



Church Stretton

Town Council

Report for Public Realm Committee Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 5th July 2022

Agenda Item: 10

Report produced by Officer / Councillor	Deputy Town Clerk
Summary	A spate of vandalism has been occurring over the last few months at the Lutwyche Road toilets and consideration of how this should be addressed is required.
Recommendation	Councillors are requested to consider report And resolve to initially close the toilets at 4.00pm each day whilst further investigations are undertaken to resolve this anti-social behaviour
Opportunity / Risk Assessment	
Financial / Resource Implications	A member of CSTC staff or volunteer time to close the toilets
Purpose / Benefits	To prevent further vandalism of the Lutwyche Road toilets and costs to the Council
Costs Identified (include quotations / costs analysis)	
Documents / research links appended	

Background

Church Stretton has been suffering a spate of vandalism over a number of months, predominantly in the Lutwyche Road toilets which the Council are responsible for maintaining.

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On the week ending 3rd June 2022 significant damage was caused to these toilets, when the cisterns were damaged, as well as the toilets being left in a defecated state. This matter was reported to the Police and local neighbours were approached to see if there were any witnesses to the events, which unfortunately proved unfruitful.

Vandalism occurred once again on 12th June, this time a fire had been set using the toilet rolls provided, fortunately the fire was discovered as the toilets were being locked and the fire put out before any serious damage could occur. Once again there were no witnesses to the matter and the Police were informed.

During the week commencing 20th June a phone call was received by the Town Council to advise us that there was a lot of noise coming from the toilets. A member of the Outdoor Team attended and witnessed children wearing uniforms from the local secondary school leaving the scene. This time a light fitting had been pulled off from the ceiling which has resulted in the toilets being locked until the repairs can be undertaken. Once again the Police were advised of the vandalism.

Moving Forward

Not only is this vandalism costing the Council additional income with the consistent re-supply of toilet rolls and toilet fittings, it is also costing a lot of officer time having to undertake the repairs and clean up after each incident. The vandalism seems to be occurring predominantly between the hours of 4pm and 7pm and occasionally on the weekends, consideration, therefore needs to be given of the direction that the Council wishes to take to deal with this vandalism.

Possible Options

- **CCTV**
The Council could invest in the provision of CCTV cameras, particularly for the toilets in Lutwyche Road. However, in these days of data protection the Council would be responsible for ensuring that clear notices are displayed to advise that the cameras are in operation; we would also need to designate a Data Controller who would be responsible for monitoring the cameras; adopt a CCTV policy and have a system for freedom of information requests that deal with how people can view the footage. There are businesses that offer services covering both installation and monitoring but the likely cost of the monitoring service would be between £200-£600 per year, however quotes from organisations offering these services would need to be fully investigated to ensure the service being offered met with the Council's requirements.
- **Toilet Closure**
The vandalism appears to be predominantly occurring between the hours of 4.00pm and 7.00pm (outside of normal school hours). The toilets are locked at 7.00pm as an interim measure by the operative undertaking other caretaking type duties for the Council. One solution could be to lock the toilets before 4pm each day, by a member of Town Council staff, or a

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volunteer, should there be someone available. But this would need to be monitored to see the impact this is having on a daily basis and may need to be adjusted on match days.

- **Other Council Approaches**

Many Councils across the country are now charging for the use of public toilets, which helps to cut down on vandalism and provides a little income to help with the maintenance of providing the facility. However, this is sometimes seen as potentially discriminating against those with conditions who need to use facilities more often than others due to a range of different medical conditions.

Automatic public toilets (APTs) are fee-paying public toilets. The Government praises these toilets for being fully accessible, less vulnerable to vandalism and self-cleaning after use. However, it has been argued that these are extremely expensive to run, and are not ecologically friendly.

Other Councils in the UK are part of the Community Toilet Scheme. Here Councils are working in partnership with local businesses who are happy to provide public toilet facilities, providing the Council with the opportunity to close their public toilets completely, this initiative has proved popular as toilets are often open and accessible for longer periods than before.

Proposal

The Committee are requested to agree to the initial closure of the toilets at 4.00pm each day and monitor staff / volunteer time for this undertaking. This will then allow for further investigation to be undertaken on the options available to the Council and likely costs, to best deal with an effective resolution to the anti-social behaviour in the Lutwyche Road toilets.