

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

---

**Date:** Monday, 11 July 2022

**Title:** Community Engagement Report

**Contact Officer:** Communications and Community Engagement Officer - Polly Inness

---

### **Background**

A brief update on Community Engagement matters.

### **Current Situation**

The Council is at the halfway point in planning for the remainder of Community Engagement events and activities for 2022

### **In Bloom Judging Day Tues 26 July**

The sofa in Bar 1863 has been reserved and the Venue and Events Officer will provide refreshments when officers and the Mayor meet with the judges as they arrive. Community gardening groups and members of The Shed will also be invited as a thank you for their contribution, Witney Shed having provided nature habitats for Towe Hill Cemetery free of charge.

There have been some issues with the summer bedding across the town, but it is hoped a stronger display will be evident by the judging day. (The town itself is not forming part of the judging as just the Tiny Forest at Eton Close and Tower Hill cemetery have been entered), but other impressions obviously count.

With regard to Schools In Bloom, the Mayor and judges will select the winning wheelbarrows which will be set out at Eton Close for In Bloom Judging day. The barrows are also being displayed at The Leys for the rest of the summer and will have been displayed at the Town Council Stand at the Carnival, for a People's Vote occasion.

### **Love your Parks Campaign 29 July - 5 August 2022**

Although no plans have been made for physical events in the Council's parks, it is suggested the Council supports the campaign through social media messaging, highlighting some of Witney's parks over the course of the week as it did last year.

Love Parks Week is set up to celebrate and support the efforts of volunteers and workers up and down the country to maintain and protect our green spaces.

## **Car Free Day 22 September- an update**

Unfortunately, this year Car Free Day falls on a Thursday which is market day, so precludes the Council from using Market Square for very much. Contact has been made with Windrush Bike Project, who are happy to support the event, and there will be contact with Active Oxfordshire and the Bus Museum to see what is possible for this year, working in separate spaces.

It is possible the Council could ask the bus museum to run a charabanc or similar old bus or coach through town and possibly call in at some of the care homes since care home residents are less able to join in Car Free day in other ways. The Reception window could also be used to promote walks and the day in general.

## **Christmas Competitions**

The Christmas Light competition has been launched and the card and Christmas Carol poster competitions will follow in September. The tree and child's light will once more be sponsored.

There is a second tree that will go outside the Corn Exchange that currently has no sponsor. Members may like officers to seek sponsorship for this tree.

## **Christmas Lights Switch On**

Christmas Lights switch on in previous years has been on the last Friday of November at 18:00 and is managed by the Rotary Club of Witney. The mayor is usually present on stage to switch the lights on.

## **Championing Local**

Following the recommendation by this committee at the previous meeting, officers have devised a way in which to highlight achievements of local football teams, schools, and organisations on social media.

## **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**

Described here or as stated in the report above.

## **Recommendations**

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

- Does the Council wish to promote Love Your Parks week again this year?
- Is the Council happy to organise a different sort of Car Free day that does not include the use of Market Square?
- In order that the Christmas Lights & trees installation and timings can be programmed in correctly, is it Council's intention to invite the Rotarians to manage the switch on event again this year on Friday 25th November with switch on at 18:00