



Committee	Assets and Services
Month	September 2023
Report Title	Cromwell Road Telephone Box – Removal and future usage
Report Author	Georgia Arnold Deputy Town Clerk
Attachments	BT Notice of closure

Agenda item: 14

Summary

Uttlesford District Council has been notified by BT it is proposing removal of the telephone box at Cromwell Road Saffron Walden.

The telephone box is located opposite 37 Cromwell Road, pictured to the right.

UDC has notified SWTC inviting us to comment on the proposal by 28 November 2023.

Notably BT has also advised of the following:



“We’ve identified 1 public payphones in your area that are no longer needed. We’ve assessed these using the criteria in Ofcom’s Review of the telephony universal service obligation.

To make sure that the local community are fully informed, we’ve placed notices (including the posting date) on these payphones.”

Communities can ‘adopt’ phone boxes to turn into something completely different.

With payphone usage falling, communities are looking at new ways of using them. Thousands of boxes have been reinvented as cafes, mini-libraries, and defibrillator sites. Communities can adopt most red boxes for just £1.

They can also adopt modern glass boxes if they want to house a defibrillator. Visit bt.com/adopt for more information”

Options

Committee is recommended to respond to the consultation and consider whether SWTC wishes to adopt the telephone box for a future project or not, options as follows:

- 1. Not to adopt the telephone box and support its closure.**
- 2. Not to adopt the telephone but request it is retained and remains open.**
- 3. To adopt the telephone box for a community project as such:**

3.1. Installation of a defibrillator

SWTC already manages two defibrillators (Market Square and Golden Acre) which involves an operations member of staff checking the unit monthly, each check takes circa 10-15 minutes.

NB: The kit costs circa £800-£2,500¹, depending on the type purchased and whether it is in a security box or not. This price excludes future maintenance and replacement parts at additional cost. Should SWTC purchase a defib unit, it is recommended it is encased, as per those at Golden Acre and Market Square, therefore the full cost is circa £2,500 (there is no current budget set aside for this).

Funding is not currently available, but the Government has opened an expression of interest for future funding².

3.2. Community library

Chartham Village has an existing phone box library³ managed by volunteers and residents donate books, cds, dvds, puzzles which are free to be picked up, swapped, returned by residents.

NB: Whilst somewhat 'self-manning' the phone box will need to be regularly checked upon for cleanliness and an additional donation drop off point will need to be established and donations will need to be transferred to the telephone box. This could be a potential joint venture with a local community group or charity.

Key Considerations

Should SWTC adopt the telephone box either project will require a staff resourcing need, including regularly checking and/or cleaning the site. Along with monies for maintenance and repairs.

¹ <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/i-need-to-know/defibrillator-guide-for-first-time-buyers/#:~:text=The%20cost%20of%20a%20defibrillator,each%20step%20of%20the%20rescue>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bids-invited-for-1-million-defibrillator-fund>

³ <https://www.communityad.co.uk/exclusives/chartham-village-phone-box-library/>

Officer Recommendation

To respond to UDC and BT requesting adoption of the Telephone Box for a community project and progress with one of the above two projects at committee's discretion, ie options (2) or (3)