

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 14 November 2022

Title: Covid -19 Memorial

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Council wishes to have a permanent memorial for the Covid -19 pandemic – both to remember those lost and also to the acts of selflessness and kindness that took place in the Witney community. A Task and Finish Group was set up to drive the project forward.

Current Situation

Initially a preference was expressed for the memorial to be sited on Church Green. The Task and Finish Group decided to visit both this site and also an area on The Leys suggested by the Operations Manager (location plan attached). It was agreed by members that The Leys was the preferred site.

The Task and Finish Group discussed possible ideas on what shape the memorial should take. It was agreed that it should comprise of two halves (one object split into two) and that a rock would be preferential. There was also an idea that a metal “sign” of 2m in length could be set into the ground in front of the memorial with the words “Together” and “Apart” at either end of the sign. These words were suggested to represent the community coming together to support each other and also social distancing and the stay-at-home order.

The Project Officer approached several companies about rocks, but only one met the brief. They have sent over two images of rocks split into two – one is Heather Slate and the other is Welsh Slate. The image shows a bench in the middle, but members may feel that this is not needed.

The Project Officer also sketched a design for a 2m long metal sign and sourced a company which could create something similar. The sign would have a 3D look but would actually be 2 sided with a lip under the bottom to enable it to be fixed to the ground securely. The lettering would be cut out. The metal suggested is 3mm thick rusted cor-ten. This is the same metal as the Angel of the North is made of. It would fit well in a natural environment such as The Leys. It is, however, not within budget so if this is to be a part of the design then members would need to consider how to fund this. There will need to be a sign of some kind to explain what the rocks represent to the public.

The Task and Finish group also discussed the possibility of a small-planted flower bed. But no firm decision was made on this.

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. There is no environmental impact associated with this project.

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.

There will need to be a strong communication strategy when the project is implemented to ensure that residents understand the rationale behind the memorial and why the budget has been allocated in this way.

Financial implications

The budget for this project is £1,500.

The costs are:-

- Heather slate stone £1, 666.67 plus VAT (includes delivery and installation)
Or
- Grey Welsh Stone £1,833.33 plus VAT (Includes delivery and installation)
- Metal rusted Cor-ten sign £1, 678 plus VAT and delivery
- Officers have not costed a planted area as there was no consensus on this.
- A bench would cost £482.00 plus VAT of required as the Council does not currently have any in stock.

Recommendations

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

1. Whether to proceed with the purchase and installation of the split stones;
2. If proceeding, which type of stone would be preferred;
3. If the metal sign as detailed is to be part of the project and if so, where funding could come from;
4. An alternative idea for signage if the metal sign is not to be installed;
5. If a bench is required;
6. If a planted area is required.