

## Stronger Communities Committee

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**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**Title:** Welch Way Raised Bed and Church Green Flower Beds,  
Residents Letters

**Contact Officer:** Operations and Estates Officer John Hickman

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### **Background**

This report has been prepared in order to inform the Councillors of the current position regarding the council's raised planting bed on Welch Way and the planting to Church Green Flower Beds

### **Action Taken**

The raised planter on Welch Way used for displaying annual themes, commemorations etc. is in poor condition the sleepers it has been constructed with have rotted out in places and damage has been caused in one area by a fire last year. The condition of the raised planter is of concern as the timber sleepers retain the soil and there is a possibility it could/will start to collapse in the near future. Contractors have already installed timber to the front bottom of the bed in order to try to retain the soil.

The In Bloom Sub-Committee suggested consideration be given to changing some of the bedding planted to perennial planting it was decided that approx. 50% of the beds on Church Green should be planted with a mixture of perennial's and annuals this year in order to trial the idea and see what the reaction was.

### **Current Situation**

#### Welch Way Raised Bed

The Operations and Estates Officer has requested that the summer bedding is left in the planter whilst it still looks reasonable and that the bed is not replanted with Winter/Spring bedding whilst he consults with this Committee regarding rebuilding this planter in time for next year's summer bedding. Next summers theme for this bed is intended to be 100yrs anniversary of the Leys Recreation Ground.

The grounds contractors have prepared a quote to remove 1/3 of the current soil and the sleepers replace with new sleepers raising the rear of the bed higher in order to increase the angle of the bed and consequently the visibility of the display as members of the public drive by. Replace 5 x bulk bags topsoil and 1 pallet of manure to complete the bed.

Previously this bed was planted with carpet bedding however Council has moved away from this due to cost approx. £3,800 every year for the summer display of carpet bedding, winter/spring planting is additional to this. Council now uses densely planted bedding however it is not possible to make intricate designs using summer bedding plants. Therefore the intention is to have a banner across the top rear of the bed to state the significance of the bed. This should give the council a saving of approx. £3,000 annually.

## Church Green Flower Beds

The In Bloom working party requested that council looked at planting more sustainable Summer & Winter bedding in future. It was decided to do this on a trial basis at first by planting 50% of church green flower beds with a mix of 50% summer winter/bedding and 50% perennial planting and small shrubs. In this way there should always be a display of flowers even when the other plants are not in flower. If this trial is successful it would be intended to extend this out into the other bedding areas over the coming years.

A selection of plants has been chosen to plant in these beds and a quote requested from contractors including the ongoing maintenance to these plants to keep them in good order.

It will initially cost £2,443.42 for the new planting however there will be a reduction on the annual Summer and Winter bedding costs of £1506.94.

The initial costs for the £2,443.42 can hopefully be taken from the remaining additional sum for summer bedding after this year's additional planting has been accounted for next year.

Residents Comments on last years in bloom.

A number of good comments and a letter has been received since WTC won a Silver for the Town and Gold for the Leys Recreation Ground in in bloom 2019.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

### **Financial implications**

The associated cost to dismantle and re-constructed the raised bed. £5,210.35 + VAT no renewal fund was set when this bed was constructed therefore no funds are available to re-construct this bed, council would need to provide this amount from its reserves.

The associated cost of the perennial and shrub planting on 50% of the Church Green Beds from the remaining annual additional bedding sum after this year's additional summer bedding has been accounted for of £5796.98.

### **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report and consider the following

1. A budget of £5,210.35 is provided from reserves to re-construct the raised bed on Welch Way.
2. An annual sum is set for future renewal of this display flower bed.
3. The change in planting to 50% of church green beds.