



## CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

### REPORT OF THE PROPERTY MANAGER

#### PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – TUESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023

#### COUNCIL HOUSE

- a) **Artefacts and records** - We have a large quantity of paper records, paintings and other valuables which are currently being stored in disused rooms in our place of office. These rooms are not temperature or climate controlled and concern has been expressed that these are not the best conditions in which to keep them. We are looking into possibilities regarding the relocation of these items to the Novium Museum and the County Records Office.
- b) **Redecoration Works** - There are currently one or two superficial cracks in the Council Chamber décor, particularly in the ceiling. This was caused by excessive temperature fluctuations owing to the heating being turned on and off repeatedly. We now have a new control system and tamper proof room thermostats which ensures that a more constant average temperature is maintained. This should prevent reoccurrence of the cracking in future. It is our intention to obtain three quotations for the making good of the cracks and repainting of the ceiling in order to restore it to its former glory. The carpet in the Council Chamber is now starting to become a little threadbare and as such we are giving consideration to its replacement. Any works on the fabric of the Council Chamber will need prior Listed Building Consent as the Council House is Grade 2\* listed.
- c) **Battery Storage of solar energy** - We currently have two arrays of photovoltaic cells on two of our roof elevations. We are planning to install a bank of storage batteries in order that we may harness any excessive daytime generation and benefit from it during the hours of darkness. We are currently awaiting quotations for these works.
- d) **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 system in order to ensure the best possible level of protection for our assets and artefacts. To date, we have received three quotations for these works of £3377-76, £3932-09 and £5162-00. All of these quotations are subject to VAT. I recommend accepting the middle quotation as the proposed solution would integrate with our existing fire and intruder alarm systems.
- e) **Portico Enclosure** - We have held a meeting with a well known and highly experienced local architect at which 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. We are currently awaiting an update from the architect.

- f) **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. We are currently waiting an update from the architect.
- g) **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 in the process of obtaining quotations from local locksmiths with a view to the installation of a new lock. This will alleviate the need to get the manufacturers involved who are based in Scotland and as such would levy hefty travel charges.
- h) **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 purchase of a hearing loop system for use in the Chamber and the Old Courtroom, which suffers from poor acoustics as well. After approaching three suppliers, we have received two quotes from a one of the suppliers. One quote for a radio-frequency based system (£2755 + VAT) and one for an infra-red system (£2785 + VAT) The recommendation is to try to borrow an infra-red version for testing which will be reported back to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee for a final decision. Infra-red would be preferred as there would be no signal leak outside the room it is being used in.
- i) **Paintings** - Some of our antique paintings have arrived at a stage where they need professional cleaning. We will soon be seeking advice on how best to go about this and further to that we will be looking to obtain quotations for the work. It is suggested that the Councillors consider reconstituting the Painting Conservation Working Group to review the requirements on this subject.

## **LITTEN GARDENS-**

- a) Unfortunately, the War Memorial in the middle has suffered damage by way of frost penetration and mechanical impact. We are looking to effect repairs prior to Remembrance Sunday and to this end have obtained quotations for the works. There are various repair options which have been quoted at £865-80, £1604-84 and £2950-00. All of these figures are subject to VAT.
- b) It is proposed that the wooden bench behind the chainsaw sculpture (north side) is removed in order to facilitate access to the gardens from the tarmac path which runs along the adjacent hedgerow. There are two other benches in the immediate vicinity and the new entrance would provide easier access for maintenance purposes.

## **ALLOTMENTS**

- a) **Update** - We now have a total of 449 allotment plots and we are currently running at full occupation. 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 in the process of creating a wild flower area at the Southernmost end of our Florence Road allotment site in order to promote biodiversity. St Anthony's school which is located near our St

Pauls allotment facility, has recently been organising trips onto the allotments in liaison with our Property Maintenance Officer. It is felt that the children are benefitting immensely from these excursions and they are also in the process of introducing bee watering stations.

- b) **Allotment water supply** - The underground water supply pipes on several of our allotment sites are starting to become defective. The pipes in question are made of ferrous material and as such have suffered a large degree of corrosion over the years owing to the water passing through them and by virtue of the fact that they are buried in the ground. The pipes are now at a stage whereby they are starting to spring leaks from time to time of their own volition. Naturally this has the effect of increasing our water bills owing to the fact that all of our water supplies are metered. It is our intention to replace the outmoded pipework with MDPE plastic pipe which pretty much has an infinite life expectancy. We will be effecting these works inhouse during the winter months when the water is turned off on our allotment facilities. We will carry out these works inhouse in order to minimise costs incurred.
- c) **Electric Ride On Mower** - We have recently procured an electric EGO ride on lawn mower. This has greatly reduced the amount of time expended on grass cutting across our variety of green spaces. This is the latest in a line of electrical tools which we have obtained. It is clean and quiet which boosts our green credentials and bolsters our commitment to becoming carbon neutral. It has also afforded our Property Maintenance Officer more time to focus on other tasks and commitments. We also intend to use it for the ongoing maintenance of Brewery Field which will offload the cost of £2970 per annum incurred as a result of subcontract mowing.
- d) **Portfield Cemetery Gate (access to St James allotments)** - There is currently a dilapidated metal gate which separates Portfield cemetery from our St James allotment site. The gate is now sagging, hard to open and will only open as a whole to allow vehicular access. We are looking to create a situation whereby pedestrian access is available at all times and vehicle access restricted to only certain times. Such vehicle access would be for CCC maintenance purposes and the occasional delivery of allotment sheds and the suchlike. We would achieve the distinction between access levels by the installation of a set of double gates. One half would be locked with a standard allotment padlock and the other half would be locked with one of our private maintenance padlocks. We have received a quotation of £1725-00+VAT for the manufacture and supply of the gates only. We have also received a supply and fit quotation which amounts to £2367-09. We intend to install the gates ourselves in order to minimize costs.
- e) **St James compound electrical connection** - The time really has now come to effect an electrical connection to our maintenance compound in St James Road. To date we have been running lighting and small power off an inverter powered by solar panels and storage batteries. This system was installed by myself and has a maximum capacity of 2000 watts when the sun is shining. This was quite adequate to start off with but we now have an electric vehicle and an array of electric power tools and associated equipment. This is all part of our drive to commit to our carbon neutral policy. All of this equipment needs to be charged and some of it all year round. The existing photovoltaic system simply does not have the capacity to accommodate this, particularly during the winter months of weak sun. There is also insufficient power to ensure a warm and comfortable working environment in our office facilities which are located there. We are looking to install a three phase supply in order that we may charge our work vehicle at this location along with our ride on mower and other ancillary electrical items. Unfortunately these works will require a road crossing owing to the fact that the street main is on the other side of the road. Naturally this has

increased the cost due to the required traffic management and the suchlike. We have previously received a desk quotation from Scottish and Southern Energy Networks for £9723-55+VAT to carry out these works. There will be an additional cost of around £1500-00+VAT to effect the post meter electrical works for which we are responsible. This figure is based solely on material costs inclusive of excavator hire and is based on the assumption that these works will be carried out by our inhouse 2391 18<sup>th</sup> Edition JIB electrician. Alternatively we can subcontract these works out and obtain quotations which will doubtless increase the costs considerably.

## **BUS STOPS/SHELTERS**

- a) **Swanfield Drive** – We are still awaiting completion of the purchase of the parcel of land in Swanfield Drive for the installation of a bus shelter. Once this is done, a section of the existing railings will be removed and a concrete pad will be installed to form the base. Subsequent to that the shelter will be installed. These works are to be funded from S106 monies.
- b) **Bognor Road** – The new bus shelter has now been installed and we are currently in the process of organising a connection to the electrical distribution network in order to power the ceiling luminaire and the Real Time Passenger Information board.

## **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

- a) **Murray sculpture** – This has sadly recently fallen victim to an act of vandalism by way of having one of the swords bent which in turn has cracked the resin. This is not the first time that this has happened. We are giving consideration to having the swords cast in bronze which is a far more durable and vandal resistant material than glass fibre resin. The sculptor has liaised with his foundry and subsequently provided a quotation of £1958-33 to effect the repairs.
- b) **Cycle racks** – We are currently assessing our cycle racks in terms of usage. It is our intention to implement a phased replacement with units which are capable of accommodating multiple bicycles and by virtue of their design are inherently more secure. Initially we have obtained a quotation of £2953-89 + VAT to replace the units in North Street and West Street. It is also our intention to approach local steel fabricators with a view to obtaining quotations for bespoke manufactured cycle racks. The units will be installed by our in house property maintenance team.
- c) **Speed Indicator Devices** – The speed indicator device continues to be deployed on a rota basis between Broyle Road, St Pauls Road and St Pancras. It spends one month at each location which is split fortnightly across both sides of the carriageway. This is to ensure compliance with the requirements of West Sussex County Council Highways and is in alignment with their specifications regarding the deployment of SIDs. We are proposing to install a further two retention sockets in Westgate to accommodate a removable SID mounting post. This will allow the SID to be deployed there as well. WSCC Highways have granted the Section 115 licence for the installation as no objections were raised during the consultation period. This will however be subject to approval by the City Council and I have received a quotation of £920-00+VAT to install the sockets. Originally the SID was purchased by the City Council for use by residents associations and speedwatch groups. We have been moving the device around and gathering data as a goodwill gesture but this is now proving to be an unnecessary burden on our resources. As such it may well become necessary for the relevant associations to take responsibility for the operation and commissioning of the device.

- d) **Parish Boundary signs** – We have received a request to install an additional Parish Boundary sign at the Westernmost end of Terminus Road as it is indeed considered to be a main road into the City. This will be in addition to the nine we have in situ already. We have a spare sign in the cellar which we intend to refresh to reflect our recent twinning with Speyer and our friendship with Malta. We have received a quotation of £350-50+VAT to refresh the sign and supply two suitable mounting posts. The sign will be installed by our inhouse Property Maintenance team.

#### **BREWERY FIELD**

- a) We are planning some alterations in Brewery field. At present the field consists of a large area of grass. This is periodically mowed by subcontractors throughout the growing season. This incurs us a cost of £2970-00 per annum. We are now in possession of a ride on electric mower and we are planning to use the same to effect the grass cutting in Brewery Field. In order to reduce wear and tear on the machine, we are planning on reducing the area of grass which actually needs cutting. We intend to achieve this by developing some wilded areas of appropriate flowers and long grass. This will reduce the amount of labour required to maintain the field and will also enhance the area in terms of biodiversity.

#### **WESTS MEMORIAL GARDEN**

- a) We are giving consideration to the adoption of the small walled garden adjacent to The Duke and Rye in West. It is hoped that this will subsequently be maintained to a standard by the Westgate Residents Association.

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