

NNDC District Councillor

Town Council Report – 29 March 2022

Next Phase District Council Toilet Improvement Programme

New Rd Toilets:

A tender exercise is about to commence for the internal refurbishment of these toilets. The footage of the toilet block will not be increased due to the proximity of existing trees. Work should commence in the Autumn.

New toilets:

The preferred location for the new toilets is on the site of the existing toilets at the Vicarage St car park. The advantage of having the new toilets at this location is that the land is already owned by the Council and utilities (electricity, water supply and drainage) are already in place. This reduces costs and is the quickest way of getting the new toilets built. The new toilets will have comprehensive facilities for users with disabilities (known as Changing Places) and this will require parking close to the toilets for user's vehicles. The toilets will also be operated using 'Green' technology. The design and costings for this new toilet block is currently taking place. Planning permission will be required. It is anticipated that works to build the toilets will begin in late 2022.

The outcome is that the Town will have two modern toilet blocks by next year. It is a substantial improvement on the existing provision. The investment (likely to be more than £250k) is in addition to the Heritage Action Zone programme.

Heritage Action Zone Project

The Cedars

Work to refurbish and repair the building commenced on February 21st and is scheduled to finish in mid-summer. The contractors are Medieval Masonry a firm that specialises in the refurbishment of listed buildings. The District Council has sent the Town Council the Head of Terms for a lease to occupy part of the building. The District Council remains in discussion with other local public and community organisation about leasing offices in the building.

Church Approach (Shambles Slope)

Work commenced on February 28th and is scheduled to last for 15 weeks (until mid-June). This does include some provision for delays in the building works so the works could be completed at an earlier date. The work is being carried out by Tarmac (contractors arranged by Norfolk County Council) who will also be doing the other highway and place setting works in the town. To date the existing pavement slabs have been removed (on being taken up, they crumbled and cannot be re-used) and the foundations for the new retaining walls have been constructed. Access to retail/hospitality premises is being maintained at all times and

arrangements are being made for the Hop Inn to place some tables and chairs outside the front of the pub during bank holiday weekends.

New Bus Interchange at New Rd car park

This is a Norfolk County Council led and funded scheme in addition to the Heritage Action Zone project. Work on this bus interchange is currently scheduled to begin mid/late April and is scheduled to last 10 weeks. Final designs and costing are still being processed. There will be three platforms for buses to pick up and discharge passengers. Bus shelters with electronic notices showing bus arrival and departure times are being installed with funding coming primarily from the Town Council. The existing 14 car parking bays that are free for users of the Community Centre and Library will remain along with a further 20 car parking spaces. The possibility of increasing the number of parking bays continues to be explored. The broken paving between the Community Centre building and the Jubilee Gate entrance to the Memorial Gardens Park will be repaired at the same time. Once the scheme is completed buses will no longer stop for passengers by the Post Office and opposite in New Rd.

During these works and the works to come later in Market Place there will be disruption and reduced parking available in the town. Also, the dates when particular works will start, and finish can change due to the problems currently facing the building construction industry. It is recognised that this may produce challenges for businesses and for community groups using town centre meeting places. The District Council will continue to work with all interested parties to try and mitigate some of the inconvenience that will be experienced. To help ease the general parking situation in the town the District Council's Cabinet is being asked to make the unused car park in Hornbean Rd free for cars to use for the remainder of the year.

New Play Facilities Trackside Norwich Rd

The funding contribution received by the District Council for play facilities arising from the planning approval for the Persimmon housing development in Norwich Rd (known as Sec 106 monies) is about to be paid to the Town Council. The sum is £71 thousand pounds and should enable the Town Council to proceed with the purchase and installation of new play equipment in the park.

EGS