

Agenda item 3

For decision: Better footpaths and more places to sit in Victoria Park

Author: Chris Stringer, Environment Manager

Introduction

The Council has recently received a petition asking for improvements to the footpaths and seating in Victoria Park. This petition has been signed by nearly 100 residents – mainly from Longleat Court and the Park Road area.

The footpath is an important and historical part of the park and is clearly wearing in some places. Tree roots are impacting on the path in places too.

As such, we are looking at options for improvements and the paths that have always been identified for work in the Management & Improvement Plan for the park. However, the funding, timing and resources allocated to this will need to be considered in the wider context of all the parks and green spaces that we look after.

Background

Good quality, accessible and inclusive paths and routes are an important part of what we're trying to achieve in Frome; they enable people to enjoy the town's parks and green spaces and they enable people to do this on foot or on bike. As such, they contribute to a number of our strategic aims and ambitions.

Accordingly, we have improved and repaired a significant number of paths across the FTC estate in the last five years; we have also invested in and supported ambitious and important projects that have opened up interconnecting routes across the town, including supporting Frome's Missing Links (FML)

Summary of Path & Route improvements in Frome

- New paths were put in as part of the project to build the multi-use sports court on Mary Baily
- Footpath repairs to the riverside path between Welshmill and the Market Yard
- Solar-powered lights along the paths through Welshmill and Weylands
- Path improvements through Weylands
- The FML project – including the path joining Welshmill and Weylands
- Upgraded paths at the Old Showfield
- Upgraded paths at the Dippy
- The creation of a new path – with ramped & stepped access – linking Henley Way to the Roundhouse and a community garden on the other side of the river from Welshmill play park (The Otherside, as it's now known)

Next steps

For path improvements in Victoria Park and elsewhere in the town to be agreed as part of the Management & Improvement Plans for FTC's open spaces across the town. We are half way through a programme of adopting these Plans at Council Matters committee meetings.

This coming spring, we are planning to finish the paths at the Showfield and a separate report on this agenda identifies and suggests using available S106 funding to do this. The same report also identifies and suggests S106 funding that could be used to improve the entirety of the path that runs around Victoria Park. Alternatively, we could look at improving the paths on a section-by-section basis and the highest priorities are identified in the following table.

Table 1: Options for improving the paths in Victoria Park

Option	Estimated cost	Suggested funding	
1	Resurface approximately 80 sqm as you enter the park by the bowls club	£5,000 to £5,500	Community Open Spaces budget: 2017/2018
2	Resurface approximately 60 sqm as you enter the park from Weymouth Road	£4,000 to £4,500	Community Open Spaces budget: 2018/2019
3	Resurface and improve the entire path running around the park (Approximately 1,700 sqm)	£90,000 to £100,000	Community Open Spaces budget: 2018/2019 S106 funds from the Garston Road development (as suggested in a separate report)

Considerations

There are pros and cons to each option. Resurfacing the path incrementally will create a series of joins which will be the weakest parts of the path, but this approach would mean we can plan and phase expenditure over a period of years.

Improving the whole path will produce a better path that will last at least ten years but would use a significant amount of the S106 funding - and will be more disruptive owing to the scope of the works.

These pros and cons can be discussed in more detail at the meeting.

<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Decide how to carry out path improvements in Victoria Park.</p>
