

8.4	<p>withdrawals out of these bank accounts</p> <p>All unreconciled items from previous months are investigated.</p>	<p>All outstanding items from one month's reconciliation are resolved during the next reconciliation.</p>	<p>All bank reconciliations were reviewed and signed off by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>During the audit, outstanding items from the previous reconciliation were checked against the bank statements and agreed. All items had been carried forward or removed if banked in the intervening period or cancelled.</p>	None required
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FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	LAND OFF CEDAR AVENUE
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) Consider, in principle, the purchase of the land off Cedar Avenue for the purpose of public open space.
- (ii) Subject to (i) above, recommend to the Town Council the purchase of the Cedar Avenue site.
- (iii) Subject to (i) above, recommend to the Town Council approval of a supplementary capital budget of £45,000 from the Town Council's Capital Receipts account.

2. Background

2.1 Members may recall that this site has been the subject of a number of planning applications for a new housing development with some associated residual green space. These applications were refused and I understand that the prospective purchaser has now withdrawn any further interest in the site.

2.2 The site is owned by the Gilstrap Trust which is managed by Trustees who are made up of Newark Councillors representing town wards on Newark & Sherwood District Council.

In March 2021 the Trust Board considered future options for the site. The Board resolved to seek to have the Land designated as public open space and to approach the District and Town Councils for expressions of interest in acquiring the Land. Valuation advice on the proposal was also to be sought.

2.3 The District Council published its Amended Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan for consultation on 27 July 2021. This report sets out the District Council's preferred approach to a range of planning issues and includes a proposal to deallocate the Land as housing land. The consultation closed on 21 September 2021.

I am not aware that the site has been formally recognised as green space, this will be required, I suspect, to enable the Trust to dispose of the site as green space.

2.4 Prior to the last meeting of the Trust Board on 19th October 2021, the Clerk to the Board approached me with regard to the Town Council's potential interest in acquiring the site from the Trust.

Following consultations with the three Group Leaders I responded as follows:

“From a consistency perspective it would make sense for the land to be transferred to Newark Town Council as it owns and operates most of the Public Open Spaces in the town, as opposed to Newark & Sherwood District Council which now only has a residual interest in such sites. I can advise the Trust therefore that the Town Council is interested, in principle, in acquiring the site.”

- 2.5 I understand that the Trust have obtained an indicative valuation of £45,000 for the sale of the site. This is based on the Land being sold as public open space, with a covenant preventing future development and/or overage provisions, to protect the Gilstrap Trust’s position in respect of any future development potential.

The Town Council doesn’t have an approved budget for land acquisitions, if Members do wish to proceed with the purchase then I would suggest that this is approved as a supplementary budget from the Capital Receipts account.

Land acquisitions are matters that are reserved to the full Town Council therefore any final decision will need to be made by that body.

- 2.6 In addition to the cost of purchasing the site there may well be further expenditure required to improve & enhance the facilities that are provided and possible landscaping works.

I understand that there is a community group that has already put forward some proposals for the site to the Trust Board; this group is known as the Gilstrap Charity Children’s Wood and Wildlife Meadow Committee. These proposals include the development of the site into a ‘Children’s Wood and Wildlife Meadow’.

Given the sensitivity of this site with the local community I would anticipate that the Town Council would wish to engage with local residents and interested groups, as to any changes in purpose and design of the site.

At this stage it is not possible to provide an estimate for any such works as this will clearly depend on the scale and type of works that the Town Council agrees as being appropriate.

In addition there will be ongoing revenue expenditure for repairs & maintenance. It is not anticipated that these will be significant but need to be borne in mind as part of a decision as to whether or not the site is brought into the Town Council’s ownership.

3. Financial, Legal, Equality, Risk and Environmental Issues

- 3.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	None.
Lead Officer:	Alan Mellor Tel: 01636 684801 Email: alan.mellor@newark.gov.uk

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:	TARGET HARDENING OF KEY LOCATIONS
REPORT BY:	TOWN CLERK

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) Consider the proposed Target Hardening works at the five sites identified in the report and which are in the Town Council's ownership.
- (ii) Subject to (i) above, recommend to the Town Council approval of a supplementary capital budget of £44,325 from the Town Council's Capital Receipts account.

2. Background

2.1 The District Council considered a report on issues raised by unauthorised encampments by gypsy & traveller groups on areas within the District on land owned and managed by the Council, together with proposals to mitigate the future risk of unauthorised encampments.

The Town Council also has significant areas of open space which could similarly be vulnerable to such encampments.

2.2 Historically like most other Council/Landowners in the UK, the Town & District Councils have struggled to protect land from unauthorised encampments. When they have encamped on Open Space Land this gives the District Council a social issue and is a financial cost to both Councils to solve the issue. This summer, in 2021, Travellers have occupied several sites within the District. They have been occupying land at Cleveland Square/Thorpe Oaks and Newbury Road Estate. This covers ownership of NSDC and HRA. The Land at Newbury Road also has a land ownership responsibility for both the Town & District Councils.

These costs can be significant; the encampment at Cleveland Square alone was around £7,000, comprising legal costs, officer time and clean up. If they are on Town Council land the responsibility to deal with them rests with the Town Council. Whilst the District Council help by undertaking most of the work required to remove them, the cost is recharged to the Town Council.

3. Securing Sites

3.1 A range of modifications have been considered for each site; this includes:

- Bollards – Both Fixed and lockable
- Tree Planting
- Meadow Creation

- Height Barriers
- Boulders
- Bund construction
- Access Gates

Bunds are earth mounds created to provide a natural looking barrier, they add security and create a varied landscape vista. Developed correctly, they can improve works carried out for Meadow Management which can support our Carbon Strategy. Meadow land can act as a great carbon holder and Bunds would be a greater impact than Tree Planting alone.

3.2 The District Council undertook a comprehensive analysis of sites in their ownership as well as those considered to be vulnerable which are the Town Councils.

The District Council's proposals for each site are set out below:

- (i) Newbury Road Estate (various sites) – Bund & Tree planting cost £17,825
- (ii) Barnby Road Community Park & Play Area – Bund & Tree planting cost £8,500
- (iii) Autumn Croft Open Space - Bund & Tree planting cost £4,800
- (iv) Syerston Way - Bund & Tree planting cost £6,400
- (v) Riverside Park Play Area - fencing & concrete bollards cost £6,800

The total cost of all the above works is £44,325. There is no approved budgetary provision for these works and, if approved, will require a supplementary estimate. Given the scale of the works I would suggest that it is appropriate to treat these works as a capital expenditure and thus can be funded from the Town Council's Capital Receipts account.

3.3 The District Council have offered, that the works if approved, can be included within the overall contract. This will be very helpful as the Town Council will not have to undertake its own tendering processes. This should also make financial sense as it will be part of a larger contract which should attract lower quotes than if the Town Council sites are a separate contract.

3.4 In my view the Newbury Road works are the most important given the experience of the previous encampments in this area and the fact that the Town Council's land will become even more vulnerable when the District Council sites have been secured.

4. Financial, Legal, Equality, Risk and Environmental Issues

4.1 Contained in the report

Background Papers:	None.
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