

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 16th November 20

Title: Floral Displays and Trees Update

Contact Officer: Operations and Estates Officer – John Hickman

Background

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of floral displays, tree survey, tree works carried out and outstanding tree works.

Current Situation

Floral Displays

WODC Planters for the High Street carriage way is due to be delivered to the works depot week commencing 9th November as soon as they arrive, they will be put out and planted up by the Council's Grounds Contractors – as agreed at full Council on 12 October 2020.

Contractors have made suggestions regarding improvements to the impact planting on the roundabouts, the Operation has requested quotes for the works.

Schools In Bloom Competition

It has been suggested that next year as well as running the wheelbarrow competition with the schools provided, they are able to do this that WTC runs a Sunflower competition for children of the Town. It is suggested that WTC could provide seeds to any child wanting to take part and perhaps a volunteer group such as edible gardens could hold a potting up day at the Leys with the children at the Leys supported by WTC. It is thought that later a planting out day could be held in the Leys Play Area along the fence line with the Crazy Golf and Bowls Green. Children would be able to visit site when they wanted from then to look at and tend their Sunflowers. In Bloom judges could be asked to judge their best Sunflower when carrying out there judging of the Leys, there could be a Mayors best, others such as tallest plant, largest flower etc. Small prizes and certificates could be given to the winners.

Trees

Witan Way T639

In September urgent tree works were carried out to a tree on T639 Willow on Witan Way which had become dangerous with a large bow that had split out and was hanging across the carriageway.

Cost of these works was £750 + VAT.

Queen Emma's Dyke

A Crack Willow tree that has not been maintained and is not currently on the tree survey, however after research is on WTC land requires pollarding urgently as it is a high risk to pedestrians and owners of the adjacent properties. The Operations and Estates has commissioned these works at a cost of £750 + VAT.

Queen Emma's Dyke

T277-T280-T281 these trees have recently shed branches and have required remedial works; the trees are located on a green where children play and also overhanging footpaths. The tree surgeon has some concerns that these trees are not suitable for the location and has stated the following. (This group of trees, all of which have historically shed branches, have a combination of significant defects i.e. decay and heartwood rot of stems, compression and inclusion at stem attachments and branch cracks caused by excessive compression, tension, and torsion. All these defects are common with the species hence the name crack willow. Taking into account their size, it is highly probable that failure of stems and branches will continue and therefore owing to the unpredictable nature of the species it may be prudent to consider that the risks these trees present render them inappropriate for long term retention.

Mitigation options I believe are limited to pruning to reduce loading on parts liable to fail (the trees will need to be significantly reduced, 'Pollarded', and managed on cyclical basis) or their complete removal, replanting with more suitable species.)

The Operations and Estates Officer is aware that remaining arboriculture budget is limited and there may be items raised in the tree survey that will require urgent works etc. and would suggest that if council decide these works should be carried out they are done towards the end of this financial year using any remaining arboriculture tree budget or in the start of the new financial year.

If the trees are felled, then they should be replaced from the tree replacement budget in late Autumn Winter 2021. Associated cost to fell £4,250 + Vat

If the trees are pollarded then they will require to be managed on a cyclical basis every 5 years. Associated cost to pollard £2,750 + Vat

T583 Cedar of Lebanon St Mary's church yard

The tree has now been felled, the church requested any usable timber over 2m long was put aside for use as either internal or external furniture for the church. The church were in touch with Luke Hughes, who is a furniture designer/interior architect. The church has requested the usable timber is placed to one side in the church yard and the church will deal with it from there.

Tree Planting

The Operations and Estates Officer is waiting for further contact from the Wychood Project regarding the tree planting the intends to carry out during national tree planting week.

The Operation and Estates is waiting on prices from the ground's contractors regarding replacement tree planting and the mayors tree, however is unable to plan further tree planting until after the Wychwood Project have completed their planting.

Tree Survey

The tree survey has been delayed and will be carried out over next few weeks, the Operations and Estates Officer will update council once the report has been received.

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. Council should consider the risk posed by T277, T280 & T281 regarding whether to carry out works to these trees.

Financial implications

The cost Associated to the tree works at Emma's Dyke 277, 280, 281 £2,750 or £4,250 to be taken from 4040/402.

The cost associated to the Crack Willow at Emma's Dyke £750

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. T277, T280 & T281 to Fell.
2. T277, T280 & T281 to Pollard
3. T277, T280 & T281 to leave and deal with branches as they fall.

