

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 20 January 2019

Title: Bus Shelter Artwork for Burwell Drive and Corn Street

Contact Officer: Communications & Events Officer – Polly Inness

BACKGROUND & HISTORY

The purpose of the report is to ask Councillors to consider whether the application of artwork to the new shelters in Corn Street and Burwell Drive is desirable.

The Bus Shelter Art Project came about from a Council initiative in 2017/18 whereby a solution was sought in order to try and reduce criminal damage to the bus shelters in the town. In collaboration with Abingdon & Witney College a brief was delivered by the Town Clerk to students as part of their work experience and the resultant art work was then used on various shelters in Witney. Councillors and Officers sought sponsorship to cover the cost of the art installations.

The previous installations in the town centre where there was plenty of footfall were successful and were not vandalised. However, the shelter at Newland was repeatedly attacked and the plasticised artwork was set on fire and had to be replaced numerous times which meant that the cost of installation far outstripped the amount of sponsorship and defeated the object of deterring vandalism – this was the shelter which initially instigated the project because of the continued vandalism it received. Not only was the artwork damaged but the Perspex was also damaged which meant that there was an additional cost to replace this each time.

In the summer of 2018, a further project was launched by way of a competition encouraging the general public to submit photographs or other works of art which could be transferred onto the bus shelters in order to refresh the original designs. Unfortunately, only two submissions were received as a result of this competition. Officers reported this to the Community Services Committee on 19 November 2018 and the recommendation was, that if no further entries were received for the Bus Shelter Art Competition, photos from the Armistice Day Centenary celebrations be utilised.

ARTWORK

The Town Council has some artwork available for use on shelters – mostly photography but there are also a couple of paintings that can be used. Please see attached.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/SPONSORSHIP

An agreement with Abbeymill Properties means that there is some money available to install artwork on the two new shelters. This was as a result of the negotiations relating to the relocation of the bus shelter near the bus garage at the bottom end of Corn Street and was as follows: *Abbeymill Properties will pay Witney Town Council £8,500 to cover two new bus shelters (including installation by the supplier), bins, cycle racks and art work (£500 total).*

For information purposes, the cost of the Market Square shelters was £314 each and the Newland Shelter was originally just £168 but replacement artwork sheets and panels were £84 each to produce and install on each occasion.

The charge is made per panel so the new shelters cost as follows: Corn Street is enclosed by 12 Perspex panels at a total cost for production and installation of £505.85 at 2018 prices and the Abbey Road shelter comes in at £266.10.

No sponsorship of other shelters has been decided which means that unless this is sought then the full cost of producing and installing artwork on other shelters will be borne by the council.

As well as the money provided by Abbeymills Properties, in the current and next year's budget there is £2,000 set aside for Bus Shelter Maintenance (4035/402).

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 the facilities and services it operates. *Whilst the intentions of the original initiative were based on the hope of reducing anti-social behaviour/criminal damage it should be noted that the artwork is installed on printed plasticised sheets which may contradict the Council's Climate Emergency declaration.*

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. whether the Council wishes to continue to install artwork to its bus shelters, and if so whether this is the town centre shelters only or to include the outlying shelters such as the one at Abbey Road;
2. whether Councillors wish to engage with local businesses to raise sponsorship for further shelters to be included.