

**NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 18.00 on 7th February 2022 in the
Godwin Room at Northampton Guildhall**

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

Officers: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Mrs J Thorneycroft (Assistant Town Clerk)

Mr J Chalmers (Principal Regeneration Officer at WNC)

27. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been submitted by Cllr Meredith.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hallam declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 30, Update on the Market Square, since he was on the cabinet at West Northants Council (WNC) who would make the final decisions on this project.

29. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 22ND NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED: That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting.

30. UPDATE ON THE MARKET SQUARE REGENERATION PROJECT

Mr Jamie Chalmers from WNC gave a presentation updating the committee on the plans for the Market Square.

Mr Chalmers had a number of slides which gave further detail on the plans for the project. He explained that the principles of the whole project were the regeneration of the market square, encouraging connectivity and creating a community space and a sustainable market.

Mr Chalmers stated that there would be a reduction in the number of permanent stalls, to be 18, but an increased number of pop up stalls available, up to 45. The pop up stalls would be provided by WNC and would be uniform in appearance. Mr Chalmers showed the committee an artist's impression of what the permanent stalls would look like. They would be prefabricated steel stalls, 4x3 metres. They would have green roofs, planted with wild flowers that would require minimal maintenance. It was noted that the intention was to have fixed services located in these stalls, such as a barbers and a bicycle repair shop. Fruit and vegetables would likely be in more open larger stalls. In response to a question about the living roofs it was explained that bio diversity was an important part of the project and whilst these would not be visible to the human eye, they would provide small areas for insects etc. in an area that had little. The tree at the Abington Street entrance would be retained and more trees would be planted to provide dapple shade. The trees would be carefully selected.

WNC were working closely with the police to ensure that anti-social behaviour was tackled, and that measures were taken to counter it.

In response to a question it was stated that there were no plans for any fixed play equipment. The Market Square is a conservation area and Historic England had been clear in stating that fixed play equipment would not be suitable. However, there would be events with play elements.

Mr Chalmers moved onto the proposed water feature informing members that it was to be inspired by Northampton's shoe manufacturing heritage. The water feature would be located on the west side of the square flowing north to south. There would be different elements, with water jets and crossings, and the ability to play in. Mr Chalmers stated that water feature at the Bull Yard in Coventry would give members an indication of how these features work. It was confirmed that the plant room for the water feature would be located in the Market Square in a permanent stall. Maintenance was crucial to ensure that this element was sustainable.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the original fountain would not be relocated, the cost would be too large. It was also confirmed that the paving would be chosen to complement the surrounding buildings and would not absorb grease.

In summary it was noted that anti-social behaviour issues would need to be addressed and resolved in order to make this project sustainable and attract people into Northampton.

Mr Chalmers was thanked for his update. Mr Chalmers confirmed he was happy to return and present to the committee with the next update and was keen to involve the Town Council as the project progressed.

Mr Chalmers left the meeting.

Cllr Ashraf and Cllr Kilbride left the meeting as they had other commitments.

Cllr Tarasiewicz arrived having been delayed.

31. ALLOTMENTS MANAGEMENT – AGENCY AGREEMENT WITH WNC

Circulated with the agenda was a report updating members on the agency agreement with WNC.

It was explained that the financial information requested on allotments had not been forthcoming from WNC. WNC had previously stated that there had been no plans to charge special expenses related to the allotments, however, the Clerk had been notified a couple of days before this meeting that they had in fact charged special expenses to Northampton residents. The Clerk would seek clarification as to how much.

The Clerk shared the legal advice that he had received regarding the agreement. Ultimately the Town Council did not have the resource to take on the management at this time, however, it would need to consider this for the future. In total there were 8 sites consisting of 1208 plots. According to WNC the average plot paid £15 per annum equating to approximately £18,000 of income.

It was noted that just before Christmas the Clerk, Chair and Cllr Meredith had met with allotment association representative and they had been asked to feedback their priorities for each site. This information was yet to be received.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk continues to try and get more financial information on the allotments including the cost of the special expenses.

32. NORTHAMPTON IN BLOOM UPDATE

Circulated with the agenda was a report on Northampton in Bloom.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that the Northampton in Bloom working party (Cllrs Birch, Stevens, Joyce, Meredith and officer Julie Thorneycroft) had met on 3 occasions (15th November, 19th and 26th January) to discuss the ongoing progress of the Bloom project. Following discussions, a provisional planting order had been agreed and the order had been placed with Plantscape Ltd for the additional floral containers. The value of the provisional purchase order was circa £20,000. Placing the order meant that the plug plants were reserved early in the growing season and had time to mature before being transferred to the larger floral containers.

The additional budget of £50,000 agreed for 22/23 had given the opportunity for extra planting schemes which would brighten up more areas of the town than was possible in summer 2021 and previous years. The Bloom project would introduce colour throughout the town council area during the summer months, June to September.

Suggested sites:

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 had been raised through Idverde services. The budget for this element of bloom would be transferred to the town council as part of the events budget as from 1st April 2022.

Peter Hackett (Direct Services Manager at WNC) and Mike Mitchell (Contracts Manager at 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 had 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 were continuing to ensure the necessary health and safety checks plus site visits were 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 were in progress.

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

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

The Assistant Town Clerk was thanked for her report.

Cllr Alwahabi left the meeting.

33. CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM

The Chair tabled a report updating the committee on the work of the Climate Change Forum.

It was explained that that the Town Council's Climate Change Forum had 9 members in all, these were The Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Cllrs Stevens, Joyce, and Birch, plus 4 community members from local volunteer organisations who were interested in and very well informed about the issue of climate change.

It was explained that the group were working on 6 projects at present these being:

1. Engaging with other town parishes.
2. Active travel – ‘every journey matters’ campaign.
3. Engagement with schools on air quality monitoring, poster competitions, school streets.
4. Greening the town - wildlife flower planting, tree planting.
5. A Climate Cafe - to involve town residents and seek their ideas for action to take.
6. Waste reduction and re-use of products.

All projects were in their early stages. The Forum was also especially keen to work with West Northants Council on climate change initiatives, and would value any advice from Town Councillors on how to do this most effectively.

It was explained that the Forum was chaired by Cllr Stevens who would report back to the Environmental Services Committee. Any town councillors very welcome to join the Forum, especially if they have specific areas relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation that they would like to see the Town Council developing.

It was commented that all these projects were good, however there was little the Town Council could do on Active Travel. In response the Chair said that on Active Travel the Forum were focusing on influencing and promoting the benefits.

Members liked the idea of greening the town, and it was suggested that green walls in high traffic areas could be beneficial.

The Chair asked that the group be allocated £5,000 from which they have delegated authority to spend in order to move forward with these ideas.

RESOLVED: That £5,000 be delegated to the Climate Change Forum form the Climate Emergency budget.

There being no more business, the meeting ended at 19.37 hours.

Signed.....Chair