

C25-167 ESTATES AND FACILITIES

a) Asbestos at MFF

Asbestos has been found at MFF during works being done to clear the bramble area. The asbestos will be removed by a professional company and this was approved quickly due to this be a public health concern. The cost for removal is £540 inc VAT.

b) Update on peace garden project

The Council has had a plan to improve the Peace Garden since 2023 with the aim of making it fully accessible, providing more seating and creating a more interesting and useable space. Volunteer villagers have provided a detailed plan and instructions as to what works need to be done to achieve the project. An early version of this plan went to quotes which ranged from approximately £20,000 to £40,000 in 2023. Due to time pressures and lack of fund, the project was put on hold.

Following the tragic death of Luis Guembes, members of the public who are friends of the family asked the council to create something that would be a memorial to this young man. The Estates committee discussed this and put forward the idea that the Peace Garden project could be something and somewhere a memorial could be created. A working group was established (Cllr Tugwell, Cllr McCrow and Cllr Mitchell) to meet with members of the public to discuss this idea and take things forward.

The outline plan prior to the meeting (attached) would have a u-shaped sleeper bench at the north (play area) end, a Legend on a Bench at the southern end along with the existing bench and a third feature (possibly a water feature). In the centre would be an Olive Planter. The surface would be similar to the surface of the path alongside the tennis courts with porcelain planks that look like wood laide down the middle. There would be some in-ground spaces for sensory plants. There would be a fully accessible path from the bridge near Bowling and on the far side would have a gravel covered open drain with a bank beyond. This would help to drain the area and the bank could be planted with sensory herbs and/or wildflowers.

To help raise funds for the project we considered the idea of people putting plaques in memory of loved ones on benches and possibly to have one bench/feature as the pet memorial area. Estates has previously agreed to do this project.

At the first meeting of the Working Group (Cllrs as above with Amy McCloud, Amanda Pick and Caroline Lenton) the overall feeling was that this would be a good project and for at least some aspects would be a memorial for Luis.

Potential aspects include:-

- a bench
- a plaque on a bench
- the 'third side feature' at the southern end - possibly a sculpture
- students and friends of Luis creating terracotta tiles to put around the wooden edge of the pergola (near the top)
- something else which is the choice of the family

Amy is putting these ideas to the family and will come back to us with their thoughts.

All agreed that the idea of inviting members of the public to put memorial plaques for family members and pets was a good idea. It was suggested that the Olive Planter would be suitable for pets.

Discussion about the Legend on a Bench bench - could be sponsored by one family or a number of families who have been impacted by suicide.

A variety of names for the area have been suggested and more are welcome -

- Memorial Garden
- Memory Garden
- Olive Garden
- Sensory Garden
- Forever Garden
- Serenity Garden
- Garden of Reflection
- Remembrance Haven

Fundraising:-

- There may be a number of funds that Council could apply for (Awards for All, National Gardens and others) - however, this takes time and effort and we are all stretched. Though if volunteers could do the initial preparation of the documents, it might be feasible.
- Creating an online fundraiser - Amy is looking into whether any would support a **Parish Council being the 'organisation' to receive the funds for the fundraiser**. For example Go Fund Me enables transfer of funds raised to a business or organisation bank account, though the Go Fund Me account needs to be set up by an individual.
- If we do set up an online fundraiser there are a few aspects to consider
 1. The ethics of raising money in Luis' name for a project that is not just about him.
 2. how the Council will ensure the money is kept separate and only spend on this project - suggestion from RFO is a Special Reserve Fund

- Further donations for memorial plaques could help repay reserves.

Costs would be kept down by using volunteer time and expertise as much as possible. However, much of the groundwork would need to be done by a specialist and this would need to go to quotes. The Council would also need to get materials and associated supplies.

If this whole project is agreed in principle by Council the next stage would be to

1. set up the Fundraiser
2. put the project in the Villager and ask for support (volunteer to help with fundraising, practical for work parties as well as donations and plaques)
3. share the fundraiser and project beyond the village

Timing is tight as deadline for Villager is end April!

Matters for consideration

1. Does Council agree in principle with this project?
2. If yes, does Council accept to being the recipient of funds raised through an online fundraiser?
3. If yes, will Council agree to set up a Special Reserve Fund to keep this money separate from other Council money and that it would only be spent on this project
4. If insufficient funds were raised, would Council be prepared to use Reserves to ensure the project went ahead?

c) Business case for Asset Transfer

Cllr Mitchell has created a business case. Please look over it and make comments and discuss the next steps.

d) Benchmark fuel surcharge

Benchmark – who manages our bin at Normandy Cricket Club, has told us that they will be charging an additional 5% fuel surcharge, due to rising fuel costs. This would be an extra £1.16 including VAT on our normal bills (two bin collections a month) – This will be more if additional bin collections are required.

Matters for considerations

Do the council agree to the accept the surcharge?