

Committee: Community, Environment and Enforcement Committee	Date: 19 th September 2022
Subject: Shenfield War Memorial consultation	Wards Affected: Shenfield
Report of: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts – Corporate Director (Finance & Resources)	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Adrian J Tidbury – Project Manager, Facilities Management Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: adrian.tidbury@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

The Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of the Shenfield War Memorial located at the junction of the A1023 Shenfield Road and Middleton Hall Lane.

This report seeks the committee's approval to undertake a public consultation seeking the views of the people of Brentwood to a proposal for the removal of the existing planting beds around the memorial and to extend the paving area thus increasing the available space for those attending the services and events at the memorial.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

R1. That a full public consultation be carried out seeking the views of the people of Brentwood in support of the proposal.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. Members will be aware of the Shenfield War Memorial set in place to remember those fallen during WW1 and WW2. Additionally, a further Memorial and two Commemorative Benches for those fallen in recent

conflicts since 1946, have recently been added as has a memorial for Sgt William Merrifield VC.

2. The Urban District Council in 1919 formed a committee comprised of representatives from the Brentwood, Great Warley, Little Warley, Shenfield and South Weald districts to raise funds for a memorial hospital extension and the Shenfield War Memorial. The Hospital Memorial Extension was opened on 29th January 1921 and the Shenfield War Memorial unveiled on 9th October 1921. The scheme was publicly announced in July 1919 and each district took it upon itself to raise the necessary funds to pay for both memorials with the task subdivided within each parish so that the whole neighbourhood would be canvassed. It is documented that as a result practically every household in the area was consulted and as a result sufficient funds were raised for both schemes.

3. The Shenfield War Memorial remains a significant poignant asset of the Borough of Brentwood held in high regard as shown with the large numbers of public support attending events.

4. Members will be aware of the well supported Remembrance Services with over 1,000 generally forming the parade along with the standard bearers' dignitaries and wreath layers negotiating the limited space available within the memorial site itself.

5. The memorial is maintained by the Council in terms of the planting of the three flower beds which takes place generally in the lead up to the remembrance Service. Prior to that the planting beds generally remain unplanted. Over recent years significant sums have been spent on the repairs and maintenance to the original stonework resulting in one of the best kept memorials in the area.

6. The Leader of the Council has requested that officers review the situation with a view to removing the planting beds and the existing 'crazy' paving around the memorial and replace with a large circular paving area whilst relocating the two recent memorials and benches to the corners and retaining a small area of planting to accommodate the WW1 silhouette within a bed of poppies or other suitable planting thus removing a significant part of the council's regular flower bed maintenance responsibility.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

7. Officers have drafted a number of possible designs which have incorporated advice from a local architect and the contractors Bakers of Danbury who have undertaken the maintenance and repairs to the Memorial site over many years and are experienced in working with this type of asset.

8. The Royal British Legion have also been consulted and are keen to progress the suggested ideas. They have indicated that they would like to

undertake a fund-raising project after this year's Poppy Appeal, so as not to detract from that important national fund raising event.

9. The existing design of the Shenfield War memorial and its surrounds are what the people of the Urban District of Brentwood at the time considered to be the appropriate form of a memorial for those lost initially in WW1 and later in WW2. It is unknown whether the crazy paving was laid at that point or whether it was laid at the time that the WW2 name plaques were installed post WW2. Either way, this is a memorial for the people of Brentwood for their relatives lost in those conflicts and any changes to the memorial that they put in place should clearly be approved by those relatives remaining today and the people of Brentwood. It is in this respect that a public consultation is carried out to approach the public sensitively with any objections that may be received and seek their support for the improvements.

10. Various options have been discussed with regards to funding for the potential project and a number of sources have been approached, such as the War Memorial Trust and Brentwood School.

11. Following the results of the public consultation, the Council can then determine, what design and therefore financial contribution is required. Final financial proposals will be brought back at a future Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee.

Reasons for Recommendation

12. To seek the committee's approval to undertake a public consultation seeking the views of the people of Brentwood to a proposal for the removal of the existing planting beds around the memorial and to extend the paving area thus increasing the available space for those attending the services and events at the memorial.

Consultation

13. Initial consultation has taken place with the Royal British Legion who are in support of the principle. A wider public consultation forms the basis of this report.

References to Corporate Plan

14. Support, strengthen and sustain communities, whilst investing in community facilities to support a growing population.

Implications

Financial Implications

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15. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Production of the consultation will be met from existing resources, and final proposals of the project will be considered at a future Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee.

Legal Implications

Name/Title: Steve Summers, Strategic Director, Interim Monitoring Officer
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16. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Place
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17. There are no direct economic implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Partnerships, Leisure & Funding Manager
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18. None

Background Papers

None