

## Meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### Agenda Item 6.1

#### **TO CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS PUT FORWARD FOR A MEMORIAL IN WEST PARK NATURE RESERVE**

##### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Uckfield Town Council very sadly lost a member of staff suddenly on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020; this was the Town Council's Countryside Ranger, Geoff Pollard. Geoff looked after the conservation management of the Town Council's two nature reserves, ancient woodlands, Harlands Pond and other key sites of special interest and biodiversity.
- 1.2 Geoff passed away in West Park Nature Reserve, doing a job which he loved. We often received positive feedback from walkers and local residents on his work in the reserve and had recently received praise on how beautiful the bluebells had been this year.
- 1.3 In honour of Geoff's work and commitment to Uckfield, it was felt that a memorial of some form should be placed in West Park Nature Reserve. Uckfield Town Council has received a few suggestions and ideas, and it was felt that the Environment & Leisure Committee would be the appropriate place to consider these.

##### **2.0 Suggestions put forward**

- 2.1 The Estates & Facilities Manager has advised that there would be suitable space, for a memorial to be placed, where it is not blocking the footway. Local residents have previously requested more benches as well, so there is potential to place a couple of items within the reserve, made of natural materials (made of wood or a log type seat) in honour of Geoff's work. Whatever is added to the reserve should be in keeping and made of, or consist of natural materials.
- 2.2 Suggestions have included:
  - *a specimen tree (one thing which West Park may not have at present is a black poplar tree;*
  - *Geoff did a magnificent job on the section of hedge he cut and laid by the by-pass from the gate over to Lake Wood. I feel sure that he had every intention of cutting and laying the rest but could not find the time. That hedge now forms an important haven for wildlife and will stand as a permanent living memorial to him. Perhaps we could have a little plaque there or something? Preferably something placed so as to be out of the way of vandals;*
  - *a resident suggested a bench at West Park;*
  - *having another one or two log seats on the edge of the open space;*
  - *brass plate on the main gate commemorating his life and sudden death;*
  - *a tree would be nice;*

- 2.3 These are a number of the ideas that the Town Council has received and a number of people who knew Geoff, also expressed their interest in providing donations towards a memorial. It would therefore be helpful if members could provide the Estates & Facilities Manager with their preferred ideas, which can then be discussed with the Local Nature Reserve Supporters Group, prior to arranging.
- 2.4 Once the memorial(s) have been placed in the reserve, it has been suggested that perhaps a small socially distanced gathering be arranged to enable people, locally, to pay their respects.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- (i) note the report, and;
  - (ii) consider the above suggestions and advise the Clerk accordingly.

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