



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 23 January 2018	Matter for Information
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Title: **Greening of the Borough and Operational Services Update**

Author(s): **Avril Lennox MBE (Head of Health & Leisure Services)
Brian Kew (Head of Operational & Street Scene Services)**

1. Introduction

This report provides Members with a progress update on the Natural Discovery Volunteer Project; Brocks Hill Country Park; Britain in Bloom; Tendring Drive footpath and an update from the Operational and Street Scene Services.

2. Recommendation(s)

That Members note the information provided within the report and endorse and promote the range of opportunities to the wider audience.

3. Information

3.1. Natural Discovery Volunteer Project

The following provides a progress report on plans which have been put in place for the final months of the funded Heritage Lottery project:

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) are continuing to deliver the off-site conservation volunteering sessions. Some new dates have been added to the existing schedule, which will conclude mid-February just before the end of the funded project. TCV have also been training-up and supporting one of our Lead Volunteers in the delivery of the South Leicestershire College gardening programme at Brocks Hill. TCV's support for this concluded when the college broke up for Christmas, but the fortnightly sessions will restart in February, led by one of our Lead Volunteers with some assistance from the Park Warden.

The Admin Officer continues to liaise with TCV, the Park Warden and volunteers to promote the range of volunteering opportunities. As well as the usual administrative tasks, the Admin Officer has sent out a questionnaire to all volunteers to gather valuable feedback from this two-year project. The data will be analysed and used in the final evaluation report for the external funders, Heritage Lottery.

Key to the success of the project to-date has been the commitment and input from the five Lead Volunteers. These are local individuals who have given their time and taken on extra responsibility in order to supervise and support new and current volunteers. They have been provided with additional training such as Health & Safety, First Aid, and specific tool training e.g. Brushcutter and Woodchipper, so they are appropriately skilled to lead tasks once the externally funded project comes to an end. This not only provides sustainability of the project, but continued engagement from the valued volunteers.

Support will continue to be provided by the Park Warden, who coordinates the Wednesday Brocks Hill volunteering sessions. However, due to the popularity of this

particular session, it is now running at capacity so new volunteers are being directed towards the offsite volunteering opportunities.

As well as acknowledging the current five Lead Volunteers, the Council has carried out a recruitment drive to encourage more 'would-be' Lead Volunteers to get involved. The aim is for these individuals to lead the off-site conservation tasks. Unfortunately to date this has not been successful. However, plans are in place to continue the off-site works, if no new Lead Volunteers are identified.

A Christmas lunch was held on 20 December to recognise all the volunteers that have given their time over the last year. Over 35 people were in attendance as well as staff from the Depot, Brocks Hill, the leisure team and TCV, all of whom have contributed to the improvements at the Country Park and the off-site locations.

All 5 Lead Volunteers were highlighted and acknowledged during the event for their additional commitment and contribution over the last 12 months, and all were individually presented with a certificate.



Brocks Hill Lead Volunteers

The following information provides details of volunteering hours achieved since 2015. It is encouraging to note the increase in volunteer hours given year-on-year:

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	448.25
July	312.45	280	256.50
August	212	268.5	274.00
September	216.5	232.75	265.75
October	170.05	223	307.50
November	243	323.4	299.75

December	153	121.5	142.50
TOTAL	3,282.75	3,569.15	3,6397

3.2. **Brocks Hill Country Park Update: 13/09/17 to 13/12/17**

Managing grassland habitats at Brocks Hill continued into September, with areas including the orchard, memorial mound and long grass by the ponds being cut and raked by the Park Warden and the volunteers. Annual pond clearance was carried out on both ponds at the front of the visitor centre, which will be continued into the future, ensuring these habitats are looked after in a sustainable manner. Pond clearance of reeds and rubbish was completed with the help of one regular volunteer and the Corporate Volunteers from Charnwood Foods, successfully utilising the new pond maintenance boat for the first time.

Other tasks completed this autumn in collaboration with the volunteers include: erecting bird and bat boxes, picking apples for the Food Fayre, bulb planting, scrub clearance and burning brush.

In November, the Park Warden and members of the grounds maintenance team recommenced the tree felling programme that began in February. They have now successfully thinned over 1 hectare of woodland during the first part of this winter's schedule and will continue tree felling until February 2018.

Work has also taken place surveying the flora and fauna at Brocks Hill in order to collate all relevant information for the revised management plan. The updated management plan is required for the Green Flag Award, submission deadline in January.

3.3. **Silver Gilt Award for Oadby and Wigston**

Following the success in the East Midlands in Bloom competition, where Oadby and Wigston received the Gold Medal for the 8th successive year, the Borough was asked to represent the region in the Small City category of the prestigious National Britain in Bloom Finals.

The judging, which took place in August, included a tour of the Borough visiting areas such as Peace Memorial Park, Brocks Hill Country Park and locations maintained by neighborhood groups, concluding at the University Botanic Gardens. The judges focused on three categories; horticultural achievement; environmental responsibility; and community participation.

The results were announced at the RHS Britain in Bloom awards ceremony held in Llandudno, North Wales on 27 October. Oadby and Wigston attendees were delighted to be awarded the Silver Gilt award. The judges highlighted the partnership working approach for particular merit. Sincere thanks go to the Pride of the Borough group, the many volunteers and community groups, plus Oadby and Wigston Council staff who contributed to the Borough achieving this prestigious award.

3.4. **Tendring Drive Path**

A plan showing the extent of the land to be transferred is currently being prepared, and discussions between the relevant legal teams are taking place in order to progress the access route into Brocks Hill Country Park from Tendring Drive. Timescales for the agreement/sign off from the Secretary of State is yet to be confirmed.

3.5. **Brocks Hill Children's Play Equipment**

New outdoor play equipment will replace some of the wooden play equipment recently removed from the Brocks Hill children's play area. This includes the installation of appropriate equipment for children with additional needs, in line with the approved 2017/18 capital funding bid. The works will be timed to coincide with the resurfacing work required under all pieces of play equipment at Brocks Hill. This will provide safe, shock absorbent surfaces that are compliant with BS EN 1177.

A further capital funding bid will be worked up in time for the October deadline, to cover the other pieces of wooden equipment which are beginning to rot. This will be implemented in 2019.

3.6. **Operations and Street Scene Update**

Peace Memorial Park - Badge Bed:

Councillors are currently working with key Officers on the Peace Memorial Park 'badge bed' for 2018. The theme for this year is a Poppy, in recognition of 100 years since the First World War. The actual layout and design is yet to be confirmed.

Bulb Planting:

Numerous bulb planting sessions have taken place across the Borough, including at Launceston Corner and William Gunning Park. The Street Scene and Operations team has replaced the winter bedding with grasses at Willow Park, this not only produces a cost saving but also provides year round colour. Bulb planting has also taken place in the sensory gardens in Oadby.

Ellis Park – the Oadby Rotary Club has planted a number of bulbs around the surrounding area of the park. Bushloe House has also had some grasses planted, instead of the winter plants. All the above works is in addition to the general ground maintenance that takes place across the borough throughout the year.

3.7. **Route Optimisation**

Following on from the Council meeting on 5 December, a contractor to carry out the review of the refuse/recycling rounds (route optimisation) has been procured and an inception meeting with Officers on the technical aspects is scheduled in early January. This piece of work is key to providing Members with a detailed evidence base of costings to assist in their decision making at the next Council meeting on 22 February. Dates for meetings of the now nominated five Member cross-party working group will also be sent out early in the new year, at which Officers will report on the progress being made on this next piece of work.

3.8. **Fly Tipping and Recycling**

Fly Tipping: The latest figures released by DEFRA for 2016/17 reveal a national clean-up cost for fly tipping of £57 million for that financial year. It was the fourth year in a row that fly tipping incidents increased. Approximately 56,000 fixed penalty notices were handed out by Councils to people caught illegally dumping.

There were 1,002,000 cases of fly-tipping handled by Councils in England between April 2016 and March 2017, equivalent to 114 every hour. This was 66,000 (7%) more

than the year before.

Two thirds of the 1,002,000 fly tipping cases recorded in 2016-2017 involved household waste with 18 per cent of all incidents comprising black bin bags. Those with the lowest rate of fly-tipping include the Islands of Scilly, who recorded no fly-tipping issues, and Oadby and Wigston, who reported 17.

Recycling: For the purposes of comparison, these recycling figures are calculated using the 'Waste from Households' measure used to report household recycling to comply with the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC). Under this Directive the UK and other EC Member States must meet a target to recycle 50 per cent of 'household waste' by 2020.

Recycling rates for 2016/17:

Harborough	53.6%
Hinckley	49.4%
Charnwood	48.4%
OWBC	48.3%
Blaby	47.9%
Melton	47.7%
North West	46.7%

3.9. Tree Planting Action Plan - Grass Verges

In support of the Council's tree strategy, it is proposed to carry out the following actions in terms of tree planting:

A further 16 trees to be planted in the current season (e.g. to the end of March 2018) and a further 25 trees to be planted over the course of 2018/19. Trees can only be planted during the months of November to March of each season.

The intention is to plant these trees on highways where they will be especially visible and contribute significantly to the overall aspect of major routes across the Borough.

Highways are maintained by Leicestershire County Council, and discussions with Officers at County have indicated a willingness for the County to take on the continuing maintenance of any trees planted by the Council, including any costs arising after the Council has purchased and planted the trees. There are sufficient funds in the Council's capital programme to meet the estimated costs of tree planting for the remainder of 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The delivery of these targets is predicated on concluding discussions with the County Council regarding ongoing maintenance, and specific site inspections on the highways to ensure that the sites provisionally identified do not have any issues that might lead to establishment problems for the new trees, e.g. soil conditions, drainage, etc.

Background Documents:

None

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Implications Greening of the Borough and Operational Services Update	
Finance Chris Raymakers (Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits)	There are no significant financial implications.
Legal David Gill (Head of Law & Governance / Monitoring Officer)	The report is satisfactory.
Corporate Risk(s) (CR) Avril Lennox (Head of Health & Leisure Services) Brian Kew (Head of Operational Services & Street Clean)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decreasing Financial Resources (CR1) Some projects are reliant on external funding and volunteer input; therefore if these are reduced it could impact on service delivery.
Corporate Priorities (CP) Avril Lennox (Head of Health & Leisure Services) Brian Kew (Head of Operational Services & Street Clean)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An Inclusive and Engaged Borough (CP1) Working in partnership to provide access to all. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Effective Service Provision (CP2) Utilising external funding and volunteer input to delivery local projects. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green & Safe Places (CP4) Utilising and improving our green spaces, protecting habitats. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wellbeing for All (CP5) Increasing the range of opportunities, and providing opportunities for volunteers to engage with projects.
Vision & Values (V) Avril Lennox (Head of Health & Leisure Services) Brian Kew (Head of Operational Services & Street Clean)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "A Strong Borough Together" (Vision) Continuing the positive working arrangements with new and existing partners to deliver an effective service. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountability (V1) We are accountable through regular monitoring and evaluation reporting and check and challenge groups. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Respect (V2) Equality and fairness is at the heart of what we deliver, as is listening to staff, volunteers and residents to gain valuable insight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork (V3) Stakeholder teamwork, both internal and external is key to the delivery of projects. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation (V4) The new Brocks Hill service re-design is one of the many

	<p>key innovations Leisure Services is continually driving forwards</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Focus (V5)</p> <p>Leisure Services and Operational and Street Scene Services continually go above and beyond stakeholder's and customer's expectations, which can be judged by the number of positive comments received.</p>
<p>Equalities & Equality Assessment(s) (EA)</p>	<p>There are no significant equalities implications.</p>
<p>Avril Lennox (Head of Health & Leisure Services)</p> <p>Brian Kew (Head of Operational Services & Street Clean)</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable (EA)</p>