

Town Mangers Report

Facilities Manager

Steve Eckett is currently providing a skeleton service covering the essential elements of the Premises Officer role; this is working well. The successful applicant, Jason Green, is expected to commence with his role from 29 June, although this is negotiable depending upon the current situation relating to Covid-19. His original expected start date was 20 April.

Skate Park Flood Lighting until 8 pm

Delays on this due to the company, Sports Lighting now not being sure of a suitable source of power. It is and was expected that they connect to the CCTV post, John Hadfield from CBC has confirmed that this is suitable and is liaising with them. On a positive note, the S106 monies for the deposit of £2,375 which I applied for in March have now been paid by CBC.

Councillor Vacancies

There are six vacancies at the Council in wards:

- Merton Ward
- St Peters West Ward
- New Barkby Ward

I have received interest from three people, Satish Visavadia is here today.

Please continue to promote this to any of your friends and family.

Syston and District Cemetery

- Rose bushes are now planted and being watered by Cllr David Pepper.
- The selective weed killer and grass seed has been applied.
- The height restrictor and hazard signs have been installed.
- The BT router has been delivered and an installation date of 16 June has been provided by BT.

There was an unfortunate occurrence at a recent burial at the cemetery where it was reported that approximately 70 mourners were present. I approached Gambles about this the following day and they were finding it very stressful to communicate this ruling to bereaved families. They have received clear guidance from the Council as well as guidance from their own professional body the NFD. We have agreed a plan for the future whilst social distancing is continuing to be enforced and that has been communicated to all local funeral directors for burials in Syston. Further information will be provided at the Amenities Committee.

Hawthorn whips for the hedging have arrived, but currently the ground is too hard to plant them, also they would need a good deal of regular rain or watering until they were established. Therefore Jack Tindle has kept them at his depot until the planting conditions are improved.

A bench that had been donated in memory of a relative is already in need of refurbishment. The relatives have been informed that it is their responsibility to do this and have also been advised that it is recommended to use Linseed Oil to help protect the wood from the elements.

Pavilion

The detailed specification has been approved by Council; I am currently liaising with the architect to draw up the invitation to tender for the National Contractor Website. It is anticipated that the Football Foundation will be partially funding this project. I had applied for S106 monies for the architects' fees to be reimbursed but have been advised that only the actual build costs will be funded.

Syston Allotments

The allotments have remained open and people have applied common sense and social distancing when tending their plots.

The replacement water pump has been fitted during the Spring, now a solar powered pump. The Committee are unable to meet at present as many of them do not have internet access. Allotment enquires have significantly increased during lockdown and the current waiting list at last count was 45.

An allotment plot was left in a poor state and had been used as a dumping ground by its previous holder, whom had recently vacated it. The person was known to be a difficult person to deal with and I was advised that it would not be worth writing to the person to ask them to clear the plot. Prices were obtained for a skip after Groundsmen advised it would take around eight trips to clear the site using the pickup. However, it transpired that a skip lorry would be unable to get close enough to the plot and so our Groundsmen have had to clear it using the pickup after all. I have discussed this with Richard Thorpe, the Chairman and we agree that we should introduce a deposit system so that if someone does leave their plot in a state that needs clearing, then their deposit would be kept to help pay for the clearance work. As the Committee are not able to meet at the moment, this has been deferred.

Tree Panel

Another problem between a resident of Northfields and an allotment holder has been dealt with. Trees on the allotment side were being cut down and/or pruned by the allotment holder. The neighbour at Northfields objected to this. The allotment holder has been asked as a matter of courtesy to discuss future actions with the resident. The resident is planning on attaching trellising to the fence, and this has been communicated to the allotment holder.

Playgrounds

The RoSPA inspection of the playgrounds took place last week. The report and action plan will be presented to the Amenities Committee.

Syston Bowling Club

Sports such as lawn green bowling are allowed to take place with social distancing measures actioned. No more than three lanes are open at any one time, and only two people per lane

allowed. A booking system is in place, it is great to see members having a good time on the green again.

VE Day

Sadly the celebrations at the War Memorial could not take place. John Collis MBE presented his own tribute at the War Memorial and the fence was left open for him to do this.

Health & Safety – Annual Inspection

The inspection covered all buildings and a small number of issues have been highlighted. An action plan is in place and is being monitored through Resources Committee.

Return to Work Risk Assessment and Policy for Covid-19

I had a meeting with the H & S consultant for this and reports have been presented to Full Council this evening.

Internal Audit 2019/20

The Internal Auditor will be auditing remotely this year. Many of the documents for assessment can be found on the STC website, she also sends a request for a list of additional documents that are not available on the website. Ursula, Kay and myself have worked together (but remotely) to compile the documents and have done our best to implement all the recommendations from the previous audit.

Staff Handbook

I have done the preparation for a revised handbook separating the handbook and policies and procedures and handed it over to Ursula to finish off this week or next.

Training

Zoom meeting training on 29 April – LRALC
Covid-19 Actions training on 19 May – Ellis Whittam

Syston Topic

During lockdown, the frequency of this has been increased to every four-six weeks instead of quarterly.

Iseki Tractor

The tractor is now back in working order at a cost of £2397.75 including the service.

Friends of Barkby Road Cemetery – Barkby Road

This group concentrate on the appearance of the cemetery and buildings. Anyone interested in joining this active committee, please contact mailbox@systontc.org.uk; your contribution no matter how big or small is much needed. A potential new member will be attending the next meeting, which had been planned for the beginning of March.

CCTV Melton Road, by the Railway Station

To complement the ANPR cameras installed by Leicestershire Police, an additional CCTV camera will soon be installed in the same area and will be monitored 24/7 by Charnwood

Borough Council. The Section 50 application and £500 payment has been submitted to LCC. ADT are now progressing this.

Principal Member of SLCC

I have recently been made a Principal Member of the Society of Local Council Clerks, this is in recognition of sector based work and CPD points.

Spring Clean

It is hoped to be able to hold a delayed Spring clean in September (doubtful!)

East Midlands in Bloom 2020 - cancelled

I am working on the route for 2021 – taking in Syston heritage, as was planned for 2020.

Diary Dates

6 June 2020, Councillor Surgery by Zoom 10 – 11 am

Please remember to join up to our Facebook page for further developments at Syston Town Council. social@systontc.org.uk

Website: www.systontc.org.uk

Twitter: @Syston_TC

Catherine Voyce

Town Manager

Deputy Town Manager's Report

Deputy Town Manager's Report

Events Panel

Unfortunately the Christmas Event has been put on hold due to the Coronavirus pandemic and a decision will be taken later in the year as to whether the event will be allowed to take place.

Churchyard Panel

Work on the Churchyard Panel has temporarily ceased due again to the Coronavirus pandemic with Officers working remotely.

A new notice board has been installed in the Churchyard at Lower Church Street entrance.

Bloom for Syston Group

Work on this group has been halted as the East Midlands in Bloom competition has been cancelled for this year. Work will resume on this Panel when planning begins for next year

Rodent Control

This service has temporarily been suspended.

Electrical Testing

All PAT testing and Fixed Wire testing has now been carried out on all Council sites.

Electricity

Most Council contracts for electricity have been moved to Corona Energy as their prices were more competitive than E-on.

Website

I have been working on updating the website with guidance and news on the pandemic and checking everything is up to date for the Internal Audit.

Year End Procedures and Audits

A lot of in-depth work has been carried out Year End Procedures, including Payroll, Pensions and Accounts. Preparation of reports has been done for the Internal Audit on 22 May 2020.

LCC Pensions

A new iconnect spreadsheet has been completed and submitted for April Pensions, which is a detailed monthly spreadsheet on pension contributions and salaries.

Health & Safety

New safety signage for the Community Centre and Perspex safety shields for office desks have been ordered. This is to ensure the safety of staff and users when the Community Centre is allowed to reopen.

E Training

I have completed training on Lone Working, Safe -Guarding Vulnerable Adults & Children, Data Protection and also a Coronavirus LCC Pension webinar. This is in preparation to

having my PDR.

Burial Records

A spreadsheet for Burials at Barkby Road Cemetery is now complete and Ash Interments will be added. This is a helpful addition to the old manual book when determining who is in a particular grave space and another spreadsheet is being started for the new Cemetery. Kay and I have been working on this over a long period of time and is ongoing.

Senior Administrator

Working from Home

I have been working mostly from home since 24 March but attending the office once a week so far. Remote working has been successful, the accounts system and emails can be accessed easily. When at the office I have carried out tasks that needed to be done there, such as changing the filing system to start the new financial year and archiving previous year's documentation into the loft space.

Annual Fire Extinguisher Survey

A survey of all fire extinguishers at Council locations was carried out during the week before lockdown. I arranged further quotes while working from home, the maintenance was carried out on 6 April. This has ensured compliance; the certificates have been received.

VE Day Bedding Display/Summer Bedding

I have contacted both suppliers, the plant deliveries are still on schedule, due to arrive the first week in June.

Allotments

During the past few weeks, I have signed up two new allotment holders while working remotely, which proved successful. I am in the process of signing up one more person, then all plots will be taken.

Amenities

I ordered the weed killer, topsoil, and grass seed at the end of March. The supplier had furloughed staff and the order took longer than anticipated to arrange. I chased the supplier several times, part of the order arrived on 19 May. The rest of the order for topsoil is awaited.

Telephone System

The five-year lease of the telephone system expires in December 2020, I continue to work on comparing quotations to find the best value option.

Photocopier Lease

The five-year photocopier lease expires in January 2021, a representative from a local company in Ashby-de-la Zouch visited the office in March and provided a quotation, I am contacting other suppliers for quotations.

Training

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the Mental Health Awareness training I was due to attend has been rescheduled to November. I have continued to take online Health & Safety training courses with Ellis Whittam, to remain up to date.

Internal Audit

I have helped to provide information requested by the auditor for the internal audit, week commencing 18 May.

Assistant to the Town Manager Report

Syston Topic & COVID-19 Updates

The second issue of the Syston Topic has been distributed on Social media and shared on the Syston Town Council website. Due to Covid-19 unfortunately, we have not been able to distribute the newsletter to local cafes, pubs or the library. We have enough content to start another issue so I have been working on some articles for that.

Social Media

As residents have not been able to come into the office, we have had a lot more activity and enquiries on our social media pages. I have been keeping a close eye on tweets and facebook messages we receive as well as sharing content. We now have over 600 friends on Facebook!

The mystery postbox knitter post on our Twitter and Facebook pages were shared by Charnwood Borough Council, BBC Radio Leicester and BBC East Midlands Today.

Training

Whilst working remotely from home I have been able to complete some training courses from EW. Lone Working, Health and Safety and First Aid. I have one more course to do and will then be up to date on all Training.

Ward List

I was given the task of working out which streets in Syston are part of which ward. In the office, we receive a lot of enquiries as to which ward people are in so that they can contact the right councillors for their area. It is very difficult for us to look for this information on the map we have in the office so I have now typed up every street in Syston and distinguished which ward they are in. The database was emailed out by Catherine to all Councillors to check their wards to make sure there are no mistakes.

Signage on Parks

I have printed and laminated updated signage for all of the parks and play areas in Syston with information on use of them during the Covid-19 outbreak. Play areas have been taped

off and residents are informed not to use them. This is to help stop the spread of the virus. I have also asked the local Police Beat team to keep an eye on parks and the skate park when they are in the area.

Assistant to the Town Manager