

Committee: FULL COUNCIL

Date: 3 October 2023

Title: Hammerhead land management

Purpose of Report

For Members to consider management of the Hammerhead land

Recommendation:

- a) Members **Resolve** to recommend to Full Council that £4,000 be transferred from General Reserves to cover the cost of the installation of knee-high fencing and that officers be delegated authority to complete the project.
- b) Members **Resolve** to delegate authority to officers to remove and redistribute the earth at a point when the digger is brought in for ditch clearing work in the financial year 2024-25.

Background:

1. As a result of recent issues over vehicles driving on the recreation ground, a few Members have raised the issue of the management of the Hammerhead land.
2. This is not a new topic as Members and people in the community have, on a few occasions, raised issues regarding both parking on the land and of the placement of advertising on both sides of the entrance to the drive into the Archie Gooch Pavilion.
3. This report will enable Members to consider how they wish to deal with both issues as well as the opening up of the area.

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4. Contained within **Appendix 10A**, you will see the area that is defined as the Hammerhead land and held on Land Registry under Title WS76813. This shows clearly that the land either side of the driveway is under the ownership of the Town Council.
5. You will see from the recent photographs that there is nothing to prevent vehicles from parking on the land. Because of the nature of the land, cars parking on this land does run the risk of damaging the surface leading to long term maintenance issues occurring.
6. There is no dropped kerb which could lead to damage of the kerbside. There is also a very distinct possibility that cars may block access to the Jurassic Fibre cabinet which we are required to keep clear at all times, in accordance with the licence we have with them.

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7. It is therefore suggested that knee high fencing is installed along the edge of the Hammerhead land, ensuring that the footpath to the Jurassic Cabinet is kept free. Examples of the type of fencing are contained in **Appendix 10A**.
8. Members will recall that the **£15,000** received from Jurassic Fibre in respect of the cabinet agreement was put back into General Reserves for the 2023-24 financial year.
9. If Members are agreeable we will vire **£4,000** for the installation of the fencing from General Reserves. This will allow for a contractor to be sourced and employed to install the fencing. Three quotes will be obtained if possible and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Open Spaces Committee consulted over the final choice.
10. There have also been concerns raised about the advertising boards that are placed either side of the entrance to the Archie Gooch Pavilion. Permission was given for the permanent signage to be erected, but there is in fact no permission for the blackboards to be in position. This has been raised in the past by Members and as such keeps on popping up from time to time.
11. There is currently, other than through the byelaws, no restriction on placing advertising on the council land other than a requirement to ask permission. We have looked for any policy that may have existed from before the current administration and the previous administration and there does not appear to be one. Bearing in mind that when the "Charging Policy" is considered each year there has been no reference to how much the Town Council would charge for advertising on its land.
12. Currently it would be safe to say that there is nothing in place to define the current administration's approach to advertising on any of the council's land. It is however appropriate that any organisation should seek the council's formal approval before placing any advertising.
13. We get several requests each year from charities and Ilminster based organisations for short term banner and adverts to be displayed. These are notified to Members but delegated management of the land has been given to officers, so consideration is carried out by the officers and then notified to Members.
14. Consideration takes into account, whether the event being promoted is in conflict with any of the objectives of the Town Council and does not breach any financial or legal obligations that the council may have. It also takes into account whether or not the event has been allowed to promote their activity in the past.
15. With regards to the advertising boards, Members need to consider whether or not they are happy that first of all it should be allowed on the Hammerhead land and if so how many boards.
16. A number of councils have policies for the type of advertising that they permit on their land. These policies may cover permanent boards on railings, banners

and 'A' boards. Officers are proposing that a policy is prepared and that it covers all aspects of adverting/promotion permissions that may be requested. This would then be taken to the resources committee for their consideration. Members will then also be able to consider how much they wish to charge organisations for advertising their events if anything.

17. Members will also see that included in **Appendix 10A** is a schematic for the area that shows how the grounds team would like to manage the area around the Hammerhead land over the coming year. Included in this is the possible removal of the old wooden fence, which they have identified as requiring remedial work in the coming years.
18. This would open up the area more and with the introduction of the knee-high fencing would still provide protection from vehicles being able to access the recreation ground at anywhere other than approved points.
19. They would also like to remove the bank in front of the tennis courts and redistribute the earth to build up the pathway that comes from the Archie Gooch Pavilion thereby dealing with the raised manhole that is by the canal.
20. This would also improve access to the recreation ground and the canal as well as an accessible fishing peg that the Angling Association would like to see installed and which has been the subject of recent discussion at the Recreation Ground Users Group meetings.
21. The movement of the earth could be done potentially when a digger is brought in to clear the various ditches in the next financial year as requested by this committee and approved by Town Council at its meeting on the 19 September 2023.
22. The final section of French drain could then be completed around the tennis courts finishing off the work that has already been carried out.
23. **Members are asked to recommend to Full Council that £4,000 be transferred from General Reserves to cover the cost of the installation of knee-high fencing and that officers be delegated authority to complete the project.**
24. **Members are asked to delegate authority to officers to remove and redistribute the earth at a point when the digger is brought in for ditch clearing work in the financial year 2024-25.**

**Mark Tredwin
Town Clerk
September 2023**