Agenda Item 4

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

Date: **Wednesday 4 June 2014**

Subject: **Management Report**

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

1.0 Software & Business Continuity

1.1 Microsoft Office 365

I will circulate some options prior to the meeting for your consideration.

2.0 Play Areas.

The extensive works on the Springbank play area and repairs to the wetpour at the Elsea Park Way and Aykroft play areas previously authorised by The Board are now complete, and the play areas have re-opened.

Work overran slightly due to the recent heavy rain, and we kept the website updated to reflect the state of the works. The only outstanding action is the collection of the Heras fence and the skip.

Peter has laid bark chippings at Springbank until the area can be topsoiled and grassed later this year.

3.0 Transfer of land East of Setts Green Conservation Area

Taylor Wimpey today accepted our quotation (of just under £2000) for The Trust to complete remedial works on their behalf prior to, or following transfer. I am pleased to report that the transfer is now progressing

Some of the costs are attributable to repairs to the 185m long close board fence adjacent to the Conservation Area. One of my concerns is that the fence is in a much poorer condition than was originally identified, and poses a long-term financial liability to The Trust.

Peter has suggested that a better option might be to remove the fence completely, thus allowing access to our post and rail fence directly behind it, and permitting maintenance of the adjacent ditch and hedging that is currently inaccessible.

Tim Harris (our preferred fencing contractor) stated, after inspecting the fence this week

"in my opinion the whole fence is in a bad state of repair, and I would consider it to be an ongoing situation of re-concreting posts that are becoming loose in the ground and changing posts due to rotting and splitting boards"

Options

a. Make do and mend.

Taylor Wimpey agreed during the inspection to meet the cost of replacing one post, several featheredge boards, and treating the fence with appropriate preservative. This work was priced at approximately £600.

b. Dismantle, remove from site, and dispose of the fence entirely.

Timber posts would be cut below ground level to avoid leaving stumps that would be a trip hazard to pedestrians. This work was priced at approximately £500, but would require some additional topsoil.

I have already advised Taylor Wimpey that we may decide to exercise Option B, and they have confirmed they are happy to be billed the sum of £600 whatever we decide to do.

Recommendation

a. That we write to the owners of all properties facing the fence line and advise that due to the poor condition of the fence, we propose to remove it in its entirety. This will allow owners views over the conservation area and allow us access to maintain the post and rail fence, hedges, and drainage ditch that form the existing boundary of Trust Property. We would need to give a firm commitment to maintain the same in good order.

You should note that we may incur considerable costs in bringing the post and rail fence up to the required standard, but I am convinced that these will be much lower than long-term maintenance of the close board fence.

Board Decision Required.

4.0 Flooding and Impact on Grass Cutting

4.1 Following the recent heavy rainfall, Peter has been paying particular attention to the ponds, ditches, and culvert grids to ensure that we are doing everything possible to minimise the risk of any flooding**.**

I accompanied Peter on an inspection of all watercourses and ponds under Trust ownership on the evening of Thursday 22 May, and the water was at the highest levels we have yet witnessed. None the less, no flooding had taken place (other than in the badger tunnel), and the active intervention that Peter undertakes has paid dividends.

4.2 I have maintained close contact with the Ground Control contractors and have instructed them not to attend site when the ground has been heavily waterlogged to minimise the risk of undoing their previous good work.

Recommendation

None – For Information Only

5.0 Planning Application for Bins, Benches, and Signs

Liam has the lead on this, and we met with Gordon Smith (of Matrix Planning) on 13 May to finalise the locations and clear up a few questions raised by Gordon. Gordon was impressed by the quality of the location information and detailed photographs that Liam had provided.

Gordon is now submitting the applications, and suggests we allow two to three months for a decision (this longer time period will allow for any changes to the scheme that may be required).

6.0 Health & Safety Training

Trust staff will be attending H & S Training on site on Thu 5 June 2014. The training lasts all day, so the office will be closed that day. Events Group volunteers have taken up the spare places on the course (the training is provided at no cost to anyone who is unemployed).

7.0 Defibrillator

The Defibrillator and external housing have now been ordered. I approached GEDA to ask if they might be prepared to undertake the electrical installation for us, and they have provisionally agreed to do so. (I have no timescale at the moment).

8.0 Provision of HR / Emplyoment Services

Angela and I attended a free seminar delivered by Peninsula Business Services on 15 May and I have attached the proposal and supporting documents from them for provision of services for consideration / discussion at the meeting.

Note that Peninsula operates a subscription-based model only (rather than the ad-hoc approach we currently use with our existing HR / H&S providers).

Recommendation

I think we should pursue the Employment Services option, as costs are broadly similar to the costs we incurred with our Current HR provider during a twelve-month period. One of the major advantages offered by Peninsula is the high level of support they could offer us, and the web-based training programmes that would be available to staff and Directors..

The Health & Safety services are worthy of discussion, though I believe much of what they offer can be done “in-house”. None the less, the H & S Proposal offers many advantages and full access to Subject Matter Experts.

A decision is required, but can be deferred pending further consideration.

9.0 Youth Worker Report

I have asked Niki for an update on the work she is currently undertaking and some proposals she has for future engagement with residents. I will circulate this update when I receive it.

10.0 Superfast Broadband Roll Out

The impasse between BT and Kier over the siting of Cabinet 28 on The Pollards roundabout, was holding up the roll out of Superfast Broadband on the newer parts of the development.

Kier have now granted BT the way leaves they were withholding, allowing BT to move forward with the project. For their part, BT have given verbal assurances to Kier that they will re-site Cabinet 28 when they upgrade the existing circuits fed from that cabinet at some future date.

11.0 Issues Log

Numerous issues pertaining to Kier have been raised in the past month and I have passed all these via a single email to Justin Gaggini (contents attached for your information).

Kier have been on site this week to scope the work required to make the roads and pathways safe, particularly along The Gables and at the Gables / Greenacres roundabout, and the work associated with the removal of debris and installation of a second grid on the culvert that runs under the roundabout highlighted in my recent letter to Kier.