

AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

28 JULY 2020

AYLESFORD VILLAGE SQUARE

In April last year it was reported to this committee that using a consultant engineer it would be possible to implement a scheme for improvements to the Square which would cost between £40k -50k including the consultants fee of £7500. At that point it was agreed that the Clerk should look to see if half of the cost of the scheme could be met from other sources. At this point KCC committed to funding of £3k and a possible further small sum from the local County Councillor. It was also identified that there could be funding from Historic England but on looking into the detail of this scheme it was identified that any scheme would have to be promoted and led by TMBC.

TMBC were approached and after a long delay in replying the following response has been received from them:-

“The guidance note makes it clear that the Local Authority is the lead partner and must provide funding in some form, or lead a partnership of funders (local business’s, local grant givers, parish council etc.). They must also provide the resource to evidence and subsequently run the scheme, surveying of the conservation area, liaising with individual owners, parish council, potential joint funders, highways and internal departments, to establish a need for the grant scheme, for example.

Given that in the event that such a scheme were to be progressed, there would be a requirement for the Borough Council to provide some of the funding and significant resource into a scheme in order to access what funds might be available, I’m afraid at this current moment in time we would not be able to commit to that. Notwithstanding this position, which I appreciate will be disappointing for you, we are mindful that there will be a need to review Conservation Areas as part of ongoing work following the adoption of the Local Plan and I would suggest that perhaps that might be an appropriate time to re-evaluate the position.”

Currently within the Square there are barriers around the tree on the right-hand side as the surface has risen and is dangerous because the roots of the tree breaking up the surface. If there is no action taken re possible improvements to the Square it is very likely that KCC will do some remedial work which could include taking the tree out as it will continue to cause damage.

Members instructions are requested.