

Leisure, Events & Environment - 4 May 2021

Agenda Item - LEE1637/21

Unauthorised Encampment Prevention

Introduction

This paper proposes measures which will help deter unauthorised encampments from taking place in Croxley Green.

Discussion

The Green

As councillors will be aware, several groups have in recent years used the area of the Green on which the Revels is held as a place of encampment. As part of the maintenance contract Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC) has with Three Rivers District Council (TRDC), it falls on CGPC to cover any costs associated with waste removal following the groups departure.

These encampments have cost CGPC £2450 over the past two years in clearance costs. It is very likely that further groups will try to access the site again this year.

So far, the only deterrents in place are a concrete block installed by the formal vehicle entrance and a small section of bunding (shown below). The bunding raises the level of the earth in relation to the road prohibiting vehicles from being able to drive across.



The bunding needs to be extended by approx. 350m to ensure full protection of the site.

The line shown in blue below represents bunding already in place, whilst red shows sections which need to be added.



The Revels section of The Green is the most at risk of encampments. The other parts are not as enclosed, are nearer the road and have less open space.

The Grounds Maintenance Manager and I have liaised with multiple contractors about the bund extension. We requested that the extension be comprised of certified subsoil and capped with certified topsoil. As The Green is part of a historical conservation area we thought it important to only use materials of which we can prove their quality.

Stone's Orchard

Another area at risk of encampment is Stone's Orchard. A group occupied the space for almost a week causing damage to trees, furniture and access points. There is only one official vehicle entrance to the site from the main road which at present is also being blocked by a concrete block. However, this method of protection is unsustainable. The Rangers will require access through the blocked gate for larger machinery and we do not have the capability ourselves to relocate the block. It is also unsightly and detracts from the natural surroundings.

We suggest the installation of two secure collapsible hardwood bollards which will sit behind the gate.

It is not being suggested that these measures will definitively prevent unauthorised encampments from taking place. They will however add a much-needed extra layer of protection which may deter those wishing to access the sites from doing so.

Funding

The Parish Council has no duty or responsibility to arrange for these works to take place.

There is an onus on local authorities to try and deter these encampments in Croxley Green. It is important to show residents that we take the protection of our public, green and open spaces seriously and have made attempts to prevent them from happening.

In the spirit of co-operation, we are suggesting offering to TRDC that the Parish Council will fund half of the costs of the bunding extension and installation of preventative posts in Stone's Orchard.

We have received a competitive quote of £10,970 from Weaver Plant Hire & Groundworks to extend the earth bunding on the Revels site.

The cost to purchase two hardwood removable bollards, including additional metal lock shroud for further protection, is between £300-£400.

Funding can be taken from the council's Community Infrastructure Levy reserve.

Recommendations

That the Parish Council:

- Approaches Three Rivers District Council to request that the earth bunding on The Green be extended.
- Approaches Three Rivers District Council to request that preventative bollards be installed in Stone's Orchard.
- That the Parish Council offers to fund 50% of the total cost of the project, up to a total cost of £6000.

Ryan Bennett / James Townley
Clerk to the Council / Grounds Maintenance Manager
April 2021