

Supporting Documentation Full Council Meeting

Tuesday 25th JULY 2023



Agenda item 6 - Gilberts Lane Environmental Improvements Proposal

Following the winning ideas presented by AT in the competition, held during one of the consultations on the revised Neighbourhood Plan, last year, the concept of turning the lane into a public space was followed up by Highworth Community Partnership Group and ultimately by Visit Highworth Limited (VHL). Coincidentally, the same time that this was being discussed VHL were planning an Arts and Literary Festival to take place in August this year. The two groups decided they would work together to transform Gilberts Lane.

The Plan

1. Ask all garage owners' permission to paint a mural on their walls and garage doors
2. To seek to remove the self-seeded tree
3. To seek out street artists to support the task
4. To raise money for paint
5. Decide on what the murals should display

Progress

1. All garage owners but two have given quite enthusiastic permission. The two remaining have yet to be approached.
2. Established that the tree is self-seeded and is not owned by the two garages to which it is adjacent.
3. HCPG have therefore taken the lead in having it removed. A local tree surgeon has agreed a price. As it is in a Conservation area he is making the usual overtures to SBC.
4. As Gilberts Lane is in a Conservation area SBC planning department have been advised of the proposed environmental improvements.
5. The manager of VHL is in contact with the Swindon co-operative of street artists that has transformed areas of the town over the past year.
6. The lead artist has taken photographs of possible areas for murals to be displayed.
7. Initial fund raising has begun.
8. Whilst undertaking research for the project it emerged that in section 4.4.4 of the current Neighbourhood Plan it states: *'Financial contributions received by Highworth Town Council (HTC) from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be allocated to community priorities agreed at the time and may include but not exclusively the projects listed below...'* One of which is *'Environmental Improvements to Gilberts Lane'* On this basis a request has been put to HTC enquiring whether there might be monies available to support the project.
9. AT has been advised that her concept has been taken into consideration and that HCPG and VHL are at the planning stage

Next steps

1. Seek permission from two remaining owners.
2. Consider the estimate when it arrives.
3. To confer with artists on a suitable theme
4. To decide on a timescale. Ideally it would link with the Arts and Literature Festival in August.
5. To consider the rubbish bins – can anything be done?
6. Shall we put seats in - if so where?

Conclusion

This is a really exciting and an ideal opportunity to actually create a colourful thoroughfare into the town. In the medium term there is no meaningful chance that a permanent solution will be found, this is the next best alternative. We hope that the residents, businesses and HTC will support us in this project.

Keith Smith
Chair
Highworth Community Partnership Group

Helen Lacey
Visitor Highworth Limited.

June 2023