



NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

Environmental Services Committee Meeting – 7th February 2022

To: Members of the Environmental Services Committee:

Councillors Stevens, (Chair), Kilbride (Deputy Chair), Alwahabi, Ashraf, Choudary, Hallam, Haque, Joyce, Meredith, Miah, Soan, and Tarasiewicz

Distributed electronically to all other councillors for information

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Environmental Services Committee of Northampton Town Council to be held in the Godwin Room at Northampton Guildhall on 7th February 2022 at 18.00

Public participation is in accordance with the Town Council's public participation policy. Members of the public will need to contact the Town Clerk in advance if they wish to participate

**Stuart Carter
Town Clerk
1st February 2022**

**Guildhall
Northampton
NN1 1DE**

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the last meeting held 22nd November 2022 – not attached, sent out with Council agenda for 24th January 2022**
- 4. Update on the Market Square project**
Mr J Chalmers from WNC to give update
- 5. Allotment Management**
Report attached (pages 3 – 4)
- 6. Northampton in Bloom Update**
Report attached (pages 5 – 7)

7. Climate Change Forum

Chair to give report on activities of the Climate Change Forum (report to be tabled)

Environmental Services Committee

Allotments Management – Agency Agreement with WNC

Report by Town Clerk

Purpose of report: To consider the updated agency agreement with WNC for the management of the allotments

Recommended: (i) That the committee continues to seek further information on the finances of the allotments in terms of expenditure

(ii) That we await further legal advice on the agreement pending a response from WNC

Members will recall at the last meeting that the issue of licence to manage the agreements through WNC's contract with Idverde was discussed. The minute from that meeting can be referred to at minute 24.

As members will recall, the Clerk had attended a meeting about allotments and the agreement back in October. Simon Bowers explained that the agency agreement formalised the appointment of WNC to manage the allotments on a day-to-day basis. WNC contracted Idverde to carry out work at the sites. The use of special expenses to re-charge the cost of running the sites was permitted in law.

WNC were unable to give a cost breakdown for running the allotment sites. They advised there were no current plans to re-charge the running costs, either through special expenses or by offering the councils the opportunity to pay a contribution. It was agreed that this may change in the future.

Members will recall that the Clerk expressed his concern that despite there being no intention to charge special expenses, there was still the opportunity. The committee agreed to let the Clerk take legal advice on this. The legal advice stated:

The Order creating the Town Council had the effect of automatically transferring the title of the allotment sites to the Town Council and therefore they will need to be registered in the name of the Town Council.

The Town Council should see a copy of the Tenancy or other agreements with the allotment holders as strictly they are now the landlord under those agreements.

The Town Council can appoint West Northampton as their Manager to manage the Allotments on their behalf. I am however considering the form of the Agreement as I am not sure that it is technically correct. The Agreement does not deal with the granting of tenancies or any of the other administrative tasks involved in running an allotment site. It is almost written as though the land will be cultivated by West Northampton/Veolia.

The expenditure on Allotments primarily the responsibility of the Town Council, and these funds form part of their precept and are in a separate category. Funds raised within this category can only be used for allotments. The normal way of dealing with the question of additional funds is therefore for the Manager to request funds from the Town Council which are then paid from the Allotments budget. Special expenses are themselves based on budgeted figures and not on actual expenditure.

The Town Council needs to consider that at some stage in the future it will take over responsibility for Management. It therefore needs the information regarding the income and expenditure in any event.

To date, no information on capital investment over the past five years has been provided. We do know that within the 8 sites there are 1208 plots. We are informed by WNC that 'on average' each plot pays £15 per annum. This means that the income from 1208 plots is approximately £18,000 per annum. It is also believed that there will be no special expenses charge in the coming financial year.

The clerk has also raised the point with WNC regarding the lack of information in the agreement about the granting of tenancies etc. as highlighted by our solicitor. When received this will be reported back.

Just before Christmas, Cllrs Stevens, Meredith and the Clerk met with the allotment society representative. We asked him to contact each site to find out what their priorities were in terms of maintenance, facilities, composting toilets etc. This information will be fed back when received. In addition, it is planned to do a visit to each site in the coming months.

Environmental Services Committee – 7th February 2022

Report of Northampton in Bloom - Julie Thorneycroft, Assistant Town Clerk

Purpose of Report: To update Members of the current position with regard to the Northampton in Bloom project.

The Northampton in Bloom working party (Cllrs Birch, Stevens, Joyce, Meredith and officer Julie Thorneycroft) have met on 3 occasions (15th November, 19th and 26th January) to discuss the ongoing progress of the Bloom project. Following discussions around Bloom ideas received from NTC ward councillors a provisional planting order has been agreed through the working party, the order has now been placed with Plantscape Ltd for the additional floral containers. The value of the provisional purchase order is circa £20K, placing an order now means the plug plants are reserved early in the growing season and have time to mature before being transferred to the larger floral containers.

The additional budget of £50K agreed for 22/23 has given the opportunity for extra planting schemes which will brighten up more areas of the town than was possible in summer 2021 and previous years. The Bloom project will introduce colour throughout the town council area during the summer months, June to September.

Please see the suggested sites below:

Ward	Councillor	Idea
Abington	Cllr Purser	Marefair x 2 planters either along the railings or in front of the Church or Saxon Court at the east end of St Peter's and perhaps at the entrance to Chalk Lane as part of the Northampton Gateway.
Boothville	Cllr Lane	As per Summer 21 - lamppost baskets around the mini roundabout by the Lumbertubs pub and its approaches - Kettering Road North - Booth Rise and Lumbertubs Lane.
Briar Hill	Cllr Connolly	2 square floral planters adjacent to the roundabout – Rothersthorpe Road and Hunsbarrow Road leading to Briar Hill.
Castle	Cllr Alwahabi	Planters in Wellingborough road and Park Avenue South areas
Castle	Cllr Haque	Corner of St Georges street off Barack road, Pocket park in Spring Boroughs, corner of Lorne Road and top of Cowper street 7 large stone planters in Abington Street planted and maintained The gardens around the Cobblers Last Statue in Abington Street planted and maintained. Barrier baskets planters as per 2021 plus hanging baskets in Wellingborough Road.

Eastfield	Cllr Joyce	Planters near the row of shops in the Broadmead Avenue area. Planting arrangements (brick planters) near shops at Lakeview.
Headlands	Cllr Miah	Floral planter outside the Headlands pub, 2nd priority is on the lamppost baskets outside the coop and parade of shops at Broadway East
Park	Cllr Kilbride	lamppost baskets or planter at Bridgewater Drive near shops, wild flower areas at 2 x pocket parks
Parklands	Cllr Hallam	planter near Tesco express in coppice drive/Kettering road, by Lumbertubs pub, anything by Morrison's on Kettering road
Phippsville	Cllr Stevens	As per Summer 21 hanging baskets on the barrier opposite the White Elephant pub on Kingsley Park Terrace
Rectory Farm	Cllr Holland-Delamere	Floral lamppost or barrier baskets various areas suggested
Rushmills	Cllr Soan	Billing Road East area and surrounding area
Semilong	Cllr. Les Marriott	3 tier planter at Hester Street outside Co Op, Investigate the possibility of hanging baskets at Doctors Surgery. Hanging baskets at Alliston Gardens community centre
Spencer	Cllr G Eales	as per last year the five existing planters and areas around the shops on the Gladstone Road
St James	Cllr Ashraf	As per Summer 21, Planters and plants on the railings plus planters in St James Square
Talavera	Cllr Meredith	16 lamp post basket at the Southfields Roundabout - Lings Way and Talavera Way approaches. The garden surrounding the Southfields entrance sign has been planted and maintained.
Trinity	Cllr Birch	10x Barrier boxes, 3 x three tier planters - various areas suggested

Purchase Orders to plant the town centre (NTC owned) floral containers were agreed in November and have been raised through Idverde services. The budget for this element of bloom will be transferred to the town council as part of the events budget as from 1st April 2022.

Invited guests Peter Hackett (Direct Services Manager WNC) and Mike Mitchell (Contracts Manager Idverde) attended a working group meeting held on Wednesday 26th January to assist the working group in their understanding of the complicated and historic contractual obligations of the Bloom project.

A further meeting has been arranged on Friday 4th February with Mike Mitchell and Chris Carvell (Environmental Contract Services Manager, WNC) to discuss ideas/thoughts around variations to the existing grounds maintenance contract.

Works are continuing to ensure the necessary health and safety checks plus site visits are completed and appropriate permissions/consents gained from relevant bodies in good time for the start of Bloom in early June. Watering and maintenance contractual agreements are in progress and will be discussed at the meeting on 4th February.

Sustainable planting and community engagement/involvement discussions are ongoing; projects are now getting easier to plan and grow due to the lifting of Covid restrictions.

The Northampton in Bloom Working Party are working closely with the Climate Change Forum and are in the early stages of talking about future “Greening of the town,” and tree planting etc.