

Town Managers Report

East Midlands in Bloom

The first Panel meeting was held this week. Members are:

Town Manager, Deputy Town Manager, Assistant to Town Manager, Senior Groundsman, Cllr Tom Barkley, Julie-Ann Byrne – Contracts Officer CBC, Nicola Clarke – Community Engagement Manager, Ideverde, Jo De-Roeck – Supervisor Street Cleansing, Serco (new member), Lesley Campton U3A Gardening, Sue Blaxton U3A Gardening

The Judges Report was analysed, the judges comments were taken on board. External members are providing sound advice for us to follow and appear to be wholly committed to Syston's entry for 2020. The Action Plan from the meeting will be included on the Amenities Agenda.

Any Town Councillors with an interest in keeping Syston blooming are encouraged to join the East Midlands in Bloom Panel. Meetings are most likely to be held in the day time.

Councillor Vacancies

There are six vacancies at the Council in wards:

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

I have had some interest from potential new members, but no applications. The applicant that did not attend the meeting in October has not responded to my follow up email inviting him to the November meeting.

Skate Park Flood Lighting until 8 pm

I have just received confirmation that the S106 application to fund this work has been approved at Charnwood Borough Council.

CCTV Melton Road

I have been informed that we need to apply for a licence for the broadband cabinet to be located on the pavement at Melton Road and have started the process with Leicestershire County Council. ADT are currently submitting a Section 50 New Apparatus application to Network Management.

CCTV Central Park

Weekly checks are made on this equipment by SB. No problems reported and no incidents needing any playback.

Remembrance Parade 3 November 2019

This was very well attended, no problems reported. It was attended by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and Ed Argar as well as some of our Councillors. It was great to see the Scout marching band as well as the Brownies and Rainbows in the procession. Syston Band played the Last Post. The weather was kind to us and the follow up service in St Peter and St Paul Church was well received.

Skip for Barkby Road Cemetery

A skip was filled and emptied for a period of ten working days. I have been informed that the work is now complete and have contacted the complainant to advise of this, together with a request for confirmation that they are satisfied with our actions taken.

Allotments

I attended the meeting of the Allotment Society earlier this month.

Work has started on the fence replacement at the front of the allotments.

The historic water pump is nearing the end of its useful life. Members are currently investigating the possibility of a solar powered water pump as a replacement. I am advising them of various grants that are available to assist with the cost. Minutes will be brought through the Amenities Committee.

Allotment plot inspections will re-commence in the Spring.

Winfield Park

Committee originally agreed to flail along the whole boundary. Professional advice was that this be likely to cause damage to nearby windows and greenhouses as well as create a lot of mess in people's gardens – clearly not a desirable option. Committee now agreed to appoint a local farmer to use a long reach manual hedge cutter to height reduce the hedge along the boundary.

Ridgemere Close

Work to be postponed until 2020.

Melton Road Car Park

Two clothing banks located on the car park are full and clothing bags now left on the ground. I telephoned the number on the box and found it to be unobtainable. I found an alternative phone number on the company website – also unobtainable. Companies House search found that the company is in liquidation. CBC have been informed and are currently investigating how to get these boxes removed. They are aware that we would like something action before the Christmas Event on 1 December.

Car Vandalism

Manager from Specsavers had her car vandalised and an obscenity written on it sometime on Tuesday, 19 November. The car was legally parked by the brook. No CCTV that we can assist with in that area. Syston Jewellers CCTV did not cover it, I advised her to see if Santander CCTV could assist.

Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36

Public consultation was held at the Community Centre on Tuesday, 19 November. There was a steady flow of people attending throughout the day and early evening. A quick questionnaire was available together with a more in-dept one. There is still time for Councillors to participate as individuals – information has been left at reception.

Adult Fitness Equipment and General Parks Maintenance

The adult fitness equipment has been totally removed this week and the ground re-seeded. Other playground apparatus has been repaired in line with proposals approved at the Amenities Committee. Further works to be address in April 2020 when budgets allow.

S106 Application for Syston Band Clubhouse

Having started a first draft for the application for £40K S106 monies. Syston Band have found that the original quotation had under-estimated the scope of the project. The cost has now escalated to approximately £130K. I have suggested some additional funding streams that they could apply to and have put a request into Charnwood Borough Council for a hold on the S106 monies. If the answer is negative, then we can apply for this sum towards the Pavilion refurbishment and extension.

Computer Work Station Upgrades

UPS upgrade has taken place.

Workstation upgrades to be carried out on Wednesday, 27 November.

I am attending a Cyber Security Seminar, providing guidance and information relating to the latest computer hacking and cyber-attacks we need to be aware of and how to react. In addition, I will be able to observe and gain a better understanding of how our computer systems are managed. This is being hosted by our computer service management team, Supreme Systems, at their HQ next week by Supreme. The event is free of charge. I plan to pass on the Cyber Security lessons learnt to Officers and Council.

Panels

Tree Panel

Order for some minor tree works have been awarded for Tindle Tree Care. A second contractor has failed to provide a quotation for the larger work and therefore an alternative contractor to quote is being sought.

Syston and District Cemetery

Columbaria and ash interment vaults and ash vases have now been ordered.

Children's Area

Amenities Committee have agreed to give priority to this part of the cemetery.

- A children's bench with squirrels each side which was ordered on 16 October will not be available until January 2020 due to the size of granite needed.
- Following the Amenities Committee meeting on Tuesday, 12 November, the tarmac pathway order has been submitted to Glymptons.
- Note that plinths are not used in the children's section due to the different sizes of coffins used.

The selective weed-killing of the whole cemetery has been started this week. I have been advised that it is safe for saplings to be planted without any effect to their health, therefore in line with the proposal approved at Amenities Committee this week, Tindle Tree Care will be planting approximately 100 saplings with bark protectors.

The peg and Tube Anchor preparation on the plinths in the adult area has been completed by Glymptons this week.

Cllr David Pepper is working with David Smith and his volunteers in the planting of spring bulbs.

Pedestrian gate has been installed. The mechanism on the vehicle gates has been fixed.

Cllr David Pepper is arranging to re-paint the vehicle gates.

Land Transfer legal document was signed off by myself and Cllr Tom Barkley on 5 November. We await DWH to complete very soon.

Rich and Carr Solicitor, Mark Tildesley has just contacted me with his fee for his legal work. He has detailed all the work he has carried out. We had agreed a reduced hourly rate from £280 to £200 per hour. Even with this reduced fee, he has calculated the cost to be in excess of £3K. However, Mark has very generously massively reduced his fee to £1,350 + VAT and disbursements. I have discussed this with Cllr Tom Barkley as acting Chairman and he has agreed that we accept this offer without delay.

We are currently in the process of applying for an outdoor router for the CCTV, fire and intruder alarm systems. BT are needing technical information and I have forwarded their queries to ADT to answer. ADT and myself are meeting next week to discuss the CCTV progress both at the cemetery and on Melton road.

Pavilion

Meeting held with the FA and the football managers on Tuesday, 5 November to agree upon the best way to make a robust and ambitious case for the Football Foundation grant. The architect is now working up a quotation for a detailed specification of the plans to be written as well as for the project management of the build/refurbishment based on the approved plans. Notes of the meeting to be submitted to Amenities Committee.

Precept 2020/2021

We are currently working on the draft budgets for 2020/2021. The budgets will be brought through committees until December. Please scrutinise and raise any queries with myself or Ursula before they are finalised in December. In addition, if you think we need to plan expenditure for something not included in the budget, please do raise this with Officers or at the relevant committee meeting. December Committee meetings is the last chance to do this.

Diary Dates

1 December 1 – 6 pm Syston Christmas Event and Christmas Light Switch-on – **ALL WELCOME – volunteers needed!!**

14 December – Councillor Surgery, Community Centre 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

Christmas Event

The Panel held their last meeting this week to finalise plans for the Christmas Event 54 stalls have booked this year including a wide range of food and drink. Letters have gone out to all stallholders advising them which area they will be setting up in and what times to arrive. There will be two stewards to each area to help with the initial set up of the Event. Also two stewards on each entrance to Central park during the firework period.

A full schedule of timings for the event has been given to the stewards and a briefing will be held at 8.30am on the day.

Scouts have offered their help with various duties throughout the day. Merton School Choir have declined to sing outside Pound Stretcher due to the Health & Safety aspect with so many children involved. A full programme of entertainment has been organised on the stage with various performers at different locations.

11 shops have now entered the Christmas Shop Window competition which will be judged on Friday 29 November at 4pm by a Rainbow, Brownie and Guide. The winners will be announced on stage by the Mayor of Charnwood at 4pm.

Alternative parking for the stallholders has been sought this year due to the fact that Central park is water logged. KL has managed to source a few different parking areas in the town which has been very helpful.

Replacement of Christmas Lights

Christmas lights in two trees on the Green have been vandalised and the wire has been cut. Further lights in a tree on Brookside has been damaged by the stormy weather. Both of these are being claimed through Zurich, the Council's insurers, as the cost is in excess of £2K. They are being dealt with as two separate claims with an excess of £250 each. As the Christmas Light Switch on is only a week away, it has been agreed by Resources to replace these lights in the hope of successful claims.

Churchyard Panel

Letters have been sent to some local churches to see how they have funded their flood lighting and a few responses have been received. This will be looked at further by the Panel at their next meeting this Friday.

Syston Town Council are responsible for the maintenance of the Closed Churchyard on Upper/ Lower Church Street. Great strides have been made to improve this area however, Council funds are limited and there is much work required to keep it looking at its best.

An advertisement has been agreed to go in the Syston Town News asking for volunteers to form a 'Friends of the Churchyard' group.

Precept 2020/2021

Draft budgets for 2020/2021 are currently being worked on and these have been presented to the individual Committees for discussion. The budgets will be finalised and approved by Full Council in December for submission to Charnwood Borough Council in January 2020.

East Midlands in Bloom Panel

I have joined the East Midlands in Bloom Panel and the first meeting was held this week. The Panel looked at the positive and negatives of the judges' comments and an action plan was formulated. I will be putting more on the website regarding the In Bloom ie photos and announcements. As a trained florist I have asked if I could have a bit of a project next year, to design and plant one or all of the planters, outside the Community Centre; to help alongside DS to consider a change of colour scheme for the baskets and planters next year. To gather some ideas for the next meeting.

Energy Renewal

All our electricity contracts have now gone over to Corona Energy for 2020 onwards. Our gas contracts to stay with E-on and Espo.

Remembrance Parade

Along with other Officers I helped the RBL to steward the Remembrance Parade on Sunday 10 November and fortunately the weather was kind.

Bank Mandate

Finally, after a number of issues with HSBC the Bank Mandate has been updated.

Fencing Around the Play Area on Deville Park

A quote have been obtained for replacing the wooden fence around the play area on Deville Park as the fence in situ was considered to be inadequate by RoSPA. One quote has been received and awaiting a second quote shortly.

Metal Railings – Central Park

It has been agreed to Precept for the refurbishment of the metal railings along St Peter's Street, Central Park and it was requested by a Councillor to obtain a quote for the railings at the two front entrances to the park. After receiving another quote, Council have decided to just refurbish the railings on St Peter's side of the park for now and to re-look at the front entrances in 12 months time.

Machinery Maintenance Quotations

I have obtained a second quote for the Parks Machinery maintenance which has come to Full Council this month for a decision as it is urgent to be sorted.

Senior Administrator

Allotments

The reminder letters for 2020 allotment fees are due out in December, I am working on a draft to include GDPR information. A final letter has been issued advising the plot holder that they no longer rent the allotment. The next person on the waiting list will then be offered that plot. Apart from this, all other allotment plots are currently rented.

Christmas Event

I have been contacting local businesses to arrange additional car parking for the stall holders to park their vehicles after they have set up for the day. The area of Central Park that would normally be offered to them is currently waterlogged. Two businesses (Preci-Spark and Furnley House) have kindly allowed use of their car parks on the day.

Fashion Show

I took part in the SOS Fashion Show on Friday 25 October, helping to set up the room, and modelling clothes. The event raised £212 for the Chairmans Charity by selling door tickets and raffle tickets, the raffle prizes for the event were excellent this year, which helped to sell a lot of tickets despite attendance being down compared to the last fashion show we held.

Telephones

The telephone lease contract comes to an end in December 2020 and I have been in contact with the provider Lilycomms regarding this, and other questions we had regarding the system. This prompted a visit by their Client Relations Manager to the STC office, his suggestion going forward is a more up-to-date cloud based telephone system which will save money in the long run.

Mobile Phones

I have been in contact with Vodafone regarding tariffs and upgrades, but have not been receiving very good customer service. The IT support provider, Supreme Systems, have sourced a good quotation for sim only contracts for use with the existing mobile phones, the Town Manager's mobile may need to be upgraded.

Remembrance Parade

On Sunday 10 November I helped steward the Remembrance Parade, initially assisting at the mini-roundabout when Melton Road was closed off; then to close off the entrance to Upper Church Street and direct traffic as needed.

Assistant to the Town Manager Report

Letters to Cafes and Food Outlets

Letters have been sent out to all cafes and food outlets in Syston regarding the discarding of leftover food to try and help reduce the current Rat problem in and around the Brook in the centre of Syston. Cllr Sharon Brown assisted with hand delivering these letters to the businesses.

Letters to Pubs and Cafes

Letters have also been sent to cafes and pubs in Syston regarding the prevention of cigarette litter. Along with notices that they can display in their outside areas to try and combat the problem.

Remembrance Parade

The remembrance parade took place in Syston on Sunday 10 November and I assisted with blocking off the road during the closure. I also printed out the service sheets for the gathering at the War Memorial on Central Park.

Syston Topic

The first Syston Topic has been publicised and has been distributed to cafes, pubs and local amenities. I am starting to work on the second issue which will be sent to Council for approval in the coming months.

Minutes – Cemetery and In Bloom

I attended both the newly reformed Cemetery Panel and Bloom for Syston Panel to take the minutes for Catherine.

Fashion Show

The fashion show took place on October 25th 2019 we managed to raise £212 for the Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance. This was achieved by selling tickets to the event and raffle tickets on the night.

Christmas Event

The Christmas event posters have been distributed to local schools, cafes, shops and pubs. The posters are also displayed in all town noticeboards.