

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

---

**Date:** Monday, 19 July 2021

**Title:** Witney Covid-19 Hero Awards & Commemoration

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk - Adam Clapton

---

### Background

At the meeting of this committee held on 6 July 2020 commemorations for those who had lost their lives to Covid-19 and for volunteers who had served the community were discussed.

The Committee resolved to agree a request from the Rotary Club of Witney to site a bench and tree commemorating those who lost their lives to Covid-19 and further discussions on volunteers led to the creation of the Witney Covid-19 Hero Awards.

### Current Situation

#### Rotary Memorial Tree & Bench

Discussion has taken place between the Rotary Club and Officers regarding the bench and tree request, with land near the Windrush Leisure Centre being mooted as a possible location.

In a further meeting the Club have highlighted other projects in which it would like to be involved, including a possible garden commemorating the 'End Polio Now' campaign 'which might also be used as a covid memorial.'

#### Witney Covid-19 Hero Awards

Nominations opened in January 2021 and were for any individual or organisation who had gone above and beyond to serve the community during the pandemic.

To date, approximately 160 individuals/organisations have been received awards as well as 31 businesses. The awards were extremely well received in the community as seen through the social media posts on various local groups. The Council published several lists of those awarded on Facebook, and all have been added to a roll call on a dedicated webpage on the Council's website.

The numbers of nominations have diminished in recent weeks and consensus from the task and finish group created to progress this idea is that the ending of Covid-19 restrictions on 19<sup>th</sup> July seems like a natural date to close further nominations.

**Members may like to consider a lasting commemoration to the Witney Heroes/Volunteers, and how this might tie in with the Covid Memorial planned by the Rotary Club of Witney.**

### **Environmental impact**

The environmental impact of the Memorial Project is not yet known.

### **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**

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- The Town Council has already pledged £1,000 match funding to Rotary for the Memorial Bench & Tree

### **Recommendations**

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

1. A lasting memorial for Volunteers in Witney who served the community during the Covid-19 Pandemic; and
2. If it might form part of the Garden/memorial already proposed by the Rotary Club of Witney; and,
3. If yes, that the project is delegated to a task and finish group to progress.