

## Agenda Item 133

### Southwell Benches May 11 2022

At the September 2021 meeting of the Town Environment Committee we reviewed the policy and adopted a plan to develop the seating in the town..

#### **Ownership of extant benches**

It is still unclear who owns what bench in Southwell. All benches which are at any other public location, are assumed to be owned by Notts County Council However, in a public reply it is clear that the NCC has no records of their bench locations or their state of repair. The NCC have little intension to maintain or replace benches, but will remove them if notified they are damage or dangerous, as they claim a lack of funding. However, no action has been taken on two benches notified to them several months ago. As a result two of the benches have had to be removed.

That Southwell Town Council still takes responsibility for all benches on land that it owns or leases and establishes a regular maintained regime. This will mean that there needs to have money, annually budgeted and time allocated from staff to implement this [20 hours pa]. It spent staff time to repair three benches in the town and we welcome this work by staff.

#### **Issues**

The location of the seat at the junction of Nottingham Rd and Westhorpe is under trees and is badly fouled by birds. It is proposed to move the seat [on NCC land] 5m southwards. The seat at Lowes Wong is badly sited and it is proposed to move this closer to its original site at the junction of Westgate and Lowes Wong, after the owner of the adjacent house has closed their vehicle entrance. New seats have been installed on the Burgage and at the War Memorial Park, the latter donated by a resident's family. The NCC seat on Halam Road has been removed and should be replaced as it was a well used site. Further work on maintenance is to be completed after the 2022 mowing season is finished.

#### **It was agreed previously**

- 1 that the seats in poor condition [#35, 43, 51 and 53] are repaired by staff by July 2021
- 2 that poor seats [#4, 10 and 31] will be repaired and renovated by Sept 2021
- 3 that a programme of renovation of the 'OK' seats will be produced by Sept 2021 and volunteers and staff to take on the task with the programme to be completed by April 2023
- 4 that a re-audit be commissioned and report back to the Committee for July 2022
- 5 that sponsors of the benches are listed and where possible plaques cleaned and reattached. If not possible that the sponsors are listed and records kept on display in the Council Chamber [proposed to be completed by Nov 2022]

#### **It is proposed that**

##### Extant benches

- allocate £500 pa 2022-2023 for repair
- allocate 20 hours of staff time each year to undertake this work
- use softwood as opposed to hardwood for these repairs, all wood to be treated to reduce rot and stained in matching colours to the remaining good wood
- paint metal work in the STC's green
- and notice given to NCC of our intent to repair

##### New benches.

- acquire by donation or purchase three further new benches in 2022-23 to be located in the town.

- to request further sites for seating and produce a map of further possible sites for new benches to be located and taken to the July meeting of the TEC for ratification. [Locations will include sites which the Town Council does not own but would provide a good amenity to residents and visitors.]
- notify the NCC of these locations for their comment
- to allow only benches made mainly from recycled plastic or other easily maintained and environmentally friendly material will be purchased or used on Town Council land.

#### Donation of Benches in memorial.

- encourages the donation of benches but they must conform to town council requirements.
- makes donors aware that when benches are donated and sited on Southwell Town Council land, that they become the property of Southwell Town council who will take on the maintenance of it.
- memorial wording on seats must be agreed by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Council and Town Environment Committee

#### Policy Review

- establishes a maintenance schedule and that this is taken to the Town Environment in July
- a report on the implementation of this policy is taken in January 2023

Proposed Peter Harris