

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL****REQUEST FOR DECISION BY CABINET****Part II Report****Non Exempt****CALVERLEY BANDSTAND****Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on progress in seeking funding to restore Calverley bandstand, outlines the options for the future of the structure, recommends one option and seeks approval to carry out consultation with key stakeholder groups.

**FOR DECISION****WARD: Park****HEAD OF LEISURE****PORTFOLIO: Leisure & Health & Well-being****Contact Officer: Nigel Bolton Extension: 3264****PRIORITIES:**

**Leisure:** To maintain a range of leisure, sporting, cultural and educational activities accessible to the community.

**Environment:** To improve and maintain the local, natural and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

**RECOMMENDATION** - That the Head of Leisure Services be authorised to undertake consultation with key stakeholders over options for the bandstand area, such options to cover the widest possible alternative uses and to meet a value-for-money test.

**Reasons:**

To reach a decision on the future of the bandstand in Calverley Grounds.

(Items marked \* will be the subject of recommendations by Cabinet to full Council; in the case of other items, Cabinet may make the decision, subject to call-in (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15))

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET – 5 JANUARY 2006

## REPORT OF HEAD OF LEISURE SERVICES

## CALVERLEY BANDSTAND

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**Executive Summary**

This report (060105/CAB008) provides an update on progress in seeking funding to restore Calverley bandstand, outlines the options for the future of the structure, recommends one option and seeks approval to carry out consultation with key stakeholder groups.

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**FOR DECISION**

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**Introduction**

- (1) At the meeting of Cabinet on 23 September 2004, it was agreed that the Head of Leisure Services be authorised to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a '*Your Heritage*' grant to restore the bandstand in Calverley Grounds. It was also agreed that the remaining balance of the £32,171.00 allocated to the repair of the bandstand in the Council's Planned Maintenance Programme for 2004/5 be utilised as matched funding for the HLF bid. Essential structural work on the bandstand was carried out shortly after this, leaving a balance of £26,000. It was originally thought that the reopening of the bandstand could be timetabled to coincide with the 400<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

**Grant funding**

- (2) Over the past twelve months investigations have shown that it is very unlikely that the bandstand could be restored via a '*Your Heritage*' grant. The reasons being:
- (a) Apart from the base, which is of little heritage value, no parts of the original bandstand structure are in place to restore. The base itself is in need of essential repair work at an estimated cost of £5,000.
  - (b) Given (a) above, if grant funding were to be sought it is likely the Council would be required to construct a new bandstand based on the original design. This would be a very costly project and not affordable under the '*Your Heritage*' programme which awards maximum grants of £50,000.

**Current Situation**

- (3) Calverley Grounds is a key historic feature of the town and is included on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. The park has a very high profile and is regularly used as a location by the nearby BBC television studios.
- (4) Calverley Grounds is a venue for relatively small-scale events, but has the potential to be used more extensively. Possible uses could include commercial events, shows and exhibitions such as BBC exhibitions, small markets, outdoor theatre and concerts and other activities.
- (5) The bandstand is situated at the centre of a natural arena and is therefore a main focal point in the park. It is well used in that it provides shelter from the rain, and importantly in the summer months, shade from the sun. It is not used regularly as a performance space, partly due to its poor condition. The height of the stage above ground prevents the structure being readily accessible for people with mobility problems.
- (6) The poor condition of the bandstand and unlikelihood of external funding, have provided the Council with the opportunity to look afresh at this space and assess how it can best be used, following consultation. The bandstand itself is not listed and, arguably, no longer meets current needs in terms of a performance space. If the bandstand were to be removed, the area in front of the café would be a more flexible and potentially useable space. Necessary shelter and shade could be provided in other ways.

**Report of Head of Leisure Services (cont)****Options**

(7) There are four options open to the Council, each with associated advantages and disadvantages:

- (a) Demolish the existing bandstand and replace it with a new bandstand. Investigations have shown that the minimum estimated cost for replacement would be £100K at current prices.

*Advantages: Central feature reinstated*

*Disadvantages: Limits the flexibility of the space  
Catalogue product rather than designed for the space  
Would be of limited use  
No access for people with mobility problems*

- (b) Demolish the existing bandstand and provide no replacement. Costs of demolition are estimated to be £10,000. including capping off electrical supplies and gravel re-surfacing to match.

*Advantages: Cheapest option  
Open flexible space*

*Disadvantages: No central feature for the park  
No shelter or shade provided*

- (c) Make minimal repairs to the bandstand utilising the balance of the Planned Maintenance budget allocated for this purpose for 2005/06 which amounts to £26,000.

*Advantages: Central feature retained  
Shelter and shade provided*

*Disadvantages: Short-term solution  
Of little heritage value and of inappropriate design  
No longer suitable as a performance space  
Not cost-effective, on-going repairs likely  
No access for people with mobility problems*

- (d) Demolish the bandstand and explore alternative options for the space including installation of an alternative structure which would provide shelter and shade and be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the activities outlined in para. 4.above. Initial investigations show that the costs of such a structure are estimated at up to £90K at current prices, including removal of the base, fees and associated builders' works.

*Advantages: Flexible space retained, with cover  
Shelter and shade  
Full accessibility  
Opportunity to install contemporary central feature*

*Disadvantages: Loss of traditional bandstand*

**Conclusion**

- (8) The option that has most advantages is option (d). This would provide the most flexible space, open up potential opportunities for the future use of the area and provide shelter and shade in the park. It should be noted however that this option would require an additional capital sum of up to £64K. It is recommended that further work be undertaken on option (d) outlined in para. 7 above and that a design proposal be developed. Given the heritage importance of the park and the fact that key stakeholders will want to express their views, it is also recommended that the Council carries out consultation on the design proposal with these groups, including the Civic Society, residents' associations and other local community groups. A further report outlining the costed design proposal and the feedback from the consultation would be brought to a Cabinet meeting before the end of March 2006.

**Report of Head of Leisure Services (cont)**

**RECOMMENDED** – That the Head of Leisure Services be authorised to undertake consultation with key stakeholders over options for the bandstand area, such options to cover the widest possible alternative uses and to meet a value-for-money test.

**Contact Officer: Nigel Bolton, Head of Leisure Services**

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**NIGEL BOLTON**  
**Head of Leisure Services**

**Appendices:** None  
**Background papers:** None