Agenda Item 4

Report to: **Elsea Park Community Trust Board**

Date: **Wednesday 7 May 2014**

Subject: **Management Report**

From: **Barry Cook – Community Trust Manager**

1.0 Office Software & Business Continuity

1.1 Sage Accounting Software:

Rebecca has trialled the Sage One Accounts Extra software. Upon initial use, it became apparent that the functionality of Sage One (in all variants) is minimal when compared to the Sage 50 software currently used, and is considered not fit for purpose.

Subsequent research (online and through speaking directly to Sage) indicates the only viable cloud-based alternative is Sage 50 Hosted, which would cost £1316 pa to include, a three-user licence, and unlimited support. However, this product does not offer a vital import / export to Excel function that is essential for Harland's Direct Debiting

Sage 50 Accounts (as currently used) costs £619 pa for upgrades and support. In the past, these have not always been purchased, so we have had no recurring costs, but neither would we have been able to obtain support for the product.

Options:

a. Do nothing. The Sage 50 subscription could be allowed to lapse, leaving us able to use the software, but without any support. This poses a *potential* risk to the business. Last year, for example, we requested support from Sage on four separate occasions.

b. Renew the annual subscription (when it expires in July 2014) at a cost of £619.00

Recommendation:

I recommend Option b, and further advise that the annual IT budget be increased to include the Sage subscription. We should revisit the Sage One product prior to renewal each year to see if the hosted version offers improved functionality.

Board Decision Required.

1.2 Microsoft Office 365

Provision of Office 365 is still being researched. I hope to have some options for discussion ready for the meeting.

2.0 Fencing at the front of The Centre.

With no clear demarcation between the patio area and the newly planted area, children have been playing in the latter, trampling the earth and risking damage to the plants. To protect the area, a temporary plastic fence was put in place.

I have obtained a quote from Tim Harris fencing to install knee high fencing using concrete posts and 6" x 2" rails as wooden fence posts across the development appear to have a lifespan of around five to seven years; the ground is mainly clay, and the posts rot over that period.

To reduce recurring costs, I propose that whenever we have fence posts replaced, we use concrete posts with ranch-style rails. Although initially more expensive, this will be much more cost effective over the long term, and will mean that rails can be replaced in future as and when required (by anyone), rather than using a fencing contractor.

To supply and install new fencing with posts at 1.8m centres will cost £1126.00.

The board might also wish to consider replacing the existing fencing between the path and the other side of the play area. Although this would be primarily for aesthetic purposes to match the new fencing, two of the posts are already loose.

To remove the existing knee rail and replace as above would cost £627.65

Recommendation

That the board approves the new fencing work and considers replacement of the existing fence.

That any time fencing works are undertaken in future, wooden posts are replaced with concrete posts.

Board Decision Required.

3.0 Springbank Play Area

The works on the Springbank play area are scheduled to take place during the period 12th to 23rd May 2014. A letter has been sent to approximately thirty-five properties near the play area to advise them of the work being undertaken and to apologise for any inconvenience that may be caused.

4.0 Ongoing Essential Maintenance Works

4.1 Badger Tunnel:

The badger tunnel is subject to occasional flooding. I authorised pump hire (at a cost of £40) and the tunnel has now been pumped dry. Peter is of the opinion that the tunnel only floods when any water surge in the meadow dyke rises to the level of the tunnel opening. As the dyke is overdue de-silting, I have authorised a section of the dyke approximately 45m in length to be dug (by Frank Dean of Edenham) at a cost of £400 plus vat. This appears very reasonable quote compared to what Fen Ditching would charge. Peter will be asked to confirm that the work is completed to a satisfactory standard before the invoice is paid.

Recommendation

None – for information

4.2. Ongoing Maintenance Works

The dyke works undertaken adjacent to Tennyson Drive cost in the region of £6300 net (the quote was higher, but included work on the ditches in Water Lane, which was postponed).

Whilst we allocate money in the annual budget for Ground Control costs and for landscaping / improvements, we do not appear to make provision for essential maintenance works such as dyke / ditch clearing or repairs to the extensive fencing across the development.

Unless the intention is to use money from the reserves as and when required, I think we should mark some funds from the reserve for any essential maintenance work that we might require in the current financial year

Recommendation

None - For discussion / consideration.

5.0 Issues Log

Issues from the past month are reported below:

Type	Issue	Comment	Recommendation
ASB	The PCSO advises that a resident reported mopeds being ridden on The Centre patio on the evening of Mon 28 April.	Viewing of the CCTV archive did not substantiate the claim.	Information Only