

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Environment and Amenities Committee
Meeting date	5 October 2022
Agenda item	7 - Forward Plan

1. Community Woodland (TB/NW)	
Jan to Mar 2021	Plan for community woodland
Jun 2021 review	Community Wood Project - report to Amenities 9.6.21. Carbon Cutters undertaking a site survey June 2021
July to Sep 2021	Consideration of business plan
Oct to Dec 2021	Site and draft plan agreed by committee November 2021
January 2022	Budget now needs to be agreed.
February 2022	Landowner approached by council's agent; awaiting further advice.
July 2022	Land acquisition being progressed, Town Clerk to update and report further.
September 2022	<p>Council's agent John Read of Carter Jonas advised Town Clerk on 15.09.22 regarding the proposals for the tenant who has offered to surrender c.6.72 acres for the woodland.</p> <p>This matter is reported further in the confidential section as it is subject to contract and legal agreement.</p> <p>In taking matters forward it is suggested that the Committee reappoint the Community Woodland Working Group with the terms of reference as appendix 1 of this report.</p> <p>The Committee is requested to appoint this Group and agree the town council membership.</p>
Jan to Mar 2023	Planting and Review future arrangements.
2. Review of play areas (TB)	
Jan to Mar 2021	Review of play areas
Jun 2021 review	Review took place June 2021
Oct 2021 update	Quotes for play equipment received. Procurement should be completed in 2021 – report to committee 16 November 2021
Nov 2021 update	Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager updated meeting on quotes received. Work to proceed under delegation to officers.
February 2022 update	Play area working group established, meeting originally to be arranged for late March 2022.

<p>July 2022</p>	<p>Outdoor Services Manager reports: Has considered each of the play areas in turn and will come the appointed working group which will include the following proposals: <u>Boxhill and Chilton</u> – recently improved so no proposals <u>Caldecott Recreation Ground</u> – improving play value for those aged up to 11 within the enclosed park whilst providing activities for those older, in the adjacent area. The activities would include a pendulum basket swing and a hurricane swing. There would be scope to further extend in the future as it is a large with potential. Adult fitness equipment will be installed shortly. <u>Chaunterell Way</u>- propose extending the enclosed area with a basket swing, two DDA compliant roundabouts - simulator roundabout and inclusive wheelchair roundabout. Outside the play park, adjacent to the trees – toddler area with items which include interactive panels, balancing mushrooms/ logs, talking flower tubes and picnic table. Often young families visit this park. Masefield Crescent – tall multi-play climbing unit to take advantage of the site’s elevated position.</p>
<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Request Committee to set a date for the meeting of the working group as soon as possible to agree officer proposals in order to go out to tender. Working group previously appointed 2021/22 will need to be reappointed; previously consisted of: Cllr Barody Cllr Bowring Cllr Halliday Cllr Oates</p>
<p>3. Tree Survey (TB)</p>	
<p>Apr to Jun 2022</p>	<p>Commission tree report</p>
<p>Apr to Jun 2024</p>	<p>Commission tree report</p>
<p>February 2022 – contractors and staff continue to address the works identified. Contractors are behind schedule with 43% of work, by value, done.</p>	
<p>July 2022 update – next survey to be commissioned once currently outstanding works are completed.</p>	
<p>September 2022 update – report on progress made and proposal to commission new tree audit is in the officer report at agenda item 10 (report of Cemetery and Outdoor Services Manager).</p>	

4. New Cemetery (NW>VM) (Consolidated from actions register)	
Apr to Jun 2021	Land offer from VOWH - Key decision on proceeding
Jun 2021 review	Masefield Crescent site part of Vale Strategic Property review See Amenities Committee - 9.6.21 Recommended: 1) New Cemetery Working Group reappointed; 2) Sum of £20,000 released from the earmarked reserves towards work on the business case 3) Other potential sites in the town be explored cemetery infrastructure is already in place); 4) Confirmation on suitability of Masefield Crescent site undertaking a desk top exercise; 5) Valuation of the Masefield Crescent site; 6) A business proposal be developed, as far as we are able, ahead of further information from DC; 7) Dialogue with the District Council continue during this period so that proposals can be informed. Further meeting due with VWHDC June 21
February update	2022 Feasibility study scoped and contract awarded. Work on feasibility study taking place in April 2022 – see update on agenda for meeting of 8 March 2022
July 2022	The external consultants, CDS, are making good progress and submitting regular updates - the original timetable has slipped slightly as they required detailed information.
September 2022	New cemetery working group will meet to consider feasibility study and matter will be on agenda for the meeting in November 2022
Oct to Dec 2023	Commence building work TBC
Jan to Mar 2025	Open new cemetery TBC
5. Infant Burial Area (TB) (Consolidated from actions register)	
January 2022	This project is ahead of schedule. The area has been planned by the Outdoor Services Manager and a quote has been obtained for the work
Apr to Jun 2022	Plan infant burial area – planning work completed
July to Sep 2022	Implement infant burial area – quotes to be obtained
Potential projects for prioritisation and timetabling	
<p>— Rewilding and tree planting programme. — January 2022 update: have identified sites for 30 replacement and additional trees. Identified 150 metres of council boundaries suitable for hedge planting. Town Council is not responsible for grass verges on the highway. March 2022 update – please see report at item 10.</p>	

~~Annual programmes for: cemetery improvements, major arboricultural works (inc. date of next major survey), vehicles/equipment replacement dates, street furniture.~~

6. Green Projects – report on progress – suggest items crossed through are Transferred to the archive	
Oct to Dec 2020	Cllr Andrew Coveney & Anne Smart to liaise with takeaway establishments regarding climate emergency. Invite experts to discuss. met with all establishments Anne to update – theme of green forum
Oct to Dec 2021	Promote small financial awards programme for environmental initiatives especially in relation to schools, to include biodiversity initiatives (inc. competition) Biodiversity competition was launched over the summer, showcasing biodiversity in action from residents and organisations sharing gardens, shared spaces form residents. Judging to commence shortly, with the announcement of the winners and prize giving ceremony to be hosted by the Mayor in December at the County Hall Museum.
Apr to Jun 2022	Environmental Awareness Day – requires proposal for November 2021 meeting to include format, date, budget etc - To be included as a theme within the Green Forum. Update March 2022: being considered and taken forward by the Green Forum.
October 2021 update	Cllr Cheryl Briggs to take over from Cllr Coveney (see Oct to Dec 2020 note) and work with Anne Smart in relation to work with “takeaway” establishments. Date of project to be put back to 2022.
March 2022	Anne Smart updated meeting on the survey which she undertook with Cllr Cheryl Briggs re survey on takeaway establishments
July 2022 update	Abingdon Learning Trust (ALT) organised a climate change event where three schools (Fitzharrys, Rush Common and John Mason) showcased their ideas for reducing carbon emissions, promoting biodiversity, shared community spaces and active travel. This event took place at the Guildhall on 5 July 2022. ALT would like this to become an annual event. As agreed the Town Council paid for the room hire.
September 2022	Update from the Green Forum on any plans in relation to Environmental Awareness Day

7. Plastic-free town initiative	
Jan to Mar 2021	Work with ACC regarding the plastic free town initiative with the objective that shop and market retailers use no plastic or polystyrene. Commence this work with an audit of retailers
Apr to Jun 2021	Agree and implement measures and incentives to achieve the objective that shop and market retailers use no plastic or polystyrene. Pop-up to promote reusable cups took place 29 May 21
June 2021 review	Cafes audited. Most retailers do not now use polystyrene. Work delayed due to Covid but next steps and proposal to be considered at July mtg
October 2021 update	Use of single use plastic in relation to activity on the Market considered by Community Committee (as service ctte), at its September 2021 meeting – The report of the Community Services and Events Officer on the single use plastics policy on the Market Place was noted. The Community Services and Events Officer noted the delay in rolling out the new policy due to the pandemic and health and safety concerns over reusing items. The policy was now being introduced in consultation with market traders. Report to a future meeting to consider the position regarding plastic-free initiatives beyond the Market Place
September 2022	To discuss consolidating this work in to a wider project with the Green Forum
8. Biodiversity plan	
Apr to Jun 2021	Commence work on a biodiversity plan for the town council.
June 2021 review	Plan discussed ctte April 2021 and rescheduled adoption. Link to the Green Spaces Plan (Neighbourhood Plan). Approach a volunteer to assist in this area
Jan to Mar 2022	Adoption of biodiversity plan
Oct 2021 update	Work has commenced and we should be able to keep to the timetable for a biodiversity plan to be adopted in March 2022. Report due to committee in November 2021.
January 2022 update	See report to meeting of EA Committee together with budget proposal.
August 2022	Biodiversity Plan adopted.
October 2022	Timetable for implementation to be defined by Chair of Committee with Cemetery and Outdoor Services Manager, together with financial implications.

Potential projects for prioritisation and timetabling
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure actions and decisions are in line with and partner the Neighbourhood Plan and relevant Local Plan work.- Be ready to be a pilot town for innovative green schemes which may emerge, noting that this will require flexibility in relation to this section of the Forward Plan.- Green energy event being undertaken during the “Big Green Week” 24 September to 2 October 2022

APPENDIX 1

ABINGDON COMMUNITY WOODLAND – WORKING GROUP

1 Objective of the Group

The Working Group shall draft a feasibility and development plan for an Abingdon Community Woodland as detailed in the council’s Forward Plan.

The Group does not have executive powers or budget but may make recommendations and representations to the council’s officers who may have delegated budget powers and to the council’s Environment and Amenities Committee. Any recommendations to the town council will be considered as part of its Forward Plan and subject to other priorities and resourcing.

2 Term of appointment

This will be a task and finish working group to progress and implement the council’s development of the community woodland. Its membership shall remain in post to 6 June 2023 when its role will be reviewed at the Environment and Amenities Committee.

3 Meetings

3.1 The group will be administered by the town council and meet on dates and virtually/ at venue to be agreed by the group, avoiding dates of meetings already set by the other local authorities serving Abingdon and meetings of the partner organisations.

3.2 The Group will not be subject to any formal notice period to call a meeting and the agenda will be published by e-mail. In order to expedite business and focus on output rather than process, the administration is to be undertaken as “light touch” as is commensurate with good sector practice.

- 3.3 Meetings will be attended by at least one council officer, who will normally be the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager.
- 3.4 The Group shall reflect the current informal group which has been discussing the Community Woodland and shall consist of 4 members of the Abingdon Carbon Cutters and 2 town councillors. Further persons/ organisations may be co-opted, such co-option to be agreed by the Environment and Amenities Committee, bearing in mind this group' focus is on prompt action in line with the declared climate emergency.
- 3.5 The quorum of the Forum shall be one member of ACC and one member of the town council.

4 **Chair and Vice-Chair**

- 4.1 The group shall elect a Chair for its meetings and may elect a Vice-Chair.
- 4.2 The Chair shall not have executive powers but shall act as a point of contact for the partners outside of formal meetings.

5 **Public participation**

- 5.1 Meetings of this working group are not open to the public.
- 5.2 Reports of the working group to the Environment and Amenities Committee shall be available to the public, subject to any redaction of items which are properly treated as confidential.

6 **Interpretation and Amendments to Terms of Reference**

- 6.1 The Town Clerk or his nominated officer will advise in relation to all matters of interpretation and working group process..
- 6.2 The Group's terms of reference may be amended by the Environment and Amenities Committee with or without a recommendation from the Forum.