

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 28TH NOVEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2022 at 18:00 IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, NORTHAMPTON GUILDHALL

PRESENT: Councillor Stevens (Chair), Alwahabi, Holland-Delamere, Joyce, Miah and Tarasiewicz

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Mrs L Hannam-Jones (Projects and Events Officer)

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Soan , Meredith, Ashraf and Haque

17. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was submitted.

18. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 7TH SEPTEMBER 2022

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record.

19. NORTHAMPTON IN BLOOM

Circulated with the agenda was a comprehensive report on bloom.

Mrs Hannam-Jones explained that this year saw the installation approximately 500 baskets of a summer colour mix of flowers, within the town centre and Town Council wards. The impact of oranges and pinks brightened up areas and in response we received an abundance of positive comments from our residents. In addition, a special planter in red, white and purple accompanied by a banner was dedicated to the Queen's Jubilee and stood pride of place opposite The Guildhall.

The report explained that officers Julie Thorneycroft and Louise Hannam-Jones worked closely with Idverde and West Northants Council to finalise the environmental contract and create maps of where the planters would be installed for future years. This provided an agreed understanding between all partners. It was noted that the contractors could not take on any extra watering and maintenance than the present amounts, therefore it had been agreed that any further planters would have to be looked after by resident associations and community groups, with a sustainable element to coincide with the Britain in Bloom marking criteria.

It was noted that the Bloom Working Party Group had developed further, with the addition of key Northampton partners. In preparation for the judging for the RHS Britain in Bloom, partners came together to prepare for the sustainability and community aspects of the judging in 2024. The intention was that Northampton re-enters this competition in 2024.

It was reported that the Climate Change Forum had started the sustainable planting for the Town Council off by sourcing a planter made from sustainable materials to be planted on Abington Street and maintained by St Giles Music Shop. This was the start of hopefully many more as part of the Climate Change Forum's strategy to 'Green the Town'. The Volunteers were finalising the planter to be made in conjunction with The Hope Centre, and would plant it themselves. An information panel would accompany the planter to explain about sustainable planting and include partner logos.

Mrs Hannam-Jones reported that officers had started to collate a database of partners and community groups that may like to be incorporated into Community Groups. These include WNC's 'Garden in the Park' at the Racecourse that utilises a space for community planting and the recycling of park waste.

Referring to the 'Poetry Project' James McInerny's wellbeing poetry quotes were incorporated into designs to accompany the flowers. A 'soft launch' commenced with banners on the Market Place, Bus Station and Carparks and will be launched as a full wellness walk when 2023's summer flowers are installed.

A recent highlight had been the Town Council's It's Your Neighbourhood Awards. Five Community Groups: IHWO, Friends of Abington park, Friends of Dallington Park, Friends of Eastfield Park and Hope Gardening entered the It's Your Neighbourhood Awards section of the RHS Britain in Bloom. The Town Council hosted the awards ceremony to present certificates and prizes in the Mayor's Parlour.

It was reported to the committee that officers had assessed the Cllr preferred locations for hanging baskets. There was to be a few adjustments in the coming year based on what worked well and what didn't. These are noted in the table below:

Ward	Councillor	Idea
Abington	Cllr Purser	Marefair - 4 barrier baskets along the railings or in front of St Peter's Church or perhaps at the entrance to Chalk Lane as part of the Northampton Gateway.
Boothville	Cllr Lane	Lampposts on the approach roads to Lumbertubs Roundabout - Moulton Way, Kettering Road, Booth Rise and Lumbertubs Lane, Northampton 6 lamp posts identified, 2 half baskets per lamp post.
Briar Hill	Cllr Connolly	2 square floral planters on the roundabout leading to Briar Hill.
Castle	Cllr Alwahabi	Hanging baskets in Wellingborough road – change to lampposts as too high/not visible as hanging baskets? and park avenue south areas
Castle	Cllr Haque	Removal of the 1 x 3 tier planter of St George's/Barrack Road Change of the 1 x 3 tier planter on Lorne Rd/Barrack Road to a 1 tier planter. Pocket park in Spring Boroughs and top of Cowper street
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 and Birchfield Road East.
Park	Cllr Kilbride	lamppost baskets or planter at Bridgewater Drive near shops, wild flower areas at 2 x pocket parks. Landcross Drive shops – Dig out soil, land slabs on compacted sand. Supply and install 2no single tier planters with wooden surrounds.
Parklands	Cllr Hallam	An even distribution of barrier baskets along Kettering road outside parade of shops at Spinney Hill opposite Cynthia Spencer Hospice and on barriers adjacent to Morrisons on Kettering Road. 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	Co Op Lampposts L4LES, L5LES, L3LES, L6LES, L7LES Junction Great Billing Way, L64LMQ and LS5 LMQ - Junction Rectory Farm Road Great Billing Way L56LMQ, L55 LMQ, L54LMQ Lampposts roundabout Well Rd and Cherry Lodge Road L107 LNN and L106LNN
Rushmills	Cllr Soan	Billing Road East area and surrounding area. Lamppost baskets at Billing road East, 3 Tier Planter at Billing Road East Removal of 4 barrier baskets on Rushmere Road due to getting lost amongst the natural habitat
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, 2 x planters in the shopping area at St James Square, 3 x floral containers along the verge at Weedon Road.
Talavera	Cllr Meredith	16 lamp post basket at the Southfields Roundabout - Lings Way and Talavera Way approaches.
Trinity	Cllr Birch	10x Barrier boxes, 3 x three tier planters – Kingsley Road – 4 x Barrier boxes Plinth on Kingsley Road - 3 Tier Planter Top of St Georges Avenue - 2 x Barrier Boxes Lights Opp Brick Kiln Lane - 2 x Barrier boxes Racecourse entrance - 3 tier planter Kingsthorpe Grove opposite school - 2 x barrier baskets Barrack Road entrance to Racecourse - 3 tier planter

Turning to the budget it was reported that based on this year's ordering, the Council's contractors Idverde advised that they were at full capacity with their teams for maintaining the number of planters in the various wards. Therefore, if Bloom were to expand in size we would need to find alternative options. It was noted that East Midlands in Bloom had a heavy focus on the Community and Environmental elements for judging. Therefore, officers were going to engage and encourage community groups to create further Bloom planters in their areas. These projects could also meet the criteria to apply for an Environmental Grant.

It was reported that costs due to inflation had risen and that an extra £10,000 was required in order to keep the same provision.

In response to a question about extra planting for the coronation, it was stated that this was possible but it would need to be extra. The colours for the coming year would be a bright summer mix with some pollinators and peat free compost.

The Committee commented on that there had been some fantastic comments about bloom and that the officers were to be congratulated for a fantastic project.

NOTED

20. St Katherine's Gardens restoration project

Circulated with the agenda was a presentation on the proposed restoration of St Katherine's Gardens by Mr Peter Brothers of the Northampton Royal British Legion.

Mr Brothers explained that the gardens and bequeathed by the former NBC, and that the Royal British Legion (RBL) had been tending the gardens, which were located near the Park Inn Hotel. The gardens were publicly accessible but attracted antisocial behaviour at night. The RBL were looking to restore them and create a nicer and safer environment for people.

The central idea was to have some sort of poppy representation located on the plinth. The area would be cleaned up and the beds replanted. Mr Brothers explained that there were approximately 100 members of the Northampton RBL Branch, 25 of which were active, 10 of which helped tend the garden.

The committee were supportive of the idea and suggested that the Council would like to be involved in some capacity. It was suggested that the RBL could approach the University of Northampton about designing the poppy centrepiece for the garden. They also suggested that S106 funding may be applicable to this project.

It was agreed that the committee would like to be kept informed of this project and that they would consider what support the council could formally offer as it progressed.

Mr Brothers was thanked for attending the meeting.

21. Climate Change Forum

Circulated with the agenda was a report by the Chair updating the committee on the work of the Climate Change Forum. The report detailed the current projects as follows:

1] Public Engagement.

Events. After 3 Climate Cafes in the Grosvenor centre earlier this year, there was a Climate Change 'hub' (i.e. a 'cafe' without the 'cafe' element) event at Weston Favell Hub 22/10. A Grosvenor Centre Shop Window display is due to be placed in early 2023, and other 'hub's are likely for 2023, incl. at UoN and Northampton Museum. CV Clare Marriott-Robinson contributes a lot of time to these events, and NTC Events Officers support these as well.

Climate Change Grants Scheme. Launched late October, details on NTC Website. Process for assessing applications is currently that CCF sub-group provides opinion to ESC for final decision, BUT this could be unwieldy time wise as ESC only meets c. 5 times per year. So, under review, depending on uptake of the Scheme.

Working with other Northampton area Councils. Parish Councils - of the 13 other Parish Councils in Northampton written to by the Chair on 15/8/22, 5 replies to date rec'd from: Kingsthorpe Parish (Cllr Sam Kilby-Shaw attended Oct CCF), Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council, Wootton Parish, Billing Parish (reps these 3 are due to attend the Nov CCF) and Hardingstone Parish (who declined involvement). The Town Clerk and Cllr Stevens have liaised with NCALC about parishes across a wider area than only the Town working together.

2] Greening the Town. WNC permission has been given for the Abington St planter which has been ordered from the Hope Centre Workshop. Possibilities for a tree planting programme in the Town are still being considered by the CCF. Options for a 'Nature Needs Nurture' campaign that could support small scale biodiversity actions by town residents, and augment NN in Bloom community biodiversity projects will be considered in early 2023. CV Clare Marriott-Robinson and NTC Events Officers have spent time on these activities.

3] Active Travel. 'Every Journey Matters' - this "increasing awareness and behavioural 'nudge' campaign" is to be launched in Spring 2023. CV John Crick has contributed significant time outside CCF mtgs to planning this campaign.

Why this Project? a) It fits with national and local govt environmental ambitions. E.g. UK Govt: The second cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS2, July 2022) outlines the government's ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey by 2040. WNC's Corporate Strategy from Dec 2021 states: We want to be an authority that puts the environment first and considers the carbon cost in all of our own decision-making, but also encourages and supports others to do the same, help us shape a cleaner and greener West Northants.

b) People who choose to walk or cycle benefit themselves fitness, health-wise and financially, and these people plus those choosing to bus or scoot instead of car travelling help to reduce air pollution and climate change causing emissions for all town residents.

c) More journeys by foot of bike should also benefit car, van and lorry drivers moving around the town as traffic congestion and air pollution are reduced.

Components: An 'accessible to the public' library of information via NTC website, a publicity campaign, advisory support for people who would like to try to be more Active Travellers by signposting people to some safer and more pleasant routes around and through the town. Supporters, to date: WNC – Nicky Hyde-Pulley. Principal Travel Choices Officer (Road Safety and Sustainability) has said they would support in whatever way they could; Jackie Browne, Sports Northamptonshire have said the same.

4] Monitoring air quality in Northampton. *This project would purchase and install self-sufficient air quality monitors for NOx, O2, PM10, PM2.5, PM1, temperature, pressure and humidity every 15 mins. in 8-10 locations around Northampton, and collate data over a one, possibly, two-year period. (CV Dave Pearson has contributed significant time outside CCF mtgs to planning this campaign, and Climate Action-West Northants (CA-WN) have provided advice on AQ monitors).*

Why this Project? According to the Northampton Town Council Low Emission Strategy 2017 – 2025 "in 2010, across Northampton, 6.1% of people aged over 25 will die prematurely each year because of particulate air pollution: equivalent to 102 deaths per year or 1,168 associated life years lost." One of the challenges of implementing measures to improve air quality is that the public don't know if our air is dangerous. Apart from some WNC NOx tubes around the town, there is only one DEFRA air quality monitoring station in Northampton, at Spring Park in Kingsthorpe. This project would collect air quality data from sites in Northampton, and the data could then inform NTC if there is a case for a number of possible publicity campaigns on AQ which would not only lead to improved public health outcomes but may have the potential to lower emissions of the greenhouse gases that are causing climate change.

5] Possible Joint Project of the CCF with University of Northampton. *Zoe Taylor, Senior Lecturer in Illustration would like to get her students involved in a CCF project.*

6] Engaging with local businesses. *The CCF is now a member of UoN's Sustainability Forum which has c. 70 County businesses as members to date.*

The Chair emphasised the links being made with partner organisations including other parishes. Am members of Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council had recently attended a meeting of the forum, and it was hoped a member of Billing Parish Council would also engage. More publicity was key, and this would be looked at as part of the council's own communications strategy.

NOTED

22. WNC Fly Tipping Strategy

The Chair verbally highlighted to the committee that WNC was devising a fly tipping strategy which was now live on the website. WNC had given a briefing to the Litter Wombles and other organisations who were concerned about litter and it was agreed that communication between WNC and these groups needed to be much improved. The Chair stated that the strategy focussed on the prosecution of offenders. IT was also noted that WNC spend £2,000,000 on fly tipping and street cleaning annually. The committee was encouraged to take a look at the draft strategy.

NOTED

23. WNC Bus Strategy Consultation

Circulated with the agenda was a proposed response to the WNC bus service strategy. The response had been drafted by Cllr Holland-Delamere, a regular bus user in Northampton. It was noted that the operators had just announced investment in a new fleet of buses which was welcomed and that the answer to the question about making bus use more attractive should be amended to reflect this.

RESOLVED: That the consultation response as attached at appendix A be submitted to WNC.

Cllr Holland Delamere was thanked for taking the time to draft this response.

24. Budget Principles 203/24 – Environmental Services Committee element

Circulated with the agenda was the current budget managed by the Environmental Services Committee.

The Chair noted that not much had been spent so far this year but there was a plan in place which would need to be considered by the committee formally at a future meeting. The Chair had prepared a plan as detailed below:

Public Engagement	Café Printing	TBC	
	Laminator	£300.00	
	Provisions for 'cafes'	£27.04	
	Cups	£9.56	
	3L Flask & Drip tray	£50.61	
	Miscellaneous	£45.00	
Greening the Town	Planter & Fill	£300.00	estimate - HOPE centre planter - c. £150, plants and explanation notice/s
	Tree planting	TBC	
'Every Journey Matters'		£10,000.00	estimate - for design, production and printing of publicity materials, possibly renting spaces for 'advertising' the campaign
Air Quality Monitoring		£20,000.00	estimate - for AQ monitors, placement in situ, contract for auto reporting, maintenance.
AQ 'Breathe In Better'		£2,500.00	estimate - for design, production and printing of publicity materials
Grants Scheme		£15,000.00	depends on uptake
TOTAL		£48,232.21	

It was noted that any proposed spend above £2,000 as detailed above would need to be formally considered and approved by the committee and that a detailed report would be required on each proposal. It did however set out a plan for the budget.

With regards to budget 4536 Northampton In Bloom budget. It was noted that the officer had already requested a further £10,000 to enable the project to remain as it is.

RECOMMENDED: That a further £10,000 be added to 4536 to uplift this to £60,000.

With regards to allotments, the officers stated that there were still many unknowns and that they presented a risk to the town council in terms of unknown costs. The Finance Officer was getting to grips with the water bills which were very contradictory depending on whether they had done a reading or not. The Finance Officer had made a spreadsheet to record costs and metre reading so we could then begin to see some patterns in consumption and cost, and therefore hopefully identify any leaks etc. There was still little clarity in how the allotments were maintained through the Idverde contract and the Clerk was wary of receiving a large maintenance bill for a fence or gate etc.

RECOMMENDED: That budget heading 4400 Allotment Repairs and Maintenance be increased by £4,000 to £30,000.

RECOMMENDED: That the remaining budget remain as is and that no request be made to earmark any unspent funds.

25. Items for future agendas

No items were raised under this agenda.

MEETING CONCLUDED 7:45PM

Appendix A – RESPONSE TO WNC BUS SERVICE CONSULTATION

Is your community served by a local bus service and if so, are residents satisfied with the service?

The Northampton Town Council area is served by a network of routes with varying frequencies. The main service provider is Stagecoach with Uno and some smaller operators serving some areas of the town. Depending on which community residents live in will depend on how satisfied they are. We do have areas between the main routes which are not served at all which is a problem for mainly the elderly and disabled without their own transport. Other areas have low frequency services for example Parklands which is hourly, Southfields which is half hourly. At times services keeping to timetable can be a challenge with buses ending up travelling in convoy along the same route. The frequency reduction since covid means the waits can be longer if buses are late. Sunday services in some areas do not exist in others for example Southfields.

Evidence of any barriers to bus use in your community (excluding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic) – for example concerns about frequency, routes, destinations, times, fares?

The frequency on some routes has reduced. The main routes pre-pandemic used to be every 10 minutes, now every 15 minutes. As usage hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels the reduction hasn't yet had an impact with overcrowding during peak times but may do in due course. Voi scooters may have also reduced bus usage in some demographics. Residents are concerned about the cost. Young people at a recent meeting attended by a local councillor commented about how expensive it is. A young person's day pass is £3.60, week pass £13.60 and 28-day pass £52 (formally £45.30). Over the course of the last 10-15 years the cost of a 28-day pass with the main operator has over doubled from around £28 to the current £69.30. Lack of Sunday services in some areas as previously mentioned. This could be a barrier for some attending Sunday events organised by the Town Council.

What do you think could be done to make bus use more attractive?

Improve affordability and restore frequency. We welcome the recent announcement regarding investment in new buses. At present the old buses mean that there often break downs which causes delays and cancellations and effects trust in the network. The new buses will hopefully remedy this and we look forward to seeing fully electric buses in the near future.

Do you have any ideas or options which you believe should be included within the review?

Slightly later buses in the evening, extend by 30 minutes to an hour. Ensure at least half hourly bus services on main routes in particular to the north and east. Investigate additional park and ride options.