

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - TUESDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2021

ITEM NO: 9 – Parish Benches – Update and Programme Modification

Updating on progress to date and proposing a modification to the refurbishment programme

Information

The first stage of the Parish Council programme for the refurbishment and where required, replacement of Parish benches is proceeding. However, as a result of further information as to the condition of certain benches, plus the possible inclusion of a further memorial bench in the programme, some changes are necessary. This report summarises progress, details the changes in programme requirements and proposes an expenditure (which falls within the existing budget allocations) as a part of the need to resource those changes differently to those refurbishment actions which were originally proposed.

Progress to date

To date, the following actions have been undertaken:

1. **The bench at New Inn Road / Southampton Road** has been removed and replaced with the new memorial bench which was purchased with a donation from Sylvia Wiggins in memory of her husband. Now installed, the bench has been placed on the Parish Council asset register.
 - a. *NOTE: the original bench in that location, when removed, was found to have badly corroded legs on the underside which were, therefore, not possible to repair and re-use. It was originally proposed to utilise those legs, after suitable refurbishment, together with new timber slats to replace the badly corroded bench situated at the White Hart corner on Romsey Road. This is not now possible and a proposed alternative solution is now identified – see Changes required to complete the current programme below.*
2. **The two benches in the upper field at the Parish Hall** have now been removed and replaced with two new recycled plastic benches in a new location on the upper part of the field alongside what would be the touchline of the football playing area.
3. **The bench at Cadnam outside Forest Foot and Health** has been removed, the leg ends and arm rests have been refurbished and powder coated, the newly purchased slats have been prepared with several coats of suitable timber oil and the bench is now ready for re-installation in the same location in the very near future.
4. **The bench at the corner of Pollards Moor Road / Romsey Road** has been completely removed and the bolts cut back to ground level. The leg ends and arm rests are in the process of being refurbished and powder coated. This bench is now proposed to be relocated at the White Hart corner location. However, it would be necessary to obtain some new timber slats to complete this task – see Changes required to complete the current programme below. This is due to the fact that an approach has been made to the Parish Council for the installation of a Memorial bench at the current location and we await further communications with the proposers in due course.
5. **The two cast iron and timber benches at the War Memorial** have been treated with timber oil by the Lengthsman which will preserve the life of the timber for a period of time, but the slats will require replacement in due course and the leg ends will require repainting (a next stage of the programme).
6. **The bench at Splitwind Pond** has been rubbed down and re-oiled by as a result of a very kind offer by a local resident. There are three slats on this bench which are deteriorating and which will require replacement, probably next year. The bench as a whole will require refurbishment at a later date (a next stage of the programme). Our thanks go to the resident who made the offer and undertook this activity.

Changes required to complete the current programme

As is mentioned above in the note under item 1 above, **the bench at the White Hart corner** is badly corroded on the base of the leg fittings. The underside of one of the legs has completely rusted away and would not be possible to repair. As mentioned above, it was originally intended to re-locate the bench legs from the removed bench at New Inn Road to this location and provide new slats. However, the original bench legs at New Inn Road were found, upon removal, to be similarly considerably corroded underneath and impossible to re-use at the White Hart location.

Originally, 5 new timber slats to fit this bench were purchased.

As further mentioned in item 4 above the removal of the bench at Pollards Moor Road / Romsey Road corner, has 'freed up' 2 high quality cast iron leg ends and 2 arm rests, which are now being refurbished. These cast iron fittings are of high quality. Therefore, it is proposed to replace the bench at the White Hart corner with these bench ends and new slats.

However, the 5 slats currently purchased were measured and sized for the original White Hart bench solution and cannot be used on the re-located bench ends from Pollards Moor Road / Romsey Road corner as they are completely different in number and size. It would be necessary to purchase 9 new slats of the appropriate measurements and sizing for this newly relocated bench using those cast iron bench legs. However, we could reduce this to 7 slats if 2 of the 'spare' slats were re-sized for use on that bench

The remaining 3 slats can be used to replace 3 slats on the bench at Splitwind Pond, as mentioned in item 6 above.

Proposed way forward for this part of the programme

In the light of the above information, the following is proposed:

1. The 'freed up' legs and arm rests from the Pollards Moor / Romsey Road corner location which are now being refurbished and powder coated are used to replace the bench at the White Hart corner.
2. 7 new slats of the appropriate measurements and sizing are purchased for the bench re-installation at the White Hart corner with 2 of the 5 'spare' slats re-sized to make the total of 9 slats required for this bench
3. The remaining 3 of the 5 'spare' slats are re-sized and used to repair the rotting slats on the bench at Splitwind Pond.

Financial considerations

The cost of purchasing 7 new appropriately sized oak timber slats from the previously used supplier is £263.34 ex VAT plus £27.50 delivery. After allowing for the cast iron refurbishment costs of the 'freed up' bench ends from the Pollards Moor / Romsey Road corner, there is a current underspend in the 2019-2020 benches budget of £32.94. There is also £1,000 in the 2020-21 budget allocated to benches. Further funding remains in the earmarked reserves from County and District Councillor Grants which was set aside for various infrastructure projects over the next 2 years including the benches programme. Therefore, there is more than adequate funding to cover the cost of the purchase of the 7 new slats.

Recommendations

That Members of the Parish Council:

1. Note the proposal to relocate the 'freed up' and refurbished bench legs for installation at the White Hart corner.
2. Approve the uses to which the originally purchased 5 slats are now proposed:
 - a. to replace 3 rotten slats on the Splitwind Pond bench, and
 - b. to utilise the remaining 2 slats, after appropriate re-sizing to be used on the re-located bench at the White Hart corner.
3. Approve the purchase of 7 new appropriately sized and prepared oak slats from the original supplier at a cost of £263.34 ex VAT plus £27.50 delivery using the unspent 2019/20 funds and the 2020/21 budgeted funds.