

PUBLIC TOILETS AT GEORGE LANE CAR PARK

Background and History

On 1 April 2016, Wiltshire Council closed its public conveniences right across the county. Town and parish councils were asked, at short notice, whether they wanted to take on these facilities. The toilets at George Lane Car Park in Marlborough were amongst those set for closure. The Town Council recognised the importance of providing these facilities to its residents and visitors and decided to take on this building via a Community Asset Transfer. The Town Council already owns the toilets at Chantry Lane but there is not sufficient funding to run both sets of facilities. So, Councillors agreed that as those at George Lane are in an important position in terms of the main car park, proximity to public open space and busy shopping areas, then these should provide the provision for the town.

No significant investment has been made at the George Lane site for many years and Councillors have decided to sell those at Chantry Lane and use the proceeds to upgrade the George Lane site. This will then offer a much improved level of service at one site helping to meet the town's local and tourism needs. The aspiration, subject to necessary agreements, planning permissions and funding, is to also include a small Tourist Information Point, a coach driver's rest room and a Personal Care Room.

The Town Council is keen to move this project ahead quickly and with the aim that new toilets, Phase 1 of the project, can be installed by mid-2017. However, rather than sell Chantry Lane at this point, we should like to ensure that there is some public toilet provision until the new ones at George Lane Car Park are built. So, to ensure this can happen, Councillors would like to apply for a public works loan.

What it will cost

The Town Council has already held meetings with the British Toilet Association to identify the facilities best matched to Marlborough. Initial design plans have been drawn up and preliminary estimates suggest that the amount needed for the toilets will be up to £125,000.

What next?

To ensure that there are public toilets in the town until the new George Lane Car Park toilets are built, we are asking local people whether they would be prepared for the Town Council to source this money through a loan from the Public Works Loan Board – a statutory government organisation that lends at preferential rates to local authorities.

Has any money already been ring-fenced for the project?

Finding funds for this project at such short notice has not been possible. (Hence, the decision by Councillors to sell the Chantry Lane site to fund the refurbishment works at George Lane making it an improved facility for the whole town.) However, at the end of the 2015/16 Financial Year budget savings of £25,000 were identified towards the project.

Will use of the toilets be a chargeable service?

The running costs of public conveniences are high – cleaning, utilities, electricity, water, business rates, etc. We have been advised by the British Toilet Association that the toilets should be a chargeable service to help meet these costs.

What is the likely long term loan cost to the Town Council?

The cost of a loan spread over a period of 10 years (the estimated life of the refurbished toilets) is set out below:

Loan Amount	Fixed Interest Rate*	Annual Repayment - 10 years	Total Cost
£125,000.00	1.23%	£13,322.86p	£133,228.86p

Interest rates current at 30th September 2016 from the Public Works Loan Board

What would this loan likely to cost the average householder?

The likely annual cost to the average Band D householder of taking on this loan is set out below

Loan amount per year	Approximate Cost per year to Band D Householder	Approximate Cost per month to householder	Approximate Cost per week to householder
£13,322.86	£4.10	.34p	.08p

Based on the 2016/17 Wiltshire Council formula of 3252.83 households

This cost would be added to your annual Council Tax bill a proportion of which (around 10%) is collected by Wiltshire Council and goes towards Marlborough Town Council's expenditure and is known as the precept. In 2016/17, the annual cost to the average Band D tax payer to fund Marlborough Town Council is £156.73 (or £13.06 per month). This pays for a range of services - keeping your town clean and tidy, day to day maintenance and upkeep of buildings, parks and open spaces, play areas, cemeteries, the CCTV system, etc.

What we need to know

We need your views on our plans to go ahead to construct refurbished public toilets at George Lane Car Park with a loan to bridge the gap in funding. We should be grateful for your views on the project and the plans to apply for a Public Works Loan. Please send your comments and your postcode to the postal or e-mail address below by **Friday, 4th November 2016**.

Marlborough Town Council, 5, High Street, Marlborough, SN8 1AA

or

enquiries@marlborough-tc.gov.uk

If you have any queries about this consultation, please contact the Town Clerk at one of the above addresses or by telephone on 01672 512487