen before the new year due to manufacture and supply times of the new seats, contractor availability and working on the highway permits. And in order to minimise the disruption at this very busy bus stop I have asked if the work could be carried out on a Sunday. This may be possible but will increase the cost. Our priority should be to get the shelters on the Relief Road weatherproofed as soon as possible and the cosmetic work on the shelter in the High Street can wait until the weather

permits in early spring. I have a plan to achieve all the bus shelter repairs and still remain within the 8K budget already agreed by Council.

8. **Watering of the Town Baskets.** Watering has now come to an end and the baskets are being prepared for delivery bask to Littlefords Nursery where they will be stored ready for next year's planting. The DLF grounds maintenance focus will then switch towards our winter program of work to include; tree and shrubbery pruning, fence and bench repairs, riverbank maintenance, cemetery maintenance, vehicle and equipment servicing and husbandry and preparation for flooding and other severe weather conditions.
9. **Winter Bedding.** Bedding is on order with Littlefords Nursery and planting will take place over the next few weeks.
10. **Voluntary Group for the Cemetery.** Efforts to form a cemetery volunteer group continue with a plan to combine their efforts with the Caring for God's Acre volunteer group that already helps out in the cemetery. A meeting of the two groups is being planned for January 2023 along with Council representation to formulate a schedule of work to further enhance work already carried out by the DLF.
11. **Training.** The two new staff members Dean Edwards and Talitta Jones will attend a Riverside Safety training course this month as well as an introduction to Health & Safety in the Workplace and Manual handling training. Other members of staff that require it will attend First Aid refresher courses and or the introduction to Health & Safety in the Workplace and Manual handling training.
12. **Festive Lights Installation.** During routine Christmas lights installations and anchor point testing our contractor who was about to install crossroad feature by Costa Coffee and noticed that the gable end wall above Carrie England appeared to be bowed and noticed a surface crack in the render. They also witnessed deterioration of the timber structure a few feet below and felt that it was unsafe to install the feature at this stage. I have now had chance to check this out for myself and would agree that until we get a reliable structural report that this overhead feature is not installed. Carrie England and the property above are both currently vacant. However I have found out who the landlord is and I have left my details with the proprietor of the shop next door who has agreed to contact the landlord and ask him to contact me or the Town Council to discuss the way forward.

#### SUMMARY.

13. There continues to be much ongoing work across the wide sphere of property and ground maintenance tasks.

#### FINANCIALS

14. None of the above works requires any additional funding outside of what has already been allocated to those properties.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is recommended that the Town Council notes the report and the activities being undertaken and considers making a decision on the December closing time of Listley Street toilets and whether or not to reinstate the hanging baskets on the Clock Tower and the Town Hall.

Barry Ince  
Outdoors & Properties Manager