

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

COLLEGE WOOD

Report Reference EN-20-11
Meeting Date 22nd March 2021
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Town Clerk



1.0 BACKGROUND

College Wood is a small woodland on Thorneyholme Drive. The woodland is owned by the Shrewsbury Roman Catholic Diocese and, following an application by the town council in 2019, is a registered Town Green which gives the public a right to use the area for lawful sports and pastimes.

The Diocese has previously confirmed it has limited funds for the site and undertakes twice yearly maintenance and since December 2019 the Town Clerk has been seeking a meeting with the Director of Property at the Diocese to discuss improvements being made to the woodland by the community. In January 2021, the Diocese confirmed they will meet with the council “sometime in the future” but that the Diocese currently has alternative priorities. In March, the Diocese confirmed it will consider granting consent for community led improvements.

The Town Ranger routinely visits the woodland to undertake a litter pick. The 2015 Open Spaces Survey received a number of comments on this site (11) with half suggesting it needed defined footpaths and noting the problems of littering and dog fouling.

There is a ready-and-willing group of residents living near the woodland to form a ‘Friends of College Wood’ community group.

2.0 IMPROVING THE WOODLAND

Whilst the woodland is a town green, it is privately owned and any works on the site require the consent from the Diocese. Key to being able to deliver any improvement to the space is successfully engaging the Diocese to work with the council and wider community.

To facilitate this it is suggested that the council works to lead the establishment of a Friends of College Wood by convening a meeting similar to the one held for St John’s Wood

The council could then work with the Friends of College Wood to seek permission for specific improvements and the Friends group could develop an overall masterplan for the site.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider the suggested route forward for facilitating improvements to College Wood.