



**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2020 AT 3.00PM**

- PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Plowman), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Hughes) and Councillors Apel, Dignum and Scicluna
- EX-OFFICIO: Councillor Joy
- IN ATTENDANCE: Deputy Town Clerk, Property Manager, Member Services Support Officer

MINUTES

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Councillor Scicluna be elected Chairman of the Property Sub-Committee for the remainder of the Council year. There were no other nominations.

The minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7 January 2020, having been printed and circulated, were approved by the Sub-Committee for signing 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.

2. COUNCIL HOUSE

(a) Roof Lantern

The Property Manager reported that the work to replace that roof lantern over the rear stairs in the Council House had been completed.

(b) Exterior building repairs project

Members were advised that four companies had been invited to tender for the work highlighted by Fullers Associates as being required to repair current issues with the fabric of the Council House. Members were further advised that one of these companies had declined to tender.

The Property Manager highlighted the tender amounts from each company. He also advised that two of the companies had submitted revised quotes in response to additional questions and clarification from Fuller Associates.

The Property Manager reported that the lowest tender in the sum of £87,110 + VAT had been received from Nutbourne Construction. Members were directed to the detailed information about the tender in the papers accompanying the Agenda which stated that an allowance of £25,000 had been made for elements of the work where negotiation with the Historic Buildings Officer may be required. The Property Manager reported that this meant the final bill could be significantly less than the headline amount quoted.

Members were informed that, due to the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on the City Council's financial situation, it may be necessary to phase the work according to affordability. The Property Manager highlighted that a significant part of the cost would be scaffolding and access equipment so it would be necessary to ensure that best use was made of this once it was in place.

Members were supportive of the choice of contractor due to their knowledge of the work they had undertaken elsewhere in the local area.

Councillor Dignum asked whether phasing the work would increase the overall cost of the project. The Property Manager suggested that the phasing could take place in three stages with the weatherproofing of the building taking priority. He suggested that this would be the most expensive stage as it would make most use of the access equipment. Members were further advised that the phases would not necessarily be equal in size and therefore the costs would not be spread evenly across the project.

The Property Manager advised Members that all the work in the tender would be external works on the building. He also informed the Sub-Committee that to help mitigate some costs the City Council's Property Team had started work on the low level elements, including repainting of window frames and doors.

Members then discussed why the Coronavirus situation meant that phasing of the work was being discussed.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the current Council House Reserve was sufficient to cover the projected cost of the work but that this would leave virtually nothing in the Reserve if any emergency work became necessary. She further advised that she anticipated that the City Council's General Reserve would be needed in the coming years to supplement a significant fall in income caused by the pandemic crisis.

The Property Manager indicated his support for completing the work in a single phase if the funds were available. This would stabilise the building's condition and mean that ongoing exterior maintenance would be relatively straightforward.

Members then discussed how the works might be funded including borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board. The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that, due to the drop in income, she would be concerned about adding loan repayments to revenue expenditure that was already showing a shortfall.

The Property Manager advised that a lot of the work in the project was essential to maintain the fabric of the building and that failure to carry out the work could lead to significant costs in the future if leaks or physical collapse of parts of the building were to occur.

The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to append information to the Minutes regarding the City Council's ability to borrow in this way and general suggestions about how the work might be financed.

The Chairman asked, given that another potential project in the future would be to install additional solar panels on the Council House roof; whether it would be advisable to undertake this work at the same time. The Property Manager advised that, if finance allowed, this would be a positive use of the access equipment given this would constitute a significant cost for both projects.

He further advised that he was currently awaiting a quote from the solar panel installer and would investigate available funding streams to assist with the cost of installation.

It was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee that the contract for the work on the Council House be awarded to Nutbourne Construction SUBJECT TO the financing requirements. Members of the Property Sub-Committee agreed that if the project was funded from Reserves and did not require new borrowing then no further discussion by the Property Sub-Committee would be required.

Post meeting note:

The Deputy Town Clerk has advised that, in her opinion, this is a large project for the City Council to be undertaking under the current circumstances. At the time of writing, the Council House Reserve stood at £91,562 so would be significantly depleted. As there is a large contingency sum in the quote it is hoped that the project may come in under budget. In addition to this, it is hoped that an application for New Homes Bonus funding would assist with the cost of the project.

(c) Neptune and Minerva Stone

The Chairman summarised the project that the University of Warwick had recently undertaken in scanning the Minerva and Neptune stone in the portico of the Council House. She noted that, in the pictures attached to the Agenda, one of the names on the stone appeared to have been incorrectly transcribed. It was further noted that Historians are divided over the spelling; Cogidubnus vs Togidubnus.

Post meeting note: Further referenced here - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiberius_Claudius_Cogidubnus

The Property Manager reminded Members that the project team would soon present a one third size replica of the stone to the City Council and he asked the Sub-Committee for suggestions as to where this might be placed on display.

Members discussed the potential location for display of the replica and it was generally agreed that a location in the Old Court Room corridor should be identified for this purpose.

(d) Portico

The Chairman suggested to the Sub-Committee, given the complexity of the proposed project, the discussion of the works could warrant a Special Meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Dignum questioned the affordability of this kind of project in light of the financial situation discussed earlier in the meeting. The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that this project could be eligible for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and that it had already been identified in the CIL project plan.

The Mayor supported this and suggested that the project might also qualify for New Homes Bonus funding.

The Sub-Committee were supportive of the idea in general and agreed that it represented a positive development for the facilities on offer to the local community at the Council House. The Chairman also highlighted the fact that this project would

potentially assist with insulating the Council Chamber above and therefore help with the City Council's energy bills.

Councillor Apel asked for an idea of cost for the overall project given that New Homes Bonus funding had a bid maximum of £25,000. The Property Manager advised Members that, at this stage, there were no indications of the overall cost of the project and that only the design and management costs in the two quotes supplied so far had been confirmed.

He further advised that the surveyor element of the project had been identified as approximately £13,000. This included management of the tendering and construction phases if the project proceeded.

Councillor Apel suggested that the project could also qualify for Lottery Heritage funding. The Property Manager agreed and suggested that, given the nature of the Council House, the portico project could be an ideal candidate for grant funding from a variety of sources.

Members discussed how to proceed and was agreed that it was necessary to get a clearer idea of the full cost of the project so that grant applications could be submitted. Councillor Joy advised that the materials chosen for the final project plan could have a significant impact on the overall cost given the need for the materials to be sympathetic to the Grade 2* listing of the Council House.

The Property Manager outlined the process that would need to happen in order that an overall project cost could be identified. This included appointing a designer to create a concept design, developing the design and submitting the planning application and then full technical design and submission to Building Regulations. Members were advised that, once these stages were completed a tender document could be issued which would then provide concrete figures for the grant applications.

He further advised Members that, while the exercise of obtaining quotes had been speculative, he felt that the company FiftyPointEight had grasped the concept of the project and that to undertake the three stages highlighted would incur an initial cost of £6,000.

The Chairman suggested that, subject to the available funding, the initial stages should be completed. The Deputy Town Clerk expressed concern that this cost, together with the projected cost of the Council House works would consume the entire Council House Reserve.

She further advised that it would only be possible to transfer the project start-up costs to the capital budget once the full project was up and running and that this represented a further challenge to the City Council's financial position.

The Mayor suggested that an application was made for New Homes Bonus funding for the project start-up costs and that Chichester District Council should be contacted to check if this cost would qualify for this funding stream.

The Property Manager further clarified that, at this stage, he was asking the Sub-Committee for £6,000 to fund the first three stages in the fee proposal.

The Sub-Committee RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that, SUBJECT TO the availability of New Homes Bonus funding, an order be placed with FiftyPointEight in the sum of £6,000 for the first three stages of their proposal – namely Concept Design, Development Design and Submission for Planning Consent and Technical Design and Submission of Building Regulations Application.

(e) Noticeboards at either end of Portico

The Chairman advised that the new noticeboards had been supplied and were now in use.

(f) Lift

The Property Manager reported that the new lift had been installed and that commissioning had taken place on 16 January 2020. Members were further advised that the stair climber that had been hired from Baronmead as a secondary means of access had been returned to the supplier.

(g) Disabled access to the Council Chamber

The Property Manager noted his report that identified that no secondary means of access to the Council Chamber was available for disabled users if the Assembly Room was in use therefore making the route from the lift unavailable.

He summarised his report for Members and indicated that either a fixed stairlift on the main stairs, at a cost of approximately £30,000, or a mobile stair climber at a cost of £2,500; were possible options. He advised that the second option would also be a back-up access method if the lift was out of action.

The Chairman expressed her firm opinion that a fixed stairlift would not be appropriate for the building.

Councillor Apel asked whether the City Council would be in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) if access was not available due to lift failure and non-availability of an alternative. Councillor Joy clarified that if complying with the DDA was either unreasonable or financially disproportionate, especially where listed buildings were concerned; then the regulations accommodated that.

The Sub-Committee then discussed the issue and the experience of using the mobile stair climber earlier in the year. Members agreed that the expected use of the alternative methods did not justify significant expenditure in the current environment and that, in the event of the lift failing in the future, further temporary measures would be investigated as necessary.

(h) Auto-entrance doors

The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee that the regulations governing safety issues and the automatic entrance doors had changed and that the Council House's automatic door sensors did not meet these regulations. This change related to the sensitivity of the obstruction sensors which prevent the door closing on people or objects. The existing sensors do not meet current standards. However, he further advised the Sub-Committee that to retrospectively comply with the latest regulations is not mandatory but rather a recommendation from the contractor, Dormakaba. The Property Manager reported that, in the many years of the doors being in operation, no incidents involving people becoming trapped had been reported at the Council House and the current sensors are working effectively.

The Sub-Committee requested that the Minutes reflect that the report from Officers, as passed on from the relevant contractors; was that the advice came as a recommendation and not a legal requirement to install the new sensors on the automatic doors.

Councillor Dignum asked the Property Manager to clarify whether the identified possible risk meant that there was a real risk of a child being crushed to the point of injury. Members were advised that the risk would more likely be that of a trapped limb but the earlier point of no reported incidents should be taken in to account.

The Sub-Committee RESOLVED that, given the available facts and the current financial situation the advice should be noted and no further action taken at this time.

(i) Infra-red taps

The Property Manager advised that the new infra-red taps for the staff toilets and the gents public toilets had arrived and were awaiting fitting.

The Sub-Committee agreed that this was a positive step forward.

(j) Energy and water audit

The Property Manager summarised his report and advised Members that this audit would allow the City Council to review its current water and energy usage and to plan future projects to enable efficiencies and savings to be made.

Members were advised that, as an example, two out of three of the current gas boilers in the Council House were approaching the end of their working life. The planned audit would enable the City Council to assess options for their replacement and also to identify appropriate funding sources.

The Property Manager informed the Sub-Committee that the organisation named in his report, Save Money Cut Carbon, would be able to compile the audit and guide the City Council through funding applications and final delivery of the chosen solutions.

The Sub-Committee was further informed that this organisation did not have affiliations with specific suppliers so would be able to present an independent viewpoint on how to proceed.

Members felt that this would be a positive step to making the City Council's use of water and energy more efficient, specifically in light of the City Council's early declaration of a Climate Emergency.

It was therefore RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee to place an order to the value of £1,590 + VAT for the energy and water audit with Save Money Cut Carbon to be funded from the Council House Improvement Budget.

3. ALLOTMENTS

(a) Update

The Sub-Committee were advised that there were currently 68 people on the waiting list with only 2 vacant allotments that were being prepared for reletting.

(b) St Pauls

The Sub-Committee noted that the tree works at St Pauls allotments had been completed and the parking bollard installed.

Councillor Apel informed the Sub-Committee that, as she needed to leave for another meeting, could the matter of Durnford Close be discussed before Whitehouse Farm. This was agreed by the Chairman.

(c) Durnford Close

Members discussed the contents of the Property Manager's report at length.

The Property Manager confirmed that the majority of the allotment holders at Durnford Close presented very few problems for the City Council.

The Sub-Committee were informed that the matter had been brought to their attention due to the behaviour of a single tenant and that this had caused considerable problems for City Council Officers as well as consuming a disproportionate amount of City Council resources.

The Property Manager advised that the behaviour of this individual had spread to the St Pauls allotment site.

Members suggested that the allotment holder be removed from his plot after a suitable notice period but were informed by the Property Manager that this would be likely to generate even greater and stronger negative interactions with Officers.

The Sub-Committee were informed that, unlike all the other City Council allotment sites, Durnford Close was not a statutory site and was leased from Hyde Housing.

The Property Manager informed the Sub-Committee that if the City Council did give notice to Hyde it would not necessarily mean the loss of the allotments, more that the City Council would no longer be responsible for them. Members were further informed that the City Council Planning adviser could not rule out Hyde redeveloping the site. However, the Property Manager advised that if Hyde did wish to close the allotments then they would have to apply to the Secretary of State in the same way that the City Council would have to if they wished to close a statutory allotment site. He also reminded Members that, if Hyde had wanted to develop the site they could have given the City Council 12 months notice to quit at any time.

The Property Manager expressed the firm view that the £450 annual rental income from the Durnford Close allotments did not justify the time being spent and the abuse being suffered by City Council Officers and that there was a duty of care responsibility by the City Council to ensure that Officers were not subjected to unreasonable behaviour in the course of their duties.

The Mayor expressed support for the recommendation made by the Property Manager for giving Hyde notice that the allotments would be handed back after the 12 month notice period. This view was supported by the Deputy Mayor and Councillor Dignum.

Members expressed sadness that the situation as described had arisen but after further discussion it was RESOLVED that the City Council would give Hyde 12 months notice of the intention to hand the allotments back. It was further RESOLVED that the current tenants would be given 12 months notice at which point their agreements with the City Council would terminate and be superseded by the arrangements with Hyde.

(d) Whitehouse Farm

The Property Manager summarised his report and confirmed that the developers at White House Farm had approached the City Council about management of the new allotment sites being created on this development. Members were informed that this could also include an offer to manage the new community centre being built on the development.

The Sub-Committee was advised that, given the issues highlighted with existing allotment sites, Officers were of the firm opinion that this would not be viable and that management of the allotments should be on a more community led basis with the creation of an Allotment Management Association, of which there were many examples around the country.

Councillor Apel expressed support for the position outlined by the Property Manager.

Councillor Dignum informed Members that he was a trustee of the Chichester District Community Trust and that they had been discussing management of all the community facilities on the White House Farm site with the developers.

The Sub-Committee RESOLVED that the offer from the Whitehouse Farm developers should be declined by the City Council.

Councillor Apel left the meeting.

4. LITTEN GARDENS

(a) Paving

The Property Manager informed Members that the paving and pathways at Litten Gardens were in need of attention and replacement. He advised that the York stone paving inside the main gate suffered from significant algal growth due to the over hanging trees. This caused the paving to become a slip hazard and require regular cleaning. In addition, the crazy paving that formed the outer path around the Gardens had begun to deteriorate and would begin to cause health and safety problems for users of the memorial gardens.

The Property Manager further advised that any replacement for the York stone entrance paving would need to be robust enough to withstand parking by maintenance vehicles both from the City Council and from any contractors working on the War Memorial.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the Property Manager had obtained quotes for the work from Crown Civil Engineering for a total of approximately £5000 to replace the York stone with a Tarmac surface and the pathway with a compacted bound gravel surface over a type 1 base.

The Chairman expressed concern about the choice of Tarmac as she did not agree that it was appropriate for the surroundings of the Memorial Gardens. She expressed further concern that compact gravel surfaces could occasionally look a little bright.

The Property Manager confirmed that the gravel surface being suggested was similar to the paths already in place around the Maurice Patten sculpture and the chainsaw statue in the Garden of Reconciliation and Remembrance. He further confirmed that the colour would tend to become more restrained over time.

The Chairman asked the Property Manager to consider trying to sell the York stone when it had been removed as she thought it would be a shame to see such nice paving being used for land fill. The Property Manager agreed to investigate this possibility and also suggested that the crazy paving from the outer path could be broken up as hardcore and either sold as well or used for City Council projects as required.

Following further discussion, the Sub-Committee RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that the Property Manager should obtain two further quotes for the work specified and that an order be placed with the preferred supplier for the amount quoted, to be paid from the Public Realm budget.

5. **BUS STOPS/SHELTER**

(a) RTI Bus Shelters

The Property Manager reminded Members of the history behind the ongoing bus shelters installations and the reasons that the shelters had not been supplied and installed at this point. He advised that a replacement supplier had now been identified and that the shelters should be available in October 2020.

(b) Swanfield Drive bus stop

The Property Manager advised Members that a quote had been obtained in the sum of £10,418 for a shallower bus shelter that hopefully would not require purchase of additional land from A2 Dominion and, further, would not require the current fence lines to be moved.

He further advised that West Sussex County Council had not yet agreed that this shelter would be suitable and that the City Council would need to apply to West Sussex Highways for the appropriate Section 115 licence before a decision would be made.

Members were informed that if the licence application was unsuccessful then the Property Manager would attempt to reopen discussions with A2 Dominion about the purchase of the land necessary to site the bus shelter back from the pavement.

Councillor Dignum asked for clarification of the source of funding for this bus shelter. The Deputy Mayor and the Property Manager both confirmed that Section 106 money had been made available and would be used once a suitable solution had been agreed on.

6. **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

(a) Wayfinding (finger posts)

The Chairman reminded Members that the wayfinding posts belonged to Chichester District Council.

The Property Manager reported that, despite positive cooperation with Chichester BID, slow progress in moving forward with the District Council and the Coronavirus lockdown meant that the project had stalled.

Members were informed that, once physical meetings were possible, the Property Manager would be meeting with Chichester BID to review progress to date and ensure the project moved forward.

The Sub-Committee suggested that the Town Clerk should write to Chichester District Council to request an update and try to get the project moving. The Property Manager responded and confirmed that they were awaiting final details from the District Council about the information needed for each finger post. This would then be passed to the contractor, Leander, for final costings to be confirmed.

(b) Precinct paving

The Property Manager reported that, in common with the wayfinding post, progress had stalled on the precinct paving project.

Members were informed that the Property Manager was awaiting the options report for resurfacing from West Sussex County Council that the City Council had previously agreed to part fund.

The Chairman expressed concerns that no progress had been made and that it was important that the project move forward to form part of the re-opening of Chichester as the lockdown was easing.

The Chairman and the Mayor reminded the Sub-Committee that agreement had been reached to share funding of the options report between the City Council, Chichester District Council and West Sussex County Council. Members were further reminded that, once this report had been completed, then a better idea of the overall cost would be available.

(c) Proposal to install Keats sculpture interpretation board

The Chairman noted the update in the Property Manager's report.

The Property Manager informed Members that, in addition to the costs identified in the report there would be an additional £36 payable to the LME Image Library for the rights to use their photographs on the interpretation board.

The Chairman expressed frustration that the City Council was paying for images of its own property after the Property Manager had explained what this additional charge was for.

The Mayor expressed support for the project, its positive impact on the City centre and the extra attraction that the interpretation board would provide.

The Property Manager confirmed that the sculptor of the Keats statue was happy with the proposed interpretation board and that the board itself would feature an aluminium frame as opposed to the timber frames of the Litten boards as this was felt to be more in keeping with the location.

Post meeting note: Funding for this project had previously been agreed at the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 7 January 2020 (Minute 40(e)) and approved at the Finance Committee meeting held on 14 January 2020 (Minute 112).

(d) Streetlights in Oxmarket twitten

The Property Manager reported that the new lights in the Oxmarket Twitten had been installed and were now in use.

(e) Unity sculpture and seat

The Property Manager summarised his report to Members and advised that, if the City Council adopted the statue, a possible location in East Street had been proposed.

Members were advised that Chichester Bid had objected to this location on the basis that it would cause an obstruction and may not find favour with businesses in East Street.

The Property Manager asked the Sub-Committee for suggestions for a possible location. The Members debated suggestions including the area across the road from the Keats statue and West Street.

The Mayor suggested that, given the subject matter of the statue, an appropriate location would be the West Street Garden of Remembrance. The Chairman expressed support for this suggestion and, additionally, for the possibility of the City Council taking over responsibility for the garden itself.

The Property Manager requested contact information for the artist so that further details could be obtained about the sculpture. The Mayor agreed to pass this information on.

7. MAINTENANCE TEAM UPDATE

(a) Maintenance compound (St James Road)

The Sub-Committee expressed its support for the efforts of the Property Team in keeping the City and the City Council's assets in good condition.

The Property Manager advised Members that, whilst the St James Road compound had been continuing to develop, with secure storage, new fencing and resurfacing; there were still no adequate welfare or shelter facilities for the Property Team.

Members were reminded that approval had previously been given for an electricity supply to be installed to the compound at a cost of £7,377.22. The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee that, despite paying this sum up front, SSE had revised the cost upwards to approximately £11,000 following a more detailed survey and the need to specify a lot more traffic management.

The Property Manager reported that the revised quote had been rejected and the full prepayment refunded.

The Sub-Committee were advised that one member of the Property Team was a qualified electrician and that he had designed a solar power scheme that would be suitable to supply the compound with enough power for the welfare facility, tool recharging and other miscellaneous requirements. It had been estimated that this scheme would cost approximately £2,500.

The Sub-Committee were further advised that the Property Manager had identified a local supplier for a secure site cabin. Members were directed to the details supplied in Appendix G of the meeting papers. The proposed cabin would provide a warm, secure and dry space for the property team and could be delivered to site for a total cost of £3,000.

The Property Manager suggested that, now that the money originally earmarked for the electricity supply had been returned to the Allotment Reserve, the solar power scheme and cabin could be funded from the Reserve.

The Mayor and Sub-Committee expressed their support for the change to the overall scheme and the use of solar power.

The Sub-Committee therefore RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that the solar power scheme proceed at an estimated cost of £2,500. It was further RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that a secure cabin, as specified, be purchased at a cost of £3,000. Both recommendations to be funded from the Allotment Reserve.

8. WEST STREET GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the photographs of the West Street Garden of Remembrance that had previously been circulated.

The Sub-Committee were advised by the Chairman that she, along with the West Walls Residents Association, Councillor Bell (Chichester City and District Councils) and Councillor Goldsmith (West Sussex County Council); had recently spent time bringing the garden back in to good condition.

The Sub-Committee were further advised that the Royal Sussex Regimental Association had also been helping to maintain the garden and the Chairman expressed her thanks for this assistance.

The Chairman then expressed her wish that the garden itself should be maintained by the City Council and that the owners of the land should be approached again to enable this to happen. She further noted that, now the garden had been tidied up, it would not represent a significant extra workload for the City Council's Property Team.

The Property Manager reported that he had contacted Marstons, the current tenant of the adjoining public house; and they had confirmed that the garden formed part of their lease but that the land was not owned by them.

Members were informed that the Property Manager had obtained details of the freeholder of the land and that Marstons themselves were happy in principle to assign that part of the lease to the City Council but that the final decision lay with the freeholder.

The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee that he had written to the freeholder explaining the situation and that Marstons were happy to assign that part of the lease. He further advised that he was currently awaiting a response.

Members discussed the history of the Garden of Remembrance and its inclusion in the City's Remembrance Sunday events. The Mayor reiterated that it would make a very suitable location for the Unity sculpture and Members agreed that under the management of the City Council it would become another positive asset for the City Council to share with residents and visitors.

9. ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- Nelson-Murray Statue

Date of Next Meeting – To be confirmed

The meeting closed at 4.45pm