



**Service Delivery
Committee**

**Tuesday, 27 June
2017**

**Matter for
Information**

Title: Greening of the Borough Update

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1. Introduction

This report covers the progress and developments with the Greening the Borough initiatives across service areas.

2. Recommendations

That Members note the information within the report

3. Brocks Hill Country Park

3.1. Natural Discovery Volunteer Project

Due to a new job opportunity closer to her home, the Natural Discovery Project officer, left OWBC in April this year. It has therefore been necessary to re-evaluate the last phase of the funded Heritage Lottery project.

The following plans have now been put in place for the final 8 months of the project:

- The Conservation Volunteers group (TCV) will deliver all off-site conservation volunteering sessions, as well as coordinating the South Leicestershire College gardening programme at Brocks Hill;
- A new Admin Officer will carry out all administration tasks including inputting data, booking training, updating social media, supporting events, processing all financial matters, as well as collating project data to inform the final report;
- The Park Warden will coordinate the Brocks Hill volunteering sessions on a Wednesday. She will also act as the key point for advice and new volunteers; and
- Lead Volunteers – In line with the original project bid, the exit strategy for the project will be via the specially trained Lead Volunteers who will sustain the volunteering activities, post project.

The following information provides details of volunteering hours achieved since the 2015:

Month	2015	2016	2017
January	269.3	272	229.25
February	275	330.45	447.75
March	292.15	323.05	493.50

April	266	331	238.7
May	388.3	516.2	236.25
June	485	347.3	-
July	312.45	280	-
August	212	268.5	-
September	216.5	232.75	-
October	170.05	223	-
November	243	323.4	-
December	153	121.5	-
Total	3282.75	3569.15	-

3.2. **Park Warden Update (March - May 2017)**

A range of tasks have been completed by the Brocks Hill volunteers under the direction of the Park Warden. These include planting trees to diversify the woodlands, hedgelaying, spreading woodchip on paths, gardening the flower beds and raised beds, tree maintenance, bench and knee rail maintenance and repairing steps and gates.

Key management that was essential to raise the standards at Brocks Hill was to improve the frontage of the park: in winter, the front of the centre by the car park was overgrown, covered in weeds, with a crumbling knee rail that gave the impression that the park was neglected. The Park Warden arranged for contractors to replace the knee rail and worked with the volunteers to remove weeds, tidy shrubs and sow wildflower seeds in the area: it is already looking much better and a number of positive comments have been received from visitors.

The Park Warden continues to liaise with Grounds Maintenance on tasks such as mowing at Brocks Hill to achieve the desired outcomes for the park. In addition the former tenant farmer has provided a mowing services for the meadows and ridge and furrow fields.

There have been noticeable positive effects with the management techniques the Park Warden has prescribed. For example, leaving a proportion of the meadow uncut provides habitat for small mammals, attracting birds of prey: there has been numerous sightings of kestrels hunting on the fields over spring.

The Park Warden has also been assisting with some educational events at Brocks Hill. In March she led a successful school den building activity for 61 six year olds and in April she led a 'Busy birds of spring' activity for over 20 children, parents and special needs young adults with the Information Officer.

The Park Warden passed the BE trailer test in May, enabling her to utilise the tractor and trailer to carry out tasks around the park. Now that it is the growing season, the Park Warden is ensuring that particular areas are strimmed for access and aesthetics, but also ensuring sensitive wildlife spots are left undisturbed. Wildlife surveys are important to feed into the management of a site, a range of surveys have been carried out including Beewalk for Bumblebee Conservation Trust and

butterfly surveys. A catalogue of wildlife present at the park has also been carried out; this has identified almost 200 species, details of which have been uploaded to NatureSpot to inform county-wide records of species distribution.

The Park Warden has recently been supervising a work experience student from Brooksby College, who is just about to complete her 50 hours experience. The student has been very complementary about how much she has learnt whilst working at Brocks Hill.

3.3. Bat Walk

On 24 May a Bat Walk took place at Brocks Hill Country Park and Centre which was led by the Leicestershire Bat Group. With just torches and bat detectors the group was able to identify the common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Nocturnal bat. This therefore proved to be a successful evening for the participants of the session as well as for Brocks Hill with the confirmation of these species on the site. It also reinforces the chosen management for the site is appropriate for these species and as more information is gathered it can be tailored accordingly.

3.4. Brocks Hill Natural History Garden Party

On Sunday 4 June the Brocks Hill Natural History Garden Party took place with a wide array of stalls and music on offer with the demonstration of traditional crafts and the chance to find out more about some of our wildlife from conservation and recording groups amongst others. Brocks Hill was represented by our two volunteers who record birds and butterflies, while the Friends of Brocks Hill also had a stand.

We welcomed Everyone Active with a bigger role this year to help promote Health and Wellbeing, running alongside our development as a home for the Natural Environment. This has been pursued and established with the support of the Edith Murphy Foundation. Many travelled a fair distance to attend which given the uncertainty of the weather and the number of other events on that day was very encouraging. Although the numbers of visitors were down on previous years, those that came had a great day. The full analysis of the event is yet to be collated, an evaluation meeting has been planned for 10th July, however early indications confirm that individuals would definitely come back again should another event be arranged.

3.5. Volunteering Day

On Tuesday 6 June, Brocks Hill was host to the third Volunteering Fair which was organised in partnership with Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL). The weather was extremely poor so visits from possible volunteers were very few. However many of the different groups and charities left having had a successful 3 hours of networking, with new projects established and some new volunteers and contacts made.

4. Facilities

4.1. Borough Entry Signs

Crow Mill, Aylestone Lane (Blue Bridge) and Kilby Bridge signs will be the first three to be re-furbished as part of a three year programme. The contractor will remove them from site, take them back to bare metal and then re-paint by hand to their original condition before applying an anti graffiti lacquer. Due to the contractors' workload for other local authorities which are ahead of us in the queue he is unable

to give a date for the work to be undertaken but can confirm it will not be before the end of July and that it is more likely to be around September.

4.2. Allotments

- Quarterly liaison meetings were held with plot holders from Aylestone Lane and Wigston Road sites.
- Plot inspections have taken place at both sites. Eighteen improvement letters have been issued and one plot has been terminated for non cultivation.
- Repairs have been carried out to a number of taps at all four sites and one standpipe completely replaced at Wigston Road.

5. Clean and Green

- The new town centre operative for South Wigston is now in post.
- Compliments have been received for various bowls clubs regarding the bowling green at Peace Memorial Park.
- Works in the parks have included a new bed created in Willow Park.
- Weed spraying has taken place and tidying up around the Pride of the Borough route.

Background Documents:-

None.

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AL, BK, MS)	CR1 - Decreasing Financial Resources CR5 - Effective Utilisation of Assets/Building CR8 - Organisational Change
Corporate Priorities (AL, BK, MS)	CP1 - An Inclusive and Engaged Borough CP2 - Effective Service Provision CP4 - Green and Safe Places CP5 - Wellbeing For All
Vision and Values (AL, BK, MS)	VV3 - Teamwork VV4 - Innovation VV5 - Customer Focus
Equalities (AL, BK, MS)	No significant implications.
	Equality Assessment:-
	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Screening <input type="checkbox"/> Full Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable