

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

7 September 2021

Public Questions and Answers Sheet

Question from the Reverend Canon Bruce Ruddock:

The recent events on Priory Park have left the area in front of and around the white pavilion in a dreadful state. The white pavilion itself is a decaying eyesore and - as a cricket umpire in the Sussex League – I find it an embarrassment to the cricket club, especially when hosting away teams. Prior to the recent concerts, I had been reassured by a council member that everything possible was in place to protect the park. In the event, this did not prove to be the case and this wonderful space now represents a fallow farmers field. Now It has dried out the ruts are also a hazard for the elderly and young families. May I ask what the council propose to do to prevent such events happening again and what resources are in place to repair the ground, and when?

Answer from Cllr Briscoe:

The Council is in active discussions with the Cricket Club who are looking to take a lease of the White Pavilion, to help support their future plans. In the meantime the Council continues to undertake planned and reactive maintenance and repairs, although understandably works such as redecorations do need to be planned around use of the building. Funds for these works do not extend to enhancements or improvements to the building and potential funding sources for those such works are part of the conversations currently taking place between the Council and the Cricket Club.

The damage should not have occurred to the cricket outfield and the Council felt they put everything in place to prevent damage from occurring. Unfortunately the damage was caused by vehicles that the event organiser had not notified us they would be using prior to the event and the unseasonal amount of rain in the week prior to the event. The event organisers had also misjudged the turning requirements of their delivery lorries resulting in the lorries not being able to turn from North Street into Guildhall Street. This resulted in the use of forklift trucks to move the equipment to and from their lorries on Priory Road.

As soon as the council were aware of the damage, Chichester Contract Services began obtaining quotations for the repair works. These quotations have been received and works on the repairs are due to take place following the completion of the cricket season which will allow the cricket to continue and to give the grass the best chance of establishing.

The Council will review the lessons learnt from the event and will continue to work closely with event organisers to deliver events for the local community and visitors whilst managing and protecting the parks infrastructure.