

Health and Safety Report – P&R Committee October 2022

Accidents and Near Misses

On 24 September at approximately 2200 hrs in the store room behind the Stowford Hall a member of staff was stacking trestle tables away into the racking system. At the same time a tall member of the Theatre Company also attempted to put a table away and reached over dropping it onto the staff member's head. The table knocked their glasses off and resulted in them having a sore eye and a headache. No first aid and sick leave was required and the glasses were not damaged. A leading member of the Theatre Company visited The Watermark a few days later to enquire how the member of staff was and was informed that they were feeling better.

Recommendation

It is clear that the Theatre Company has recognised that they caused an accident to a member of staff and showed concern, however staff will remind them to wait in future and not lift heavy objects over other people in order to prevent recurrence. The Town Clerk has also followed this up with an email to the Theatre Company requesting them to undertake their own investigation.

No further action is required.

Visits and Inspections

On 8 September Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority performed a fire safety inspection of the Town Hall premises. The inspection demonstrated adequate safety, however the fire schedule of improvements recommended that nominated staff are given adequate training in the use of fire-fighting equipment to enable safely fighting outbreaks of fire.

Devon and Cornwall Fire Protection, our current fire protection provider, can offer a certificated fire extinguisher course lasting approximately one hour and includes live fire-fighting using their fire extinguishers. The course can accommodate 10 people at a cost of £200.00 plus VAT. Outside space for the training would be required.

Although this training was recommended, fire-fighting is not a requirement and the Council's policy has been for staff to vacate the premises as safely and quickly as possible. Members are therefore asked to consider whether they still wish to pursue fire extinguisher training for nominated staff or continue with the existing policy of extinguishers used as a last resort.

Watermark

The fire curtain on the top floor of The Watermark was being activated by the sensor and not resetting correctly. The batteries were replaced and the issues resolved.

Parks

On 4 October a small tree in the verge bordering Filham Park car park had fallen and was removed by the Parks Officer.

On 6 October a cracked main stem of an ash tree in Victoria Park failed. This was hanging against an adjacent elm tree and was lowered to the ground and made safe by tree surgeons. They have recommended that the remaining large stem is removed as a priority before any high winds and will place this on their priority list for action.

The Council's tree inspection has revealed approximately fifteen trees requiring felling due to ash die back and a similar quantity requiring deadwood removal. The Parks Committee has approved the works to take place, and a schedule of works required has been sent to various tree contractors for quotations.

The Parks Officers have been encountering a flea infestation when visiting the cemetery. It appeared to come from the outside of the tool store and concentrated near the vents, and the suspected cause being from a hedgehog. Diatomaceous Earth feed powder was used to treat the area which is harmless to mammals, and with repeat applications the problem has now been resolved.

A play area survey has been undertaken and the results of this will be discussed at a special Parks Committee meeting scheduled for later in October. This will determine the way forward regarding the deteriorating Victoria Park play equipment which is being highlighted at engineering inspections as a health and safety concern.

The height barrier was becoming a safety hazard and was scheduled for replacement when the new access road is installed. However, it was becoming urgent and a new barrier has been ordered following approval by the Parks Committee.

A large unauthorised BMX ramp, pit and cycle way has been built in Longtimber Woods. The Parks Officers have dismantled it and also removed a den containing litter and drugs paraphernalia

The new bin ordered for Filham Park has now arrived and been fitted.

Butterpark

There has been a recent spate of break ins on the site again, with windows being left open and litter strewn. Extra Heras fencing, chains and padlocks have been installed at Butterpark, and also additional signage around the site warning 'Dangerous Building – Do Not Enter' and 'Flat Roof – Fragile'.

This however has not deterred the offenders who have been identified by witnesses as Ivybridge Community College students. They were seen entering the site by a neighbouring property. A dog walker is also suspected of entering the site by removing and taking away the clamps linking the Heras fencing, and cutting the fence with bolt cutters. These break ins have been reported to the police and logged.

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