

F19/18 HILLSIDE GARDENS LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

Background: Broadclyst Parish Council has been approached by a Hillside Gardens resident regarding the possibility of putting a Little Free Library in the Swale. The project has had good support on social media.

The project is an American concept and has become popular in communities across the globe

<https://littlefreelibrary.org/>

Looking rather like an overgrown postbox, people just use it to share books. These are some online examples.



Risk analysis and legal responsibility:

Injuries to members of the public may be caused by the design/construction of the library, or the conditions/way in which it is used.

Mitigation measures include:

- Initial checking the design for any obvious flaws (i.e. that suitable materials will be used, that it is understood that there must be no sharp edges, no protruding fixings etc.);
- Checking that the finished product has no obvious flaws or dangers pre-installation;
- Secure ground fixings, if a wooden post is used, then it should preferably be set into concrete or have a metal foot to reduce the risk of rot through wood-ground contact;
- Affiliation to the Little Free Library scheme to register community-appointed stewards who will receive instruction on inspections and how to manage the library;
- Regular checks (at least twice-weekly) by community-appointed stewards;
- Adequate insurance. Once identified as a community asset, the Parish Council's insurance policy will provide public liability cover.

Funding:

The box itself will be constructed by the local Men in Sheds¹ group. This is a project where men connect, converse and create. The activities are often similar to those done in garden sheds but are for groups of men to enjoy together. They help reduce loneliness and isolation, but most importantly, they're fun.

Construction and installation costs have been agreed to be covered by Barratts. For the sake of process, the Parish Council is already set-up on Barratts system as a supplier and so Barratts will issue a cheque to the Parish Council which would pay Men in Sheds on Barratts' behalf. It is estimated the materials/construction cost will be in the region of £100-120.

The only financial commitment for Broadclyst Parish Council in the first instance is the registration fee and purchase of the plaque (at a total of approx. £40, depending on the US conversion rate). As with other community assets, the ongoing maintenance would be the ultimate responsibility of the PC, although in reality the community would likely wish to undertake this itself.

Timeline:

- Men in Sheds have agreed to design and build the library;
- Barratts (current landowner) have given consent for the library to be installed in the Swale at Hillside Gardens, subject to GreenSquare (Management Company) agreeing the final position;
- Barratts have agreed to fund and install the library;
- Awaiting reply from GreenSquare to arrange date for site visit to agree location

Recommendation:

- i. That the Committee supports the request to have a Little Free Library in the Swale at Hillside Gardens;
- ii. That the Committee approves the registration fee and cost of the plaque (approx. £40);
- iii. That any unforeseen expenditure in 2019/20 be paid from the emerging communities budget allocation, to a maximum of £250 in the year;
- iv. That the proposer be recognised for her initiative and thanked for the preparatory work she has done to bring the project to this stage;
- v. Delegation to Cllr Waldron and the Clerk to oversee delivery of the project.

Reason:

- i. To support the emerging community, helping draw people with shared interests together;
- ii. To facilitate the delivery of a community project;
- iii. To encourage community ownership of its assets.

This concludes my report to the Finance Committee.

Angie Hurren, Broadclyst Parish Clerk & RFO.

19/07/2019

¹ <https://menssheds.org.uk/>