

TIVERTON MEMORIAL GARDEN PROJECT

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer: Catherine Marlow, Conservation Officer

Reason for Report: To seek agreement for the continued work of the Tiverton War Memorial Project working group and its allocated financial resource.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Tiverton War Memorial Project be supported and that work is continued in securing a new war memorial installation and garden setting in Phoenix Lane, Tiverton

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Economy (improving and regenerating our town centres); Environment (protecting the natural environment).

Financial Implications: The project was allocated £20k by the former Chief Executive in early 2015. No additional MDDC money is being sought in this report.

Legal Implications: The land on which the project is proposed is owned by MDDC but is also adopted highway under the responsibility of DCC.

Risk Assessment: Should grant applications fail, the Council's £20,000 contribution to the project will be substantially lost as it has been allocated for professional fees and the war memorial piece.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In late 2014 the previous Chief Executive requested that a project group be formed with a two-fold remit - to relocate the Burma Star memorial stone and create a new war memorial for Tiverton. Tiverton has a Burma Star memorial, a memorial to allied American troops in People's Park and a Memorial Hall built by public subscription after the First World War (which also contains a Remembrance Room with the names of those individuals who gave their lives). However, it has no stand-alone accessible war memorial to commemorate those who have died in all conflicts. The Burma Star stone is located in the small garden on the east side of Phoenix Lane. The garden is allocated within the Local Plan for redevelopment as part of larger regeneration and master planning proposals for Tiverton – policy TIV12 states that the (Burma Star) war memorial should be retained or relocated.
- 1.2 The project group consists of representatives of Mid Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Tiverton Town Council, the Burma Star Association and the Royal British Legion. A landscape designer has been commissioned to create ideas for the new memorial and the land around it.
- 1.3 In late 2017 the national Victoria Cross commemorative stone slab scheme will be delivering a slab in memory of Private Sage of Tiverton who was awarded his VC for an act of bravery in protecting his fellow soldiers from a

grenade. Private Sage survived his injuries and returned to live in Tiverton. The Town Council will receive this slab and it is proposed that the slab also be located in the same space as the new memorial and Burma Star stone.

2.0 Angel Hill site and move to Phoenix Lane

2.1 The location for the Burma Star stone and new memorial was initially a small triangle of land at the top of Angel Hill, Tiverton. Designs were formulated for this site. A public consultation was carried out in spring 2016 and the results identified that members of the public had concerns about the lack of tranquility and potential impact of traffic noise and fumes. The principle of a new war memorial for the town, which would commemorate the contributions of the people of the town in all wars, was welcomed by all but one contributor.

2.2 After consideration of the public consultation results and subsequent discussions the working group decided to move the project site to land on the west side of Phoenix Lane (see appended map). The advantages of this location are that it is in a pedestrianised space, has existing mature trees that can be retained and will contribute to the character of the site, will allow the creation of a more verdant scheme and a 'pocket park' feel which will replace the current garden on the east side, will provide a buffer / protection zone from future development for the two listed buildings to the west and north (one of which is listed grade II*) and will enable larger groups of people to gather for commemorative events. It is also felt that this location will help to create a much improved link from the Council offices and library (and eventual Premier Inn site) up to the town centre and introduce an area where people can remember our war dead, rest or think in a tranquil and pleasant garden environment.

2.3 The working group has been developing its ideas in conjunction with the urban designer in this new location for two months and draft designs are nearly ready for a second public consultation, planned for late November 2016.

3.0 Funding

3.1 The previous Chief Executive allocated a sum of £20,000 towards this project. No further funding is being sought from the Council in this report. A stage 1 submission for funding from Viridor Tax Credits has been passed and a stage 2 bid is being worked up for submission late December 2016. Other applications are being submitted to local groups who may wish to contribute to the project. The estimated total cost of the project is £80,000 - £100,000.

3.2 It is proposed that the project land is put forward for designation as 'Centenary Fields' land. This is a project that, in conjunction with the Royal British Legion, secures recreational land and spaces in perpetuity to honour the memory of those who lost their lives in the World War 1. If designated, this will create eligibility for future funding for the space. It will also provide permanent protection for the land from any subsequent change in status. Initial conversations with the Centenary Fields representative have been positive.

- 3.3 As part of the original public consultation exercise the working group asked for comments on a selection of preferred artists to be commissioned for the new memorial itself. The artist Charles Gurrey was chosen and has been formally invited to design and create the final memorial piece. The working group is keen to ensure that the finished piece is a fully integrated memorial in the garden space and is not simply a sculpture inserted into an unrelated context.
- 3.4 Procurement officers have been consulted at all stages and procurement rules will continue to be followed throughout the project.

4.0 Recommendation / Summary

- 4.1 This is a project that will enhance Phoenix Lane, mitigate the loss of the small garden on Phoenix Lane for future development, protect the setting of two listed buildings but most importantly, will create a fitting, accessible, legible and recognisable war memorial for Tiverton.
- 4.2 This report recommends that the working group's work and the project is supported by Cabinet.

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Circulation of the Report: Ward members (Cllr Sue Griggs, Cllr Chris Daw and Cllr Clarissa Slade), Working Group reps. (Cllr Brenda Hull and Cllr Dennis Knowles), Cllr Richard Chesterton (Planning Portfolio Holder), Cllr Ray Stanley (Tiverton Regeneration Group), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning), Nick Sanderson (Head of Housing), Andrew Jarret (Director of Financial Services), Simon Johnson (Legal Services)

List of Background Papers: None