

Childrens' Facilities Working Party

September 2017 Update

- Recap – The tender regarding the purchase and installation of new playground equipment at the Riverlands area has been put on hold, given the additional procurement considerations that need to be taken into account. This delay has allowed the WP to revisit and reassess its vision for the area.
- Cllr Jackson, Broadbent and Tomlinson met with Cllr John Murphy of Barford PC in July for a guided tour of the Barford play and recreational area which is well utilised by the local community (of all ages) and offers so much more than what is available in Henley (despite it being a much smaller town). Cllr Murphy was generous with his time and shared his experiences and knowledge with us, giving us lots of inspiration and ideas to apply to our local area.
- We are now THINKING BIG! The redevelopment of the play area will shape the way in which the entire Riverlands area is used and enjoyed for many years to come. Accordingly, before we commit ourselves on the redevelopment of this one small area we want to take a holistic view of the entire Riverlands area to ensure that we do not curtail or compromise wider improvements in the future.
- Our new VISION is to refurb and improve the whole of the Riverlands area to ensure greater use by local residents of all ages, and to attract out of town visitors. This central green space is a valuable asset, which has become very rundown and shabby, certainly not an attraction for visitors. The woods are overgrown, the pond has now become an eye sore with no visible pond life (other than beer cans!) and the open areas leave a lot to be desired.
- The WP would like to investigate, in collaboration with the Parking WP, the possibility of relocating the play area and extending the central parking by approximately 25 spaces to help alleviate the parking problems within Henley. This would require the current bund and some trees to be removed, but would have the benefit of opening up what has unintentionally become a divided space.
- The WP would also like to enter into preliminary discussions with the Medical Centre to understand their long term plans and whether there is any benefit in collaborating with the Medical Centre in a re-design of the area.
- In order to take our vision forward the Council will need to engage a third party surveyor to carry out a detailed topographical survey (@ £2,000 plus VAT). This is a necessary first step that must be taken in order to move the vision forward. The WP are hopeful that a Warwickshire County Council grant of up to £1,000 will contribute towards this cost.
- The results from the topographical survey will feed into an initial feasibility scheme and ultimately a planning application (to be prepared by third party consultants). Local residents would be given an opportunity to comment upon the proposed plans through a town consultation (supported by professional 3D graphical and colour presentations). It is anticipated that consultant fees up to the planning stage will be in the region of £10,000 plus VAT but the WP believes these fees are absolutely necessary in order to achieve our vision. We will need to present our vision to local residents in a professional way in order to gain their support.

- The WP resolve that this report, including the actions and spend referred to are approved.