

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 09/03/2023

Brewery Common Tree Work

Agenda item 22/131 4: To resolve:

- a. **The percentage of the payment to be made to West Berkshire Council towards the cost of the Brewery Common tree works deemed as a High and Moderate priority.**
- b. **The payment is made from unspent year-end Commons Budget and General Reserves.**

BACKGROUND

As reported at February's Council meeting, a meeting was held with Officers of West Berkshire Council (WBC) to establish the role WBC plays in the management of Brewery Common.

Although Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council owns the common WBC, under the Brewery Common Scheme, is responsible for the grounds maintenance. This consists of regularly cutting the accessible grass areas, maintaining the ditches, and reviewing and undertaking tree work.

In respect of a tree survey commissioned by SMPC in 2019, WBC recently undertook a review of the recommended work and on completion of an ecological survey, shall be looking to undertake works identified as being of a high and moderate priority. The cost of the work needed is £15,454.

Due to budget pressures¹, WBC are asking for a contribution towards the cost. They have suggested that as they are responsible for the site, and the trees, they should be responsible for more than 50% of the costs. However, anything that SMPC might contribute would be welcome.

Cost

WBC have confirmed the cost of the work needed as being £15,454. They will also be undertaking an ecological survey (the cost of this, if any, is not known).

If the Council do agree a payment to be made towards the tree works, it is likely that this will be paid from the 2023/24 accounts. Any unspent funds in the Commons Budget at year-end, could be transferred to an Earmarked Reserve for this purpose with the balance coming from General Reserves.

Clerk 01/03/2023

¹ WBC reported that their £216,000 2022/23 budget, has a spend of £193,620 with commitments of £19,637. The pressure on the budget is due to the impact of Ash Dieback disease and is likely to be the same for next year.