

Warwick Town Council Annual Meeting
Report from Warwick's District Councillors
4th April 2019

St Mary's Lands Masterplan: It has been a very successful year for St Mary's Lands with the start of the implementation phase of the Masterplan. Work completed includes

- The circular track within the racetrack has been resurfaced which has received great feedback. There have been more mothers with buggies and mobility scooters using it and it is much more accessible in wet weather.
- The Community room at RCW has been complete and now has over 20 community groups using it.
- Also, at RCW the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) has been laid and it open for use. It has proved to be very popular.
- The refurbishment work at Corp of Drums has been completed which was supported by a loan from WDC
- After months of planning, the cycle route through the racecourse should start soon.
- The frontage of Hill Close Gardens has been improved and they have been successful in a bid for a Lottery Fund grant of £78,000 for an extension to the pavilion. This grant was dependant on the charity raising part of the building costs and last month WDC approved a grant of £30,000 towards this.

I think it was fair to say that there was scepticism from some parts of the community when the Working Party began its work but I believe this has been shown to be misplaced by the numerous improvements already delivered on St Mary's Lands and those still in progress.

From one very successful project to one that despite a considerable effort by WDC officers the proposed regeneration of the **Lepers' Hospital** site did not come to fruition. It is a difficult issue as it requires the agreement of a number of parties and the owner's willingness to sell the land. WDC will continue to explore options to bring this historic site back into public use.

The board of **Chase Meadow Community Centre** approached WDC for help when their outgoings rose substantially and they had been operating with a deficit for two years. WDC made an emergency payment to cover the service charges for the current year while a consultant paid for by WDC worked with the board to prepare a business plan. Once agreed the plan showed that the Community Centre could be self-sufficient once all the initiatives in the plan had been put in place. This however, would take a number of years to bring to fruition and there would be a negative cash flow for three years totalling £34,500. At last month's Executive the Council agreed to fund this shortfall to allow this important community asset to continue its excellent work.

Linen Street Car Park continues to cause concern but the good news is that the monthly structural inspections show its condition has not deteriorated much and to support this any minor repairs that are identified are done by one of our contractors,

However, WDC has met with the company that do the structural inspections to discuss the longer-term future of the carpark, i.e. what may be happening within the concrete. As a result, a more detailed survey called 'Half Cell Mapping' has been commissioned which is likely to take place in the spring, due to the weather conditions needed to carry out this work. The results of this survey will give us a much clearer picture of the future of the carpark.

Other parking news for Warwick: Cashless payment in Warwick car parks was introduced and West Rock car park was resurfaced and lighting installed.

We also helped the **Playbox theatre** to build an access road to its car park which could not be used once the original access through Aylesford School had been closed off. This was putting the future of this important community asset in jeopardy. WDC made a loan to them to allow the road to be built which opened up the car park for use once again and so secured the Theatre's immediate future.

Cllr Noel Butler
13th March 2019