

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 10.00AM**

- PRESENT: Councillor Scicluna (Chairman), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Hughes) and Councillors Apel and Dignum
- IN ATTENDANCE: The Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Property Manager, Member Services Support Officer, Angus Eitel and Josh Smith of 50.8 Architecture and Interiors

MINUTES

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from The Mayor, Councillor Richard Plowman.

At this point, the Chairman welcomed Angus Eitel and Josh Smith of 50.8 Architecture and Interiors to the meeting.

11. MINUTES OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 June 2020, having been printed and circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman at a later date.

The Property Manager's Report had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda in connection with the Agenda items 2 to 7. (**Post Meeting Note** – due to a typing error on the Agenda, there are two items numbered 2. The Property Manager's report starts at the updates about the Council House)

12. COUNCIL HOUSE

(a) Exterior building repairs

Members were advised that the exterior building works had been progressing despite the poor weather conditions and that it was still hoped that the work would be completed by the 5 March 2021. Members were informed that the work on the chimneys had been largely completed and the painting was well under way.

(b) Neptune and Minerva Stone

The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee that the University of Warwick would shortly be shipping the one third sized replica of the Neptune and Minerva Stone they had produced as part of their project.

Members were asked to suggest possible locations where the replica could be installed and put on show. Ideas proposed included the main corridor and the Deputy Mayor suggested one of the alcoves in the Assembly Room.

(c) Portico

The Property Manager introduced Mr Eitel and Mr Smith from 50.8 Architects and advised Members that they would now see a presentation from Mr Eitel using the PDF documents that had been circulated to the Sub-Committee the previous day.

Mr Eitel gave Members a short introduction to his company and some background about their work and involvement with projects in and around Chichester. He highlighted their interest in working with the historical fabric of the city whilst sympathetically introducing more modern designs.

Members were shown a series of slides while Mr Eitel outlined the background to the work they had been asked to undertake.

Mr Eitel advised the Sub-Committee that the options they had proposed would involve glazing the archways into the portico with metal framed units. The two options presented showed a more modern framing proposal in contrast to a more traditional frame that would be a close match to the existing Georgian windows in the Council Chamber above.

Options were also outlined for positioning the glazing at the front of the arches to maximise the interior space or to set the glazing back in the arches to allow for external landscaping.

Members were informed that the project had reached the point where a full planning application was being put together. The Sub-Committee was shown the planning drawings that would accompany the application.

Mr Eitel then outlined his company's suggestions for how the newly enclosed portico space could be used. He advised Members that the design allowed for three doors in the arches to maximise flexibility and to enable separated pedestrian flows should the need arise as was demonstrated by the current social distancing requirements.

The Sub-Committee were then shown some suggested uses for the newly created space, including lecture space, exhibition areas and information display. Mr Eitel also suggested that any fittings and furniture purchased for the space should be movable and not fixed to allow for the most flexible use of the area.

He also suggested that a centrepiece for the new space could be a map of the city centre set into the floor but without any street names as a simple but effective way finding device.

Mr Eitel then summarised some of the style points of the proposed design including a fanlight above the front door and slim metal glazing units to minimise the profiles of the frames. He also suggested to the Sub-Committee that this project would be an opportunity to publicise the City Council with its branding above the door to help advise the public what the building was.

The Chairman thanked Mr Eitel for his presentation.

Members were positive about the design and how it remained sympathetic to the main building.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Mr Eitel confirmed that under floor heating had been included in the design. However, Members were advised that the technical details of this aspect had not been fully configured.

Post meeting note: It should be noted that the intention for the under floor heating is to lift the current York stone, lay the appropriate sub structure, install the heating system and re-lay the York stone back on top.

The Chairman expressed her strong support for the designs being presented but said she had a concern that the proposal was for metal frames where the existing windows were wood framed.

The Town Clerk raised the subject of safety and security and in particular the type of glass that was being proposed given the possibility of vandalism or members of the public inadvertently colliding with the new glazing.

Mr Eitel confirmed that the proposal included the use of toughened and laminated safety glass. He also suggested that, by using smaller panes of glass, any breakages would be cheaper and quicker to repair than the use of larger single panes.

The Town Clerk also raised the subject of the underfloor heating in relation to the issue of the side doors being open and the public walking through. Mr Eitel suggested that, as the City Council would be in charge of when the doors would be open, the less they were open, the quicker the public would get used to not using the route when walking through town.

The Town Clerk commended the architects on the design and the sympathetic way it had been handled.

Councillor Dignum raised similar concerns to those expressed by the Chairman with the proposed use of metal frames. He suggested that using metal and not wood may cause concerns for Chichester District Council's Historic Buildings Officer.

Mr Eitel advised Councillors that he felt that the contrast between modern and traditional materials, while remaining sympathetic, was important to the overall look. He also suggested that the use of metal frames would enable much lower profile fittings to be used and that he felt that there were projects elsewhere that had employed a similar contrast of materials.

At this point, the Chairman's internet connection froze and the Deputy Mayor temporarily took the Chair while the technical issues were resolved.

Councillor Dignum asked for an estimate of the overall cost of the project. Mr Eitel responded that this had been discussed the previous year but that he did not have the actual figures to hand. However, he advised Members that he felt that the glazing represented the largest cost within the project and that estimates for this aspect could be obtained without much difficulty to give Councillors a better idea of the funds that would be needed.

Councillor Apel also expressed support for the designs and asked whether there were opportunities to use different coloured metal frames. Mr Eitel confirmed that this would be possible and that bronze coloured metal frames might be a possibility.

The Property Manager confirmed his support for metal frames and the lower profile they offered. He also mentioned that this type of framing had been used to good effect in other projects, particularly in London.

Councillor Dignum suggested that a cost estimate could be presented to Full Council with a view to a possible tendering process. Mr Eitel advised that the Planning application would need to be completed before this step so that a clearer specification could be put together for tendering.

The Deputy Town Clerk and Property Manager reminded the Sub-Committee that 50.8 Architects had been commissioned to produce the designs and advance the agreed way forward to Listed Building Consent and the Planning applications. They were also reminded that the funding for these initial stages of the project had already been agreed by the Finance Committee and Full Council.

(d) Salix grant funded energy improvements

The Sub-Committee were advised that the Deputy Town Clerk and Property Manager had recently take part in a webinar with funding body, Salix, and the City Council's contractor Save Money, Cut Carbon (SMCC) who had recently undertaken the energy and water audit at the Council House.

The Property Manager reported that Salix had advised them that £2.5billion of applications for decarbonisation schemes had been received against £1billion of available grant funds. He advised Members that, while each applicant may receive funding for at least one project, it would be unlikely that projects would receive their requested allocations in full.

The Chairman rejoined the meeting.

Members were advised that SMCC held the opinion that the City Council's agreed allocation, to include the solar panels and hand driers; was confirmed and a written confirmation would be sent shortly. He advised caution that, while verbal confirmation had been received, he would be waiting for written confirmation to arrive before any further actions were taken.

The Property Manager informed the Sub-Committee that any projects being funded in this way would need to be completed by 30 September 2021 in order to qualify for the payment of the grant. He further informed them that, in his opinion, this would not currently present a problem.

13. ALLOTMENTS

(a) Update

The Sub-Committee were advised that there were currently 95 people on the waiting list and that there were two vacant plots on the St James site which were currently being brought back in to use.

The Property Manager then informed Members about the difficulties faced by the Property Team when allotments were abused and neglected and either handed back in poor condition or abandoned by the tenant.

The Sub-Committee was shown an example of two allotments at the St James Site that had been taken back from a tenant for non-cultivation. Images shown to Members included piles of rubbish, old bedding, sheds that had to be removed

for safety reasons and hundreds of old bottles. The Property Manager's photographs are attached.

It was further reported to Members that to clear the rubbish and return the plot to use would take 34 hours of effort as well as £168 of charges for rubbish tipping at an estimated total cost of £933+VAT.

The Property Manager informed Members that an invoice for this amount would be sent to the former tenant but he was not optimistic that any payment would be forthcoming.

Members were also informed that this was not an isolated case and that the Property Team had to incur similar costs to clear up plots that had been abandoned or let to grow out of control by tenants who had subsequently been evicted.

The Property Manager advised Members that, due to ongoing problems with some allotment tenants, they had taken a stricter enforcement stance when problems arose.

He asked Councillors to bear in mind that, if they were contacted by City Council allotment holders who had had the condition of their plots highlighted by the Property Team; they consider the financial cost to the City Council of having to undertake allotment clearances.

The Deputy Mayor referred to the particular case being highlighted and informed Members that the issue of mental health had played a strong part in what had happened and not any deliberate effort to cause problems. He agreed with the Property Manager that it would be unlikely that the tenant in question would be able to pay the invoice.

(b) Durnford Close

The Property Manager reported that, further to Hyde Housing having been sent the official notification of the termination of the City Council's lease agreement regarding Durnford Close allotments; no response had been received from the company acknowledging the notification despite several follow up emails.

Councillor Apel confirmed that she had also tried to communicate with no effect. She advised that she had now obtained contact details for senior staff at Hyde Housing and that she would pass this information on to the Property Manager.

14. LITTEN GARDENS PAVING

The Property Manager outlined the proposal he had given in his report. He advised Members that this would involve the replacement of the upper and lower paths around the Memorial in Litten Gardens. Members were further advised that the cost for this project would be higher than the cost of the outer path due to the need to install edging to contain the path.

The Sub-Committee was shown a series of photographs to illustrate the Property Manager's comments regarding the condition of the current slab paving.

The Property Manager informed Members that a number of positive comments had been received from the public following the completion of the replacement of the outer path in Litten Gardens. He also highlighted the benefits of the Breedon gravel path as being naturally free draining and non-slip, which would be of benefit to users

of the paths as well as safer for large groups such as those involved with Remembrance events.

The Sub-Committee were reminded that this was the type of path construction that was in wide use in stately homes and National Trust properties as well as the Bishop's Palace Gardens in Chichester itself.

In response to a question from Councillor Dignum, the Property Manager clarified that this type of path was not formed from bonded gravel. He informed Members that the gravel was effectively loose but that a process involving wet compaction helped it form a stable surface while remaining free draining.

The Chairman expressed her strong dislike for the path that had been installed and informed the Sub-Committee that it felt unfinished.

Councillor Apel highlighted the problems that could be experienced with damaged or failing crazy paving including problems walking on uneven surfaces and the trip hazards they presented.

Councillors Apel and Dignum expressed support for the new surface that had been installed.

The Deputy Mayor agreed and advised Members that he had doubted the surface immediately following its installation but that he felt it had now settled properly and he was pleased with it.

Following a brief further discussion, the Sub-Committee RESOLVED to proceed with the second stage of the Litten Gardens paving replacement.

Post meeting note: In order to expedite the paving replacement it was agreed to RECOMMEND to Full Council on 17 February 2021 that an order be placed with Crown Civil Engineering in the sum of £5,876 for the replacement of the existing paving slab paths around the War Memorial with compacted Breedon gravel; to be funded from the Public Realm budget.

15. BUS STOPS/SHELTERS

(a) RTPI Bus Shelters

The Property Manager summarised his report and reminded Members that there were three bus shelters that had been earmarked for installation since 2019. These included two in Broyle Road and one on Lavant Road near to the Avenue.

The Sub-Committee were reminded of the difficulties that had been experienced with obtaining the shelters themselves following the difficulties experienced by the main supplier used by Clear Channel.

Members were advised that a new supplier had been found, GW Shelters, who would be supplying UK built shelters at a lower cost than previously installed units.

Members were further advised that the new shelters were due to be installed by the 24 February 2021 although the electricity supply for the real time displays would be installed at a later date.

In response to questions from Councillor Dignum, the Property Manager advised Members that the project was being run in partnership with West Sussex County

Council and that all the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) panels from the County Council would be installed shortly after the shelters. He also confirmed the locations for each of the shelters and reminded Councillors that, at the time of planning the shelters, it had been decided to focus on the buses coming in to the city which was why the shelters near Roussillon Barracks were relatively close together.

The Chairman asked who would be responsible for the upkeep of the new shelters. The Property Manager informed Members that the original plan had been to add them to the Chichester District Council/Clear Channel contract but that this would not now be possible as the shelters were not Clear Channel supplied units and that the future of the Clear Channel contract was unknown after its renewal date in September 2021.

Members were also informed that, as an alternative, the new supplier offered a maintenance contract but that, in the short term, the Property Team would be responsible for this while the future of the maintenance contract was decided.

(b) Swanfield Drive bus stop

The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee of the history of this project and further advised that West Sussex County Council had advised that the pavement at the location for the bus stop was not wide enough to accommodate the proposed design of shelter and that land adjacent to the pavement would need to be used.

Members were further advised that, following an approach to A2 Dominion who were responsible for the management of the land that would be needed; a series of requirements and conditions had been received that would need to be fulfilled before any further progress could be made.

The Property Manager reported that it was outside the authority of the City Council to agree to these conditions so the bus shelter request would have to be passed to Chichester District Council as the freeholder of the land.

The Chairman and Deputy Mayor expressed their frustration with the delays that had been experienced with this project.

The Deputy Mayor asked whether A2 Dominion and Chichester District Council were in contact with each other in order to progress the bus shelter installation.

Councillor Dignum asked the Property Manager to contact the appropriate Officers at the District Council with a view to making them aware of the need for the District Council to pick up this request. Councillor Dignum requested that the Property Manager inform the Officers that this request was coming from him under his responsibilities within the District Council Cabinet.

16. PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

(a) Wayfinding (finger posts)

The Property Manager advised that the finger post project was almost at the point where works could commence on the refurbishment of the posts and installation of the new directional fingers.

Members were further advised that the total cost of the project would be £40,369. This would be made up of £20,000 from the City Council through CIL

funding with the remainder being paid by Chichester District Council. The Property Manager also informed Members that the District Council had agreed to cover the 5% contingency that had been built in to the project.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the City Council was awaiting the transfer of funds to be received from the District Council.

The Property Manager reported that, as previously agreed, he would be taking the lead on the project. He also reported that he had spoken to Leander Architectural who would be manufacturing the new sign post fingers.

Members were informed that, as Leander Architectural had advised a lead time of approximately 12-14 weeks, the remaining contractors would be taking the opportunity to remove the old and damaged fingers and refurbish the posts and finials. It was hoped by doing this that the new paint would have hardened properly, ready for the new fingers to be installed.

The Property Manager informed Members that the decision had been taken not to use a street by street approach as the chosen method would be more cost effective. It had also been agreed that, as the current posts were incorrect and often unhelpful; it would have little impact if they were all removed at once, especially with lockdown reducing the visitor numbers in the city centre.

(b) Precinct paving

The Property Manager reported that, with the Deputy Town Clerk, he had attended a virtual stakeholder meeting of the parties involved with the paving project together with the consultants who had been commissioned to produce an options report regarding ways ahead for the replacement and refurbishment of the city centre precinct paving.

Members were advised that the presentation had felt very disappointing as it repeated all the current problems with the paving that everyone present was familiar with and that no new proposals had been put forward.

The Property Manager informed Councillors that the statistics that had been reported appeared to show that the level of damage to the precinct and the level of accidents and injuries appeared to have increased with the arrival of the market in the city centre a couple of years previously.

Councillors were further informed that the only proposals put forward had been costed at between £18million and £25million. Members agreed that, with the current financial difficulties being experienced by Councils, this level of cost would make the project unviable.

The Property Manager advised that discussions had then focused on the replacement of the red brick areas, which were presenting a particular problem, and replacing them with a surface capable of being driven over by heavy goods vehicles, vans and emergency vehicles.

He also advised that suggestions had been made that, assuming the York stone pathways on either side of the red brick were repaired and relaid; measures should be put in place to prevent large vehicles parking on the York stone and causing further damage. These measures could include use of street furniture to close up access points.

The Sub-Committee was informed that West Sussex County Council and the consultants had agreed to review the proposals in light of the discussions and to come back with more realistic proposals which had a greater chance of being funded.

Councillor Apel agreed with the discussion but asked what measures could be put in place to monitor the heavy traffic using the precinct. The Property Manager responded that it could involve installing wooden or cast iron bollards, additional planters and other similar methods.

Councillor Dignum queried the lack of clarity in the presentation at the stake holders meeting regarding pricing for the “low cost options”. This was confirmed by the Deputy Town Clerk who also reported that the Property Manager had highlighted schemes, such as had been implemented in Romsey town centre, where coloured tarmac had been used to replace old and damaged surfaces. (Photographs of the Romsey scheme are included with these minutes).

The Chairman reminded the Sub-Committee that the current brick surface had been laid in 1973-1974 to provide a firm surface for delivery lorries where access to the rear of the shops was not possible. She expressed the opinion that this was quite a good life span for the surface but, as lorries being used for deliveries had become heavier over time, it was now time to consider a more robust surface.

The Town Clerk expressed his agreement with the Deputy Town Clerk and Property Manager about the quality of the stake holder meeting. He went on to remind Members that, despite the comments at the meeting about tarmac being undesirable; prior to the pedestrianisation of the city centre, all the roads had had a tarmac surface used by cars, lorries and buses.

The Chairman suggested that, as an alternative, retailers could be engaged with a view to suggesting the use of smaller, less damaging, vehicles to deliver to the city centre.

Councillor Dignum expressed his support for a tarmac surface being considered and agreed with the Town Clerk about the historical use of tarmac surfaces in Chichester city centre.

The Property Manager then showed Members some photographs of Romsey town centre to illustrate the sympathetic use of coloured tarmac. He advised that a concern in Chichester would be the corners where anything other than black tarmac would be susceptible to marks from the tyres of cornering vehicles.

Members all agreed that the Romsey scheme had been very well done and that the coloured tarmac did not detract from the look of the town.

The Property Manager informed Members that, at the stake holder meeting, he had proposed breaking up the tarmac in to shorter 30 metre “bays” separated by lines of granite setts. This, he advised, would allow for easier repair in the event of damage with only a short piece of tarmac needing replacement. He also advised that there was precedent within conservation areas to introduce byelaws to require any utility company undertaking underground works in the city centre to replace the tarmac bay surface in its entirety when making good after their works were completed.

The Property Manager advised that a cost/appearance balance would need to be found between the cheaper and more widely available black tarmac and the

higher cost coloured tarmac that could only be purchased in larger quantities, potentially making smaller projects uneconomical.

The Chairman asked that the Sub-Committee be kept advised about any further developments including responses from the consultants and West Sussex County Council to the suggestions made at the stake holder meeting.

(c) Proposal to install Keats sculpture interpretation board

The Property Manager reported that the interpretation board had now been installed next to the Keats sculpture by the City Council's in house Property Team.

(d) Murray Sculpture

The Chairman declared a personal interest as a member of the Murray Club.

The Property Manager advised that the new stone plinth for the statue was under construction and would be delivered in three pieces – the base, the middle section and a top section.

He further advised that the concrete base for the statue would be laid by the Property Team once the scaffolding being used for the Council House external works had been taken down.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the necessary works had been scheduled to ensure that the unveiling could take place on Saturday 3 April 2021.

Councillor Apel asked about the chances that an unveiling event could happen. It was agreed that it was too early to be able to confirm this given the uncertainties surrounding the lockdown restrictions. The Property Manager suggested that a small ceremony filmed for posterity might be considered in the event of enduring lockdown restrictions.

17. MAINTENANCE TEAM UPDATE – MAINTENANCE COMPOUND

The Property Manager reported that the cabin and solar power system had now been fully installed at a total cost of £6,005.

18. ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- Chichester look and feel and concerns about maintenance issues, including the City Walls and issues with the banks of the Lavant; detracting from the appearance of the city
- Property Team review – staffing levels, equipment and responsibilities

Councillor Apel asked that her thanks be passed to the City Council Officers who had participated in illuminating the Council House and Market Cross as part of the Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations.

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 2pm

The meeting closed at 11.21am

MINUTE 13(a) - ST JAMES ROAD ALLOTMENTS – PLOT CLEARANCE EXAMPLE









34 HOURS LABOUR @ £22.50 PER HOUR
WASTE RECYCLING CHARGES
TOTAL

£765.00
£168.00
£933.00 + vat

MINUTE 16(b) – EXAMPLE OF COLOURED TARMAC IN USE IN ROMSEY TOWN CENTRE



