

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 20 March 2023
Title: Projects Update
Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The purpose of this project is to update members on the projects that sit under the Stronger Communities Committee.

Current Situation

Covid-19 Memorial

The District Council has now confirmed that planning permission is not needed to install the large stone/rocks. Once payment has been made a date will be set with the company providing them for installation. The Operations Manager will need to order a bench as the ones held in stock have now all been used in other areas.

The Project Officer has carried out extensive research on possible signage for the memorial. The signage needs to “fit” with the memorial and compliment it rather than look like an add on – she does not believe a traditional “information board would look right (unless that is members’ preference). She has therefore investigated alternatives and has spoken to Fergus Wessel, one of the UK’s leading stone carvers based in Chipping Norton. The idea is to carve the words “together” on one half of the stone and “apart” on the other. The slate we have chosen is apparently perfect for carving. Fergus will make a site visit to advise once the stones are in place and give a quotation. Members can view his work here: - <https://stoneletters.com/>. A simple wooden sign could then be erected with “Covid-19 Memorial” inscribed. These can be reasonably purchased for under £200.

A strong press release would be able to explain the concept and story behind the memorial. There are lots of examples of public art that leave the viewer to interpret the exact meaning (e.g. Conversation Piece, South Shields; The Messenger, Plymouth; and The Line Sculpture Walk, London).

The project is currently over budget (£1, 500) at £1666.67 (VAT not included) so consideration will need to be given to funding to complete the project.

QEII Jubilee Garden

The Works Team installed the sundial pedestal but on the first night it was pulled up from its base. This may have been partly due to the concrete not going off completely. The Project Officer has discussed the issue at length with the Operations Manager and if the Committee is so minded, it could be reinstalled but may suffer a similar fate. The alternative is for it to be reinstalled somewhere else in the town that is less secluded – Officers would welcome suggestions from the Committee.

If the sundial is to be relocated, the Committee is asked to consider if it wishes to proceed with the planting scheme at Unterhaching Park.

Town Hall Reception Signage

The Deputy Town Clerk has designed a scheme for the signage for the Town Hall Reception office windows and sign board (appendix 1). The Project Officer has obtained quotations as per appendix 2 for the Committee's consideration.

Smoke Free Play Areas

This initiative was originally brought to the Council by the Town Clerk and followed up by the RFO as it was understood a grant could be obtained. The project has now been handed to the Project Officer to realise. She has worked with Smokefree Oxfordshire, and the Town Council has now launched a competition for primary school children to design "smoke free play area" signs. The closing date is Friday 14 April at 12pm. The Mayor and Chair of the Parks & Recreation Committee will be invited to pick winners. It is hoped that there will be enough entries to pick one winning design for each park and ideally for each winner to be matched with a park near to their school. Smokefree Oxfordshire can produce the signs once the designs are selected at no cost to the Council.

Windrush Generation Tribute

This is a small project to commemorate those who arrived in the UK via HMT Empire Windrush. The proposal is to put up a framed print in the Corn Exchange such as that in appendix 3. This print is a 10 x 10" risograph print based on original illustration by Kim Thompson to commemorate the arrival of the Windrush generation to the U.K. in 1948. 100% of profits go directly to BME Cancer Communities (UK). It would need to be framed – a frame with a mount can be purchased for under £20.00 on Amazon.

Underneath, it is proposed to have a small bookcase/bookshelf that will be filled with carefully curated books about the Windrush generation. There are lots of books written by those who came to England on the ship and their experiences afterwards. This would be a mix of adult and children's books. The aim is rather than simply having a picture, to encourage education on diversity and race and to provide voices for the Windrush Community. This could either be left as a permanent exhibition or brought out annually for a few weeks around Windrush

Day- 22nd June. The print is £30.00 and books are priced at c.£9.99 each. A budget needs to be identified for this project.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates. The only project with any environmental impact is the smoke free play areas signage which is expected to have a positive effect.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. The project with risk attached to it is the QEII Jubilee Garden, in terms of the vandalism of the sundial if it's replaced.

Financial implications

The financial implications are stated within the above report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Whether to proceed with exploring carving onto the Heather slate boulders, and erecting a small wooden sign for the Covid -19 memorial and how this should be funded;
2. Whether to try reinstalling the sundial at Unterhaching Park, and if not, to decide upon an alternative location; if the sundial is not installed should the bed be planted up anyway?
3. Which quote for the Reception signage to accept;
4. How to proceed with the HMT Windrush commemorative project.