

# REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

## SPONSORSHIP OF BENCHES AND BENCH REPLACEMENTS



**Report Reference** ET-23-06  
**Meeting Date** 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
**Agenda Item** 12  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk

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### 1.0 BACKGROUND

The Town Council maintains a number of benches across the town which were installed by the council or partners over various years. In recent months, the Town Ranger has had to remove four benches which were no longer repairable, two on the heath, one from Wallwood and one from the library gardens.

The Town Council does not have a specific policy on memorial benches except for those at the cemetery. The council is currently progressing a new bench at Wallwood (approved by the Assets and Operations Committee in 2021). Introducing a policy on the sponsorship of benches would enable the council to advertise a memorial bench service and work with relevant landowners (predominantly Cheshire East Council) to install memorial benches as may be requested. Concurrently, the council could always choose to fund benches itself should the relevant committee wish.

### 2.0 BENCH SPONSORSHIP POLICY

It is suggested that the committee agree a bench sponsorship policy, whereby it will facilitate the provision of benches at locations across the town. The proposed policy and pricing would be set in line with that of the council's policy for memorial benches at the cemetery to ensure parity of service and avoid confusion/self-competition.

The policy would be that:

- a) The Town Council will provide a bench and brass memorial plaque
- b) The sponsor would pay a fee of £950 (inc VAT). The price would be reviewed annually and be set by the Assets and Operations Committee when it sets the fees for cemetery memorial benches.
- c) Benches would remain the property of the Town Council. The Town Council would be responsible for their maintenance. The fee would cover the provision and maintenance of the bench for its natural life and at the point where the bench requires replacement the plaque would not be transferred to an alternative bench but offered back to the customer/sponsor who may choose to fund a replacement bench.
- d) Benches would be a uniform style (currently 'Highgrove' 6ft Teak Bench)
- e) The Town Council would facilitate benches subject to consultation with:
  - a. the Chairman of the Assets and Operations Committee (Town Council land) or ward councillors (third party land)
  - b. the relevant landowner (e.g. Cheshire East Council)

- c. relevant stakeholder organisations (e.g. Friends groups)

### **3.0 BENCH REPLACEMENTS**

Noting that two benches have recently been removed from the Heath, the committee may wish to consider funding of replacement benches.

The cost of a bench and installation is approximately £745 and would be drawn from the committee's street furniture budget (£2,215 remaining). Subject to the committee's direction, a donation towards the costs could be sought from Tatton Estates and Friends of the Heath. The approval of Tatton Estates as landowner would also be sought.

Alternatively, subject to the approval of the policy in section two, the council could advertise an opportunity to sponsor two benches on the Heath to fund their replacements (perhaps with a backup position of funding them should no-one wish to sponsor)

### **4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The committee should consider:

- a) The introduction of a bench sponsorship policy as outlined.
- b) Whether it wishes to fund replacement benches at the heath