

## **Town Hall & Facilities Committee 10.3.21**

### **Report: Cloister Gardens Working Party and the way ahead**

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To request funds to buy and place six new picnic tables in Cloister Gardens.
- 1.2 To request funds to build a fenced area behind the wall and gate in Cloister Gardens to store the picnic tables in winter.
- 1.3 To request funds to repair the shed discovered behind the arbour wall.
- 1.4 To request that the bank behind the arbour wall down to Station Yard Car Park be cleared by contractors and tree surgeons to maintain the trees.
- 1.5 To consider the way forwards with redesigning and improving the Gardens.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Cloister Gardens in 2020 had four picnic tables for use by the public on the grass near to the Café. They were well used, and the café also benefited from them and also kept them clean and tidy.
- 2.2 They were relocated to St Aldhelms Mead and Cuckingstool Mead for the winter at the request of Barbara Pollard from Abbey House. They have proved to be well used in this area over time there.
- 2.3 Currently there is no secure area to store the tables in winter or if the area needed clearing for an event.
- 2.4 The shed has ivy growing through the roof and tiles are missing. The door has been broken and is securely closed. Structurally the build appears safe apart from the roof.
- 2.5 The Grounds staff do not wish to use the shed, however if we agree to have a 'Friends of the Cloisters' group they could store equipment and tools etc in there.
- 2.6 The bank behind the arbour wall is now more exposed and in a very overgrown condition. It has not been maintained or cleared for a few years and is not a welcoming sight.
- 2.7 Trees in the area look as though they have not been maintained and in places some branches look to be in need of maintenance. Dead trees should be removed for safety purposes.
- 2.8 The Cloister Gardens have just been used as a grassy area with little stimulation for residents and visitors to stay and enjoy the area. With the arbour rebuilt now would be a good time to improve the area so it becomes desirable for people to visit.

#### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 That the tables bought last year remain in the St Aldhelms Mead area and that we buy six new ones to go in the gardens for this spring and summer.
- 3.2 That we erect a fence behind the gate in the arbour wall by the shed to store the tables over the winter period.
- 3.3 That if the committee agrees, we set a budget of £720 for tables and £1000 for fencing. This to come from TH&F budget for outdoor improvements.
- 3.4 That if the committee agrees to taking this action, we ask the Acting Town Clerk to carry out this plan.

- 3.5 That if the committee agrees we ask the Acting Town Clerk to seek quotes to clear the bank and the work carried out.
- 3.6 That if the committee agrees we ask the Acting Town Clerk to have the trees on the bank and in the Cloister Garden inspected, and any necessary works carried out.
- 3.7 That if the committee agrees we ask the Acting Town Clerk to get quotes to repair the shed and arrange for the works to be completed.
- 3.8 That if the committee agrees we should set up a 'competition' to look at redesigning the area and a planting regime. This would be a public competition with the best designs being displayed in the Town Hall for public consultation.
- 3.9 That if the committee agrees we should set up a Friends of the Cloister Gardens group to assist in the planting and maintenance of the area.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 That the proposals are agreed and actions taken.

#### **5. Financial & Staff implications**

- 5.1 We would need to allocate the budgets.
- 5.2 We would need The Acting Town Clerk and Estates Officer to source quotes and complete the various works.
- 5.3 We would need to have space in the Town Hall to display ideas for the gardens 'Competition' and administration and support to achieve this.
- 5.4 The Grounds staff would have to move the benches to cut the grass around them.
- 5.5 The Grounds staff would have to work with the friends in maintaining the area

Cllr Paul Smith  
Chair Cloister Gardens Working Party  
4th March 2021