Kidlington's Public Realm

https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/economic-growth/revitalising-town-centres-toolkit-councils/function/streetscape-and-public

We have been approached by CDC regarding some UKSPF funding (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) that could be spent on Public Realm in Kidlington.

In the first instance to understand what could be done I met with Tom Duckham, Street Scenes Officer at CDC who is leading the project. As the recent public realm report suggested the street furniture in the village is tired and out of date.

The UKSPF funding is £30k to be spent this year before the end of March and a further £40k to be spent in the new financial year. We are hoping to find a way around committing the first tranche so that the scheme can be considered as a whole and we do not have to make any rush decsions.

We met with local furniture and social enterprise company RAW who recently worked with the city on Broad Street to get some ideas and understand what they could do. They have come up with some initial ideas (attached). We are keen to continue with the zoo animal theme as it seems to be popular with most residents and gives Kidlington a unique identity. There are many ways this can be done including stand alone sculptures, like Rosie the Elephant, bespoke bollards with lion or elephant heads (like the sheep ones in Bicester), or etched into the furniture itself.

One of the areas we looked at is the top of the High Street. As you will be aware, the bandstand was removed and replaced with a seating area that is not fit for purpose and is covering up a very lovely mosaic.

Alison Street and I also met with some local artists to think about how public art might be incorporated into a scheme.

There are no decisions to be made at the moment but I wanted to ensure that members knew that CDC have the funds and the intention to replace the furniture and would welcome the Parish Council's input. It will be a CDC project but they are very keen to ensure the council approves it.