

Stafford Orchard News

Most readers will by now know that the village's bid for a 'Parks for People' Lottery grant to refurbish Stafford Orchard has been successful. This is the first of a series of newsletters about the final plans approved by the Lottery, including what is going to happen in the park, and when. There will obviously be some restrictions on access to some parts of the park during the next year or so while work is going on, but this will be minimised as much as possible.



Of course, it isn't possible to cover all parts of the scheme in a single newsletter, so this edition focuses on the plans for the main entrance area opposite Bradley's and the pedestrian (Nijmegen memorial) entrance on Station Road. Future reports will cover the planned teen and toddler play areas, the brook side, the performance space, the re-landscaped and re-grassed pitch, the sensory garden, new and refurbished pathways, and greening and ecology plans including new trees, shrub, willow and reed beds, spring bulbs, hedging and wildlife habitats.

The Main Entrance

Stafford Orchard's boundaries and entrances were quickly identified as candidates for improvement, partly for ecological and visual reasons, partly to make access easier and safer for all abilities, and partly to provide a more welcoming approach to the park.

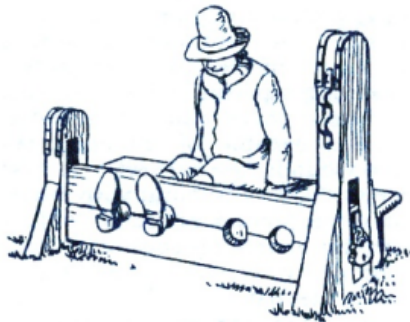
The main entrance to Stafford Orchard will still be past the lock-up (pizza takeaway) on Station Road but the triangle of land on which the lock-up stands, which also accommodates the public toilets, will get a facelift.



THE LOCKUP 1932

Consultation exercises and surveys of park users and shoppers in 2007 and 2008 revealed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the present toilet facilities in Station Road. The toilet block interior will be modernised to provide uni-sex facilities adjacent to an office and store for the new park grounds-person. The toilets will be for casual use by the public and park users (as now) and are not intended to cope with major events in the park, when additional facilities will still need to be provided by organisers. Vandal resistant fittings and interiors have been specified throughout.

The exterior of the block will be refurbished, repainted and its appearance softened by climbing plants, and the surrounding area paved with some soft planting and hedging. The notice board currently in front of the Post Office will be re-located together with other information and heritage boards about the park. There will be a flagpole, and access to the park will be through a new entrance arch.



STOCKS

Research has revealed that the village stocks were originally sited adjacent to the lock-up - a replica is to be re-instated (it might even get some use!) Discussions have also taken place with Charnwood Borough Council's Conservation Officers to see how the exterior of the lock-up (currently used as a pizza takeaway) could be enhanced to make it more compatible with its status as a Grade II listed building in the Quorn Conservation Area.

The entrance area and toilet block will be covered by CCTV, and the location of the cameras will also permit surveillance of the car park and the

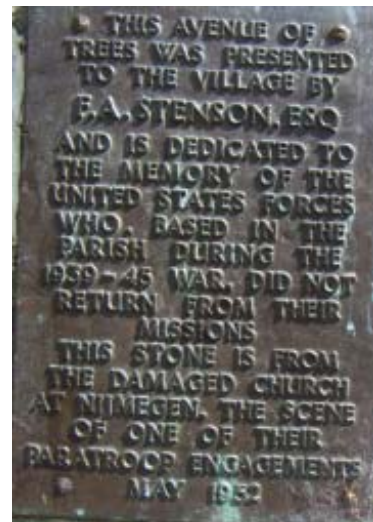
frontages of the shops in Station Road.

Work on the toilets will start in late 2009 or early in 2010 which will mean closure of the facility for a while. The remaining work on the entrance area should be completed by Autumn 2010.

Pedestrian access from Station Road

The current access past the Nijmegen memorial stone is to be improved and the entrance renamed '82nd Airborne' on an archway as a tribute to the US 505th regiment stationed in Quorn who gave their lives in World War II. Consultations with the now dwindling band of 505th veterans, their representatives in England, and Quorn British Legion concluded that refurbishment of the park offered a unique opportunity to give more prominence to this now rather neglected memorial to the US forces.

As a result, the gaps in the lime tree avenue (which form part of the memorial) will be filled, the stone from Nijmegen church will be given more prominence and its plaque cleaned, and a heritage information board will be placed nearby explaining the history and significance of the memorial. A sensory garden located adjacent to the stone will provide a peaceful setting (or as peaceful as the Station Road traffic allows). At an appropriate moment the memorial will be rededicated.



The refurbishment of this area is scheduled for the summer of 2010.



Deryk Wills and son David looking at the Nijmegen Stone memorial in the park. Deryk is a member of the Royal British Legion and has acted as a local representative of the 82nd Airborne in the UK. He has helped to facilitate visits to the UK for many of those troops who were stationed in Quorn in 1944.

A Park for People

When the refurbishment is complete, the intention is to involve the community in running the park and to apply for a Green Flag, the standard awarded to parks for excellence.

A Park Management Committee (PMC) made up of parish councillors and members of the community will manage the park. In addition, three groups of volunteers will work with the PMC – a 'Friends' group to plan and commission events in conjunction with local organisers, part-time Park Wardens to walk the park, chat to users, report problems, defects, vandalism etc, and volunteers to help the full-time grounds-person with planting, brook clearing, maintenance and event stewarding.



There has already been a positive response to volunteering for these roles – if you think you can spare a little time, please contact the parish clerk on 414491 or drop in to the High Street office.