

Agenda Item 8

Site Visit Dickie Nook & Trees at Holmefield House:

Dickie Nook

On Friday 23rd July 2021 the Clerk and the Handyman met representatives of Higherford Residents Action Group (HRAG) at Dickie Nook to discuss the site and their proposed scheme for the site. The members of HRAG appreciate that the Council currently does not have the funds to carry out extensive works and appreciate that even if they apply for funding it could take several years to complete.

The current condition of the area needs additional work in the short term to improve the area both visually and ease the maintenance required. The pressing areas of immediate concern are:

1. The condition of some of the trees, which include one ash showing signs of dieback, two limes that need the epicormic growth¹ removing, several trees that need slight crown lifting which if feasible should include the conifer formally used for Christmas decoration.
2. The round rose bed in area above the bus shelter overgrown and containing roses that have not flowered for years.
3. The overgrown area around the conifer overgrown with weeds but still retaining some yellow roses.
4. The top end of the site which due to the density of the tree canopy only sustains wispy grass and mosses.
5. The existing steps adjacent to the bus shelter may need work as they are both steep with small treads.
6. HRAG also had a longer-term plan to introduce a paved seating area with raised beds and seating.
7. The provision of a disabled access from Barnoldswick Road and existing path improvements.

The Clerk explained that items 1-3 are maintenance problems and would be the responsibility of the Parish Council as part of its maintenance and health and safety responsibilities.

1. The Clerk requested the Tree Officer at Pendle Borough Council to have a look at the trees and suggested works. He reported to the Clerk that:
 - a. The ash needed urgent felling due to the close proximity to the A682.
 - b. That the removal of epicormic growth and up lifting of the highlighted trees would improve the look of the trees and improve sight lines for motorists egressing Barnoldswick Road.
 - c. That the conifer could be uplifted 2-3 metres leaving a bare trunk at ground level improving the aesthetic look of the tree whilst considerably improving sight line for vehicles at the junction with Barnoldswick Road.

With the potential health and safety risk posed by the ash tree the Clerk spoke to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of both the Council and GP Committee, held a site visit with an arboriculturalist and ordered the works to be undertaken.

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicormic_shoot

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2. The Clerk has arranged for the clearing of the round bed, which will temporarily be sowed with grass.
3. HRAG have agreed to start clearing the overgrown area around the conifer.
4. The area to the top of the site which is shaded by the tree canopy and sustaining only wispy grass and mosses could be transformed into a woodland plants area. This will need further research and discussion.

The Clerk will have further discussions regarding potential funding streams for the other works that HRAG would like to help fund and see carried out. This could be a two-three year project and even if the disabled ramp is not feasible the other works will still greatly improve this important gateway into Barrowford.

Holmefield House

Whilst the Tree Officer was at Holmefield House the Clerk took the opportunity for him to look at the trees at Holmefield House and in particular a self-seeded sycamore which a resident of Grove Street has complained about, damaging their section of unadopted highway. The sycamore tree is behind two silver birch trees and is reducing the growing space of their canopies and would improve both silver birches and the setting and amenity of that corner if the tree was removed. The Clerk has ordered the felling. Several flowering cherries are beginning to show signs of rot, hollowing of the trunk and fungal decay. The Council will need to look at future replacement, possibly planting replacements soon giving a chance to establish before the cherry trees need felling.