



## CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

### REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER

#### PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – MONDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2023

#### COUNCIL HOUSE

- a) **Mayors Car Park** – We have appointed a contractor to undertake the resurfacing work to the rear half of the Mayors Car Park. They have received an instruction to commence the works at their earliest convenience in alignment with a mutually convenient date.
- b) **Redecoration Works** - We will be carrying out an inspection/audit on the décor of the Council Chamber, Landing, Main staircase and reception area in due course. During this process we will ascertain the scope and extent of the works. Subsequent to this, we will draw up a specification and put it out to tender.
- c) **Crush Bar Ceiling** – We have approached three ceiling fitting contractors with a view to obtaining quotations for the replacement of the low level crush bar ceiling which has become damaged in various places. The current ceiling uses a concealed grid system which renders the tiles nigh on impossible to remove or replace without causing damage to them. It is my intention to have the ceiling replaced with the more conventional grid system whereby tiles can easily be changed. We will ensure that the tiles used are not only robust and hard wearing, but are also similar in appearance to the existing tiles. To date I have received one quotation of £1224-00+VAT to effect these works.
- d) **Battery Storage of solar energy** – At present we do not have sufficient overgeneration to justify or warrant the installation of a battery bank for the purpose of accumulating electrical charge. That said, there is sufficient room on the South side of the Assembly room roof to accommodate further photovoltaic panels. Naturally this would increase our generation capacity to an extent whereby we would most likely benefit from a storage battery. We will be approaching the organisation who arranged the installation of the last array of panels in due course.
- e) **Electrical Installation Condition Report** – Two electrical engineers from a local electrical firm attended site for three working days and carried out a comprehensive test and inspection on our electrical installation in its entirety. As a result these works have now drawn to a conclusion.
- f) **Council Chamber Chandelier** - The chandelier has been repaired in the past having suffered bomb damage during the Second World War. Consideration was given to the full restoration of the chandelier but it was subsequently decided to maintain the chandelier in its current condition for the purpose of preservation of character. We will however be upgrading the LED lamps which are integral to the chandelier in order to enhance lighting levels. We will also ensure that it is on a dimmer in order to accommodate those occasions upon which a lower level of light is required.
- g) **Copper Roof** – A local roofing contractor has effected repairs to the roof and all water leaks have been rectified thereby preventing further water ingress.
- h) **Façade Display Lighting**- We will be illuminating The Council House and Market Cross in a colour changing sequence on the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023. This to be in recognition of Chichester Pride Day.
- i) **CCTV** - We are giving consideration to the upgrade of the CCTV cameras in the Council House. There are far more versatile systems available now which afford better definition, ease of remote accessibility and more recording capacity. The CCTV is doubtless an important security feature and therefore we are looking at options to upgrade the cameras, cabling and associated recording equipment. We would like the new system to be similar to that which has recently been installed in Litten Gardens. Thus far I have approached no less than five CCTV installers and to date we have received one quotation for the sum of £5162-00+VAT.

- j) **Portico Enclosure-** We have held a meeting with a well known and highly experienced local architect where possibilities for the enclosure of our Portico were discussed. It is proposed to create an enclosed space for which possible uses may include a tourist information centre. There are also environmental benefits to be reaped in terms of reducing the rate of heat loss from our building.
- k) **Old Courtroom roof light-** We have had a discussion with the same architect regarding the single glazed rooflight in the Old Courtroom. We are giving consideration to the replacement of the same with a new structure incorporating double or triple glazing. The purpose of this exercise is to minimise heat loss thereby reducing overall carbon emissions. The first stage in the process will be to secure all of the necessary consents.
- l) **Secondary Glazing-** It is our intention to revisit this project in alliance with our architect. I, along with others, am of the view that the previous designs and proposals were unsuitable and not fit for purpose.
- m) **Murray Cabinet-** The lock on the Murray Cabinet has recently become defective and as such the cabinet could not be opened. A locksmith has indeed now managed to open the cabinet which is a big step in the right direction. We are currently awaiting repairs and determining the most cost effective way of implementing them. Ideally we need to avoid using the manufacturers' engineers as they are based in Scotland. Naturally they would have to incorporate their travelling expenses into the equation. It is recommended that a more local contractor is sought to undertake repairs for reasons of cost and efficiency. The cabinet will require further disassembly but I am confident that either myself or a locksmith will be able to come up with a more robust and reliable solution. Naturally I am keen to effect repairs as soon as possible in order that the Murray artefacts can again be displayed again in their former glory.
- n) **Fire Alarm Panel-** Our fire alarm panel has now become temperamental in operation from time to time. It is currently fully functional but many of the buttons are becoming worn and as such difficult to operate. As an integral part of our fire safety system, it is very much in our best interests to have it replaced as soon as possible. To date three fire alarm companies have visited site to assess the required works with a view to the provision of quotations which I am currently awaiting.
- o) **Council Chamber Acoustics-** The acoustics in the Council Chamber really are not that great. It is often difficult to hear what people are saying, particularly when there is a high level of external ambient noise due to buskers, Street events and the suchlike. Also there is a lot of variation in different individuals ability to project their voice. In an effort to make improvements, we are considering the installation of an induction hearing loop system similar to the one in the Assembly Room. Another viable option would be a simple system utilising a microphone and suitable amplification in conjunction with loudspeakers. Such a system may have to be non permanent given the historic nature of the room.

## ALLOTMENTS

- a) **Update** – We now have a total of 443 allotment plots. This figure is fluid to a degree owing to the fact that older larger plots are often split up and smaller plots are sometimes merged dependent on tenants requests and requirements. Several boundary fence repairs are required here and there and as such we will be seeking quotations in due course. We are currently running at 100% occupation on all of our sites. It is our intention to promote rainwater harvesting and conservation of water in this years allotment newsletter owing to escalating water supply costs. We have now purchased our new industrial rotavator which is proving to highly effective in use. It is now possible to restore allotment plots to a letting standard in a very short space of time.
- b) **Water leaks**
  - **Kingsham Avenue** - The underground water leak at our Kingsham Avenue allotment facility has been located and subsequently repaired by our in house property maintenance team.
  - **Roman Amphitheatre** - Unfortunately it has now become apparent that we have an underground water leak at our Roman Amphitheatre allotment facility. I will shortly be investigating this with our Property Maintenance Officer with a view to hopefully locating the leak and effecting repairs to the same. Depending on the condition of the water service pipe, it may require replacing in its entirety.

- c) **Electric Ride On Mower**- I have received a request for an electrically propelled ride on mower from our Property Maintenance Officer. He has stated that this would greatly reduce the amount of time spent maintaining our larger green areas such as St Pauls Church and Litten Gardens. He has also stated that this would enable us to carry out the cutting of the Brewery Field grass in house which would eliminate the use of subcontractors and the associated costs. The cutting of the Brewery Field grass currently incurs us a cost of £2970-00 per annum. This would doubtless afford him considerably more time to concentrate on other aspects of our comprehensive and ongoing maintenance programme. He is also confident that this would alleviate the requirement to employ another full time member of maintenance staff to fill the Acting Property Managers old role. The Property Maintenance Officer has, however, also stated that from time to time there will be occasion when he may require assistance with certain tasks, particularly during the run up to Remembrance Sunday. He has suggested that this could be drawn from our existing reserve of Part Time Custodians. Preliminary research has shown that a suitable machine complete with batteries and charging apparatus could be obtained for £10503-00 inclusive of VAT. For comparison purposes, a Kubota diesel powered equivalent ride on mower retails at £23755-00. It is hoped that this could be funded from CIL monies.

## **BUS STOPS/SHELTERS**

- a) **Swanfield Drive** – At long last this project will soon be coming to fruition. In essence, all that is required now is to finalise the transfer of the land into City Council Ownership. We are given to understand that upon completion of this, it will be possible to raise an order and issue an instruction for the installation of the bus shelter. These works are to be funded from S106 monies.
- b) **Bognor Road** – Our contractor has been issued with an instruction and works order to effect the installation of the shelter. It is envisaged that these works will take place on the 25/26<sup>th</sup> May 2023.
- c) **Broyle Road** - Unfortunately the bus shelter adjacent to the entrance to Roussillon Park has been subject to vandalism. Our contractor has been issued with an instruction and works order to effect repairs. They will be installing metal panels which by their very nature are far more vandal resistant than glass.

## **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

- a) **Murray sculpture** – Further to the transfer of ownership we issued our stonemasonry contractor with an instruction to install the Sussex Heritage plaque. Unfortunately they were not forthcoming with their services so a difficult decision was made to appoint another local contractor. Like the vast majority of the local stonemasons, they are ex Cathedral Works Organisation. Further to this, the works were completed on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Sadly the sculpture has recently been subjected to some minor vandalism. The sculptor was made aware of this and true to his word he has now effected repairs.
- b) **Cycle racks** – We are currently assessing our cycle racks in terms of usage. It is our intention to gradually replace them with units which are capable of accommodating multiple bicycles and by virtue of their design are inherently more secure. I am of the opinion that we should commence with the most prominent and most used locations. I have done my calculations and it would be possible to replace all of the bike racks in North Street and West Street for the provisional sum of £3544-67 inclusive of VAT. Naturally we can start with a smaller replacement quantity if so desired. The provisional costing is for materials only and is based on the proviso that the bicycle racks are to be installed by our in house Property Maintenance Team.
- c) **Speed Indicator Devices** - We have received many reports of the Speed Indicator Device having the effect of slowing people down which is indeed positive. We continue to rotate the device between the locations of St. Pancras, Broyle Road and St. Pauls Road. We have recently held a meeting with Mike Dare from highways with a view to effecting its' deployment in Westgate.
- d) **Parish Boundary signs** - All nine of our Parish Boundary signs have now been replaced with new versions which reflect our recent twinning with Speyer Germany and our

friendship with Valletta Malta. It is our intention to refresh a spare boundary sign that we have in our possession and to install it at the A27 end of Terminus Road. We have had a meeting with Mike Dare of Highways in order to determine a suitable location. These works will be effected in house by our property maintenance team.

- e) **Railway Station waiting rooms** – Subsequent to purchasing the aluminium frames, we have now mounted all sixteen prints within the frames. We are currently awaiting some annotation from the photographer prior to their being handed over to the railway station for installation.
- f) **Cathedral beds** - We are proposing the complete renovation of the Cathedral Beds. There is plenty of scope for improvement in this area regarding their appearance. We are of the opinion that the soil needs conditioning/replacing and that many of the plants are now past their best. It is our intention to seek professional horticultural advice regarding appropriate floral displays and to subsequently contract the works out. These beds are an integral part of the curtilage of our biggest asset, The Cathedral, and many of you will remember how stunning these beds have looked in times past. It is also our intention to repair the associated retaining walls and the capping stones atop them as these have fallen into a state of disrepair. These works would be funded from CIL.
- g) **City Centre Task Force** – To date this initiative has been a resounding success. There have been vast improvements in many areas and it is very much hoped that these works will continue on a rolling basis.

## **BREWERY FIELD**

- a) We have been informed by the Westgate Residents association that Brewery Field is currently extremely wet and muddy. Naturally this a direct result of the recent weather we have been experiencing. They have requested a delivery of wood chippings which we can obtain free of charge from our tree surgeons. They have also requested some paving slabs to place in front of the benches on the proviso that they will lay them if we supply them.

**Stephen Hawkins**  
**Property Manager**