

WTF135
FOR DECISION
WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

30 September 2009

PROVISION OF COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARDS

REPORT OF HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT

Contact Officer: Coral Rogers Telephone 01962 848 533
crogers@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF30 – Provision of Council Noticeboards in Winchester Town Area – 18 May 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Report sets out a request from a member of the public to erect a notice board at Abbots Barton and a request from the Neighbourhood Wardens Team to replace existing notice boards in Stanmore.

The argument for the new noticeboard at Abbots Barton, as set out in the Report below, is supported by officers as it would benefit the local community. A previous report on the provision of notice boards, considered by the Forum in 2004 (WTF30 refers), highlighted that there were no notice boards in the area.

In view of these latest requests and the current need to consult Town Forum, it is recommended that the Forum consider delegating responsibility for managing the future provision of community notice-boards, within the unparished Winchester town area, to the Head of Environment (if necessary following consultation with the Chair of the Town Forum).

It is anticipated that the provision and maintenance of notice boards on an ad hoc basis can be provided from the Town Account's Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces Budget. If this was not possible and additional resources were required over and above those available at the time, then the matter would be reported to Forum. Alternatively, Forum could consider re-establishing a budget of £5000 to fund such notice boards in the future in the event that the cost cannot be met from within existing resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Forum:

1. Agree to the erection of a new notice board in Abbots Barton and replacement notice boards in Stanmore, using funds from the Town Account's Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces Budget, subject to advertisement consent from the Local Planning Authority.
2. Consider delegating authority to fund future notice board provision to the Head of Environment, if necessary following consultation with the Chair of the Town Forum.
3. Consider re-establishing a budget of £5000 to fund such notice boards in the future in the event that the cost cannot be met from within existing resources.

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DETAIL:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report relates to two recent requests for the provision of notice boards within parts of the town, one of which currently has no such facilities. Community notice boards are a valuable resource for passing on information to local residents and Town Forum has previously supported such requests. The report describes the individual requests in more detail and considers the suitability of the requests.

2. Abbotts Barton

- 2.1 A local resident has contacted the City Council to request that a notice board be erected in Abbotts Barton with the following justification.

- 2.2 *"Abbotts Barton is in the ward of St Bartholomew, with a range of housing, both local authority and private and with a wide mix of residents, from the elderly to families with young children.*

- 2.3 *Although Abbotts Barton is a quiet and friendly place to live, with few social problems, there is little opportunity for the residents to come together as a community. This is partly due to its layout, as it is stretched out over half a mile along Worthy Road and there is no obvious 'centre' and partly due to its geography - it is separated from Hyde (the other half of St Bartholomew's ward) by Nun's Walk, a river and the allotments.*

- 2.4 *Whilst Hyde benefits from a range of community facilities, including Hyde Parish Hall (HPH), St Bartholomew's Church, Hyde Newsagents and the King Alfred pub, there are no such facilities in Abbotts Barton.*

2.5 Benefits of having a community notice board

- 2.6 *There is currently no notice board in Abbotts Barton, or any other place where events etc could be displayed - the local shop, the Barn Store, has been vacant for approximately three years. The nearest community notice board is the Headbourne Worthy Parish Council notice board at the corner of Bedfield Lane (0.9 miles away from the 'centre' of Abbotts Barton), and there is a church notice board at St Bartholomew's.*

- 2.7 *A community notice board would be a simple but effective way of communicating information to the local residents and go some way to developing a sense of 'community'. This information could include:*

- *Details of the local councillors - who they are, how to contact them and when their surgeries are*
- *County council and city council notices, e.g. planning consultation notices*
- *Local health trust notices, e.g. for special clinics, consultation meetings*
- *Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings and crime prevention information*
- *Church notices - e.g. regular and Easter and Christmas Services etc*
- *Local events, e.g. at HPH and Jubilee Hall, Headbourne Worthy, St Bede school*
- *Community events (e.g. there was a picnic in the park at Abbotts Barton as part of the national Big Lunch event, which was advertised by posters around the estate and also targeted leafleting - which was costly and time consuming)*
- *Details of the local playgroup - Hyde Tots (this has recently changed to Thursday mornings as there was not enough attendees on the Monday afternoon session)*
- *Children's Centre information e.g. the summer stay and play sessions at the Riverside Nursery School."*

2.8 The local resident had also suggested that the notice board could be used to advertise local businesses (e.g. IT solutions, architects services, painters and decorators, builders, hairdressers, childminders etc); however, officers consider that this would be an inappropriate use of the notice board.

2.9 Proposed location

2.10 It is proposed that the notice board is located next to the Royal Mail post box on Chaundler Road. This is in the 'centre' of Abbotts Barton, with garage walls, not housing, behind it and it faces the park so is highly visible. It is also easily accessible to the elderly and less mobile.

2.11 This land is the responsibility of Hampshire County Council, who raised no objection to the erection of the notice board.

3 Planning Considerations

3.1 The Head of Planning Management has also been consulted and the erection of a new notice board (if used for announcing local events of a religious, educational, cultural, political, social or recreational character) will not require planning consent so long as it is not illuminated, does not exceed a height of 4.6metres above ground level or is greater than 0.6 square metres in area. However, as the proposed board has an area of 1.26 square metres, the new boards will require advertisement consent from the Local Planning Authority with a fee of £335 per application.

3.2 As the application will be from the City Council, if an objection is received it will be determined by a future meeting of the Planning Development Control

Committee. Consequently it is likely that those members of the Forum that also sit on the Planning Development Control Committee will have (by voting for or against the recommendation for the new board) pre-determined the application, which will exempt those Members from voting on the issue at the planning committee.

3.3 Size and Cost of the New Noticeboard

- 3.4 It is recommended that the new notice board is 140 cms wide by 90 cms high. Placed tightly together, this area is big enough for 18 A4s and is a similar size to the existing notice boards in Headbourne Worthy Parish, River Park Leisure Centre and St Maurice's Covert. The cost of this size of noticeboard including installation will be approximately £1200 (which includes the price of the board, installation and the planning fee but excludes VAT).

4 Stanmore

- 4.1 Where the notice boards are not looked after by members of the local community as key holders, they are maintained by the Neighbourhood Warden Team in the areas they currently cover.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Wardens have reported that two notice boards in the Stanmore area (one on the corner of Wavell Way and Stanmore Lane and the other on Cromwell Road near the post office and tattoo shop) require replacement.
- 4.3 Officers have estimated that the cost of these replacements will be in the region of £400-540 plus VAT for the wall mounted sign and £1000 for the replacement of the free standing notice board.

4.0. Maintenance of the notice boards

- 4.1. One of the challenges with the provision of notice boards is ensuring that they are then properly maintained and kept up to date on an ongoing basis. In the case of the boards provided in Stanmore, this role has been performed by the Neighbourhood Wardens as this can be accommodated within their existing duties and routine visits to the area. Outside of the main estate areas this is not possible so a willing local volunteer is required.
- 4.2. For any new board provided in Abbots Barton Mr and Mrs Taylor, local residents, have agreed to take responsibility as key holders for the board if it is glazed and have indicated that other residents would be willing to be act as additional key holders.
- 4.3. If unglazed, then Mr and Mrs Taylor would also be happy to be 'key contacts' to provide guidance on size, content, method of securing etc of information, and for checking the notice board on a regular basis to remove out of date information or any unauthorised fly posting.

5.0 Future notice board provision

- 5.1 In view of these latest requests and the current need to consult the Town Forum, it is recommended that the Forum consider delegating responsibility for managing the future provision of community notice-boards within the unparished Winchester town area to the Head of Environment (if necessary following consultation with the Chair of the Town Forum).
- 5.2 In view of the small number of requests received, the relatively small costs involved and the ability to manage such requests, it is anticipated that provision and maintenance of notice-boards on an ad hoc basis can be provided from the Town Account's Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces Budget. If this was not possible and additional resources were required over and above those available at the time, then the matter would be reported to the Forum. Alternatively, the Forum could consider re-establishing a separate budget of £5000 to fund such works as it did in 2004.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 6.1 Provision of community notice boards provides an invaluable source of information to those living in the area and can therefore be used to support many of the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives by signposting residents to relevant schemes and services and adding to a feeling of community cohesion and inclusiveness.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 This expenditure outlined in this report can be met from the existing Town Account Recreation Grounds and Open Space Budget (furniture and equipment sub-budget heading).
- 7.2 The establishment of a budget of £5000 for future provision would be growth and funding would have to be found to meet these costs for 2010 onwards.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 8.1 It is not considered that there are any significant risks associated with the issues described in this report. If the requests are refused then there is a slight reputational risk to the City Council in that it has committed to doing all it can to ensure an inclusive society and at a community level residents will see noticeboards as an important contributor to this aim.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

APPENDICES: None