

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 27 September 2021

Title: Changes to the Grounds Contracts - Additional Costs

Contact Officer: Operations & Estates Advisor - John Hickman

Background

Witney Parish Churches have recently formed a Benefice Environmental Group to work towards Eco Church states, they have requested that Witney Town Council alter the Churchyard grass cutting specification to allow for wildflowers to grow within St Marys and Holy Trinity churchyards. Council agreed to support this at the meeting of the Halls Cemeteries Allotments Committee on the 12th July 2021 item 366.

Burwell car park area. It has recently been discovered that there is an area of Burwell car park that is Witney Town Councils despite the fact it did not appear on any of Witney Town Councils land ownership mapping, however it dose appear as Witney Town Councils on the land registry.

Current Situation

Closed Churchyards

The grounds contractors have calculated the associated costs of these works as opposed to maintaining the grass previously as amenity grass, this has led to an increase in costs on the grounds contract for the maintenance of these areas.

Burwell Car Park Area

There are initial works that need to be undertaken at this part of Burwell carpark to bring the overgrown trees, hedge and grass areas into specification, the grounds contractors have been asked to provide a cost to carry these works out which has been provide for councillor's consideration.

Grounds Contractors have also included the cost of adding this area into the ground's maintenance costs going forward. The associated costs have been provided to council for their consideration.

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 wildlife areas within the closed churchyards will be beneficial to the environment.

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. It will decrease the reputational risk to Witney town Council as the area will be maintain to Witney Town Councils standards.

Financial implications

Associated costs to add these items into the contract will be added to the grounds contact maintenance payments.

Initial works to bring areas into specification at Burwell will be taken from Capital Expenditure as there is no existing budget for this type of work.

Recommendations

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

1. The additional costs to the Grounds Contract to maintain wildflower areas within the closed churchyards.
2. The additional costs to maintain the additional area at Burwell within the grounds contract.
3. The associated cost to bring the unmaintained areas into current grounds contract specification.