

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 21st September 2020

Title: Memorial Bench Requests

Contact Officer: Operations and Estates Officer - John Hickman

Background

The purpose of this report is to bring any memorial bench requests to council for consideration.

Rotary Commemorative Bench and Tree

This item came to Council's Stronger Communities Committee on 6th July 2020, the committee recommended the following;

2. *that the siting for a bench, tree, and planting in conjunction with Rotary be delegated to the Operations and Estates Officer to progress.*
3. *that the Town Council Offers £1,000 match funding to Rotary (bearing in mind the ongoing maintenance costs);*
4. *that a group of councillors discuss ideas for a tribute to volunteers and bring them back to a future meeting.*

The Rotary Club were informed of this decision and have now responded with the following.

The Club are wondering if a site on the Leys or within the Town Centre would be a bit higher profile?, the Operations and Estates Officer has responded to this pointing out that WTC does not have permissions to plant trees on Church Green and that the Leys has no real capacity to take another memorial bench and trees without affecting existing users and events on the Leys.

The Rotary Club are also wondering whether the Town council might support this as a possible Crowd Funding Project.

Replacement Memorial Bench at the Lake

The Memorial bench that was vandalised recently at the Lake has been approved by Officers as it's a replacement, and the Operations and Estates Officer is currently awaiting its installation date to be agreed.

Memorial Bench Request at the Lake

A request has been received from a resident regarding placing a memorial bench at Witney Lake in memory of her friend that died due to a mental health issue.

They have raised £1,500 towards this bench. A photo and information of the style of bench has been provided for council approval. The Operations and estates Officer is trying to arrange a date to agree a location at the Lake where the bench could be sited.

Tower Hill Football Bench request

Council previously approved Tower Hill Football Clubs request for a memorial bench at West Witney Sports Ground, however since being informed of this Tower Hill football club have not spoken to the Operations and Estates Officer about sighting or style of bench in order to move this item forward.

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.

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.

Financial implications

There should be no financial implications to council other than Officer Time and Works Team carrying out installation requirements required.

Recommendations

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

1. The Request of the Rotary Club to place a Covid 19 Memorial bench and tree on either Church green or the Leys.
2. The request of the Rotary Club as to whether WTC would support this being a crowd funding project rather than Rotary and other clubs funding the project with WTC providing £1,000 match funding. Bearing in mind the ongoing maintenance costs to WTC.
3. The request to siting a memorial bench and the suggested style by the resident at the Lake.