

Report prepared by Angie Price – Town Clerk

LEDBURY TOWN TRAIL

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Economic Development & Planning Committee with correspondence received in respect of the Town Trail and the Council's decision to apply for a "licence to cultivate".

Detailed Information

On 25 August, the following email was received from Mr Edge:

"As you may recall I have been trying without any success to get support from the Town Council in my battle with Hereford Council, over the deplorable state of the Trail. The last time we exchanged correspondence on this subject the Town Council were apparently agreeing a 'licence to cultivate', an idea first put forward under the chairmanship of Nina Shields some considerable time ago.

I wrote to the Council expressing concern that Hereford Council were seemingly trying to shift all responsibility on to the Town Council, including liability for any and all third party claims , which may arise in the future for accidents involving any well meant ground and tree maintenance by employees or volunteers of LTC.

My own report, which I issued in February 2019, with the blessing of former council members, has fallen on deaf ears with both local and county councilors ever since. Meanwhile the state of the trail gets worse, and there is no sign that statutory and regular safety checks are being carried out in any meaningful manner. I would go so far as suggesting that Hereford Council are failing in their general duty of care to public safety. I have tried to get specific information under a 'Freedom of Information' request, but in the main this was refused. Other pertinent information I have sort from HC has been heavily redacted so as to render it useless.

With the problems of covid-19 stopping public scrutiny at council meetings, I would like to know how I can bring my concerns to the attention of the Town Council. I would also like to hear if LTC have taken the idea of a licence to cultivate any further, and if so what is planned for the trail in coming months, as this may have a bearing on how I proceed with my own campaign."

Following the council's decision to apply for the "licence to cultivate" in respect of the Town Trail. The Clerk contacted Herefordshire Council to enquire on the process required for this. However, to date, no response has been received despite several chaser emails and unfortunately, the Covid lockdown and staffing issues has meant that this issue has not been followed up recently.

The Clerk had also been attending meetings of Sustainable Ledbury who had been working on a project to map the flora and fauna on the Town Trail and Members of the group were keen to create a plan for work to the Town Trail once the Council were in receipt of the "licence to cultivate". However, due to Covid this project has been slightly delayed.

Recommendation

1. That Members of the Economic Development & Planning Committee receive and note the above information and agree a response to Mr Edge's email.
2. That the Clerk be authorised to contact Herefordshire Council to follow up the enquiry in respect of the Licence to Cultivate.
3. That the Clerk contact Sustainable Ledbury to establish whether they are now in a position to continue with their meetings.