

Dereham Town Council

Heritage and Open Spaces Committee

26 January 2021

Agenda Notes.

5. Consider approach to restoring pargeting at Bishop Bonners Cottages

There are broadly two approaches to repairing and restoring historic buildings. On the one hand there is the purist approach which seeks to make the minimum interventions needed at any particular time, in essence waiting until something fails before a repair is made. This approach works well on a large historic building where there is a dedicated onsite maintenance team who can carry out repairs on a rolling basis as they are required. The second approach is where a judgement is made as to what is likely to fail in the next few years and pre-emptively fix. This latter approach is more suited to situations where expert repairers can only realistically be brought in periodically.

The advice from both the Council's Historic Building Surveyor and the Historic Buildings Officer at Breckland Council is that the latter approach is best suited to the repair of Bishop Bonners Cottages and the pargetting work. This approach is better suited to the circumstances under which the Council operates. It does however require a certain level of judgement which comes from the Historic Buildings Officer and specialists employed by the Council.

The Committee is being asked to confirm that they are happy to follow the advice provided by the Historic Buildings Surveyor and Breckland Council's Historic Buildings Officer and that the Dereham Heritage Trust will be consulted and kept informed of any work.

7. To consider requests from individuals to plant trees.

The Council used to accept requests from members of the public to place memorial benches at various locations. A few years ago the Council decided to stop accepting requests because the benches were being treated as personal memorials. The donor can feel a personal connection and feel poorly treated if the bench became vandalized or removed because it was broken. The Council resolved that because it could not guarantee the security of the benches it would no longer accept such items.

There have been a number of requests recently for permission to plant a tree, the reasons vary but there is generally a personal connection to the tree; such as the memory of a loved one. Like benches, trees can get vandalized, unlike benches, trees need looking after and can die or be badly damaged by contractors. The risk is that in accepting such requests people have a personal connection to a particular tree and the Council will be criticised if something unfortunate happens to it.

While the motives for wanting to plant a tree are very good, the recommendation is that the Council has a policy not to accept donations of trees, because it is unable to sufficiently control the environment in which they are located. People are likely to maintain a personal connection to the tree and feel aggrieved if they are accidentally damaged, or die.