

Town Managers Report

East Midlands in Bloom 2019

We are now working hard towards our entry in the 2019 competition, U3A Gardening Club, Syston in Bloom group and our regular volunteers are all engaged in the preparations. David Smith and I met with the manager of IdeVerde (Highways grass cutting) and CBC Officer Julie-Ann Byrne (Serco – street cleaning) to walk the “walking part” of the judging route. We have been advised on our weakness on the route and I am drawing up an action plan for STC as well as for IdeVerde and Serco. Some areas of graffiti are being actioned for cleaning straight away. The Front Garden Competition entry form is on our website and notice boards, social media and is also publicised in the June edition of Spotlight. Local pubs with gardens have agreed to enter the pub garden competition although they have all advised me that the persistent rain recently has delayed their gardening plans this year. I am also putting together the portfolio and power point presentation to judges.

The judging date for Syston is Friday, 5 July, as I am on holiday, Cllr Paul Henry has agreed to drive the judges around and Cllr David Pepper is on reserve.

Councillor Vacancies

There are five Councillor vacancies which will be advertised after the summer recess.

Syston Regeneration Project

Items for discussion relating to the business plan and strategy will start to be addressed at Committees in July. The plan will also be referred to when considering any new capital expenditure requests and other new initiatives.

CCTV Coverage

Broadband is now installed at The Mace. The arrangement to have the unit under the counter at the shop has now been moved to the loft space. Metric are fitting a new double socket in the loft on Thursday, 20 June and ADT will connect the cameras up asap.

Replacement Windows and Fire Door at the Community Centre

The new windows will be installed on 20 and finished off on 23 August.

The new fire door is now installed.

A Climate Change funding grant from Leicestershire County Council has been awarded which will contribute towards replacement double-glazed windows and a new UPVC fire door for the Brookside Suite at the Community Centre. This will greatly improve the energy efficiency of the building as well as enhance security.

Playground Safety

In addition to the weekly safety checks, RoSPA carried out an annual inspection on 13 May. An action plan with minor recommendations has been presented to the Amenities Committee whom are being kept up to date with progress.

Environment Improvement – the Brook

This will be brought to Development Committee in July. A member of the public has offered to go into the brook to help clean it up. I have checked with the Environment Agency who are supportive of this offer. I have advised the person that as well as PPE, we would need to ensure that someone was watching him in case he fell over or got into difficulty. He thinks this negates the benefit of him going in and doing the work, so I have not progressed it.

Ash Trays outside Pubs

Currently asking pubs of their thoughts on this. Cllr Mal Carnall also carried out some research. To be reported through Development Committee.

Panels

New Cemetery

The cemetery on Millstone Lane is due to complete imminently. There are a few minor hold-ups with the building completion which are expected to be resolved. The opening ceremony will be attended by Ed Argar MP, local funeral directors, all Councillors and staff, Clerks and Chairmen from local councils and residents living close to the area have been invited.

Cemetery – Barkby Road

The cemetery is in theory now full. However, if necessary we can still use an area in the children's cemetery without encroaching on it too much. A Friends of Syston Cemetery group has been formed. The Council has now jointed the "National Federation of Cemetery Friends" as an Associate Member at a cost of £10. Members are already working towards improving the Cemetery including the buildings and are clearly having a positive impact.

Pavilion

The deadline for objections to the planning approval has now passed but I have not heard official confirmation are assisting me with the funding application.

Tree Panel

The Panel has met at the beginning of June and actions are being reported via the Amenities Committee.

Quotes for tree surveys in the remaining areas are being arranged. This is in light of the recommendations from Cavanagh v Witley Parish Council – areas of high footfall or traffic are classed as high risk and should be surveyed every 12-18 months.

Skate Park Lighting

I have contacted the company accepted by the Amenities Committee and asked them to assist me with the planning application in terms of the detailed specification.

Bowling Club Liaison Panel

I have informed the Committee that Council have agreed to provide financial assistance of £500 towards the provision of an additional gate to reduce the carrying time of heavy wheelie bins full of grass cuttings.

Woodland Trust Donation/Syston Youth Café Donation

The cheque for monies raised for the Woodland Trust during 2018/19 will be presented at Full Council on 23 July.

I am still waiting for a date from the Youth Café.

Diary Dates

6 July Councillor Surgery 10 am – 11 am

6 July Syston Jazz Festival – Dog & Gun – all day

8 July – Annual Parish Meeting at County Hall 5 pm – 8 pm – ALL WELCOME

27 July Syston Fun Day, Central Park 10 am – 4 pm

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

External Audit 2018-2019

The Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2019 has been sent to the External Auditors, PKF LittleJohn, following the Internal Audit from LRALC. Notice of Public Rights to examine the accounts for the Year ended 31 March have been posted on the Council notice boards and website.

Road Closure for the Christmas Event

Highways have sent the draft schedule for the closure of Melton Road which will include the Christmas Event 2019 and the Memorial Parade 2020. We are waiting for confirmation from RBL that all details are correct for next year's Memorial Parade before sending it back to Highways for sealing. This year's Memorial parade will be included in last year's licence.

Street Entertainment for the Christmas Event

Different options for Street Entertainers are being sought including balloon modellers, comedy acts, stilt walkers etc and these ideas will be taken back to the Events Panel meeting with costings.

Safety Testing of Memorials – Training

I recently attended an ICCM training course at LRALC with the Town Manager on the Safety of Memorials. This course aimed to:

- help us understand why memorial management is an issue
- help in developing a Memorial Management Policy
- effectively manage the risks memorial testing
- give options for dealing with unsafe memorials.

A register will be compiled shortly of all memorial stones; a date for testing will be arranged in August to test memorials in Barkby Road Cemetery and the Closed Churchyard. The date will be publicised in the local paper and on Council notice boards. A Risk Assessment will be carried out.

Quotes for Memorial Safety Testing Equipment

Obtaining prices for equipment required to test the safety of memorials. This includes safety and warning signage and staking and banding materials.

Policy Reviews

The Code of Conduct for employees has been updated for review in line with Charnwood Borough Council's policy.

Lone Workers Policy has been reviewed.

Will shortly begin working on a policy for the Management of Memorials.

Scribe Accounts – Making Tax Digital

Making Tax Digital is a key part of the government's plans to make it easier for individuals and businesses to get their tax right and keep on top of their affairs.

HMRC's ambition is to become one of the most digitally advanced tax administrations in the world. Making Tax Digital is making fundamental changes to the way the tax system works.

For STC to be compliant I have updated all suppliers records with their VAT numbers. This change will happen in October 2019.

St Peter & St Pauls Churchyard

The Cemetery Contractor will be shortly strimming areas of the Churchyard where weeds have grown massively with the deluge of rain and generally tidying up the area.

Ways of obtaining extra lighting near the west door of the Church is still being looked at and a further quote is awaited.

The Premises Officer has replaced and restored the wooden posts around the rose garden on Lower Church Street and has much improved the look of that area.

Tenders for Insurance

I have contacted three insurance companies plus Zurich who we are currently with for insurance, as this is up for renewal on 1 April 2020. We are coming to the end of a three-year contract with Zurich.

Energy Renewal

Our two- year contracts for electricity and gas are coming to an end in the next few months and I will be seeking quotes for renewing our energy supplies.

Park Hire – 2020

Pinders Circus have booked from 23 -25 March and Funtopia have confirmed a two- day event from 9 -10 May 2020.

Senior Administrator

Allotments

Following the allotment inspection on 28 May, I have sent warning letters out to six plot holders, two of whom have responded. I will monitor the responses and report back to the Town Manager and Syston Allotment Society. There are 32 people on the waiting list at the moment.

Christmas Event

I have been contacting the Morris Dancers, Syston Scout Band and U3A to invite them to perform at the Christmas Event on 1 December. I have booked St John Ambulance to provide first aid cover. I have begun work on the communications plan, and have contacted Arriva to advise them that a road closure is planned.

Cemetery

I have been helping a gentleman who came into the community centre to enquire about re-purchasing an existing family grave which had exceeded the 75 year period of 'exclusive right of burial'. The grave was originally purchased in 1937 by his parents and the plot had now reverted back to Syston Town Council ownership. I have since spoken to him to let him know the next steps and I am waiting to hear back from him as to whether he might wish to go

ahead with this. I have been helping another gentleman who enquired about placing a memorial bench at the cemetery.

I am continuing to work on the burial record spreadsheet. Burial records up to 2003 have now been entered. Once all burial records are listed, work will begin on detailing ash interments.

I have contacted the ICCM for advice on the legalities and maintenance issues around scattered ashes at cemeteries. This is to provide information, as scattering of ashes at the new cemetery is currently being considered by the panel.

CCTV broadband line

I ordered the broadband line from BT for the CCTV at the Mace Shop, Melton Road. This was installed on 11 June. The billing address has been confirmed with BT as Syston Town Council, at the Community Centre address.

Making Tax Digital

STC must start digital VAT submissions in October 2019. To make this possible the accounts software must be updated. The current provider (Scribe) would provide a free upgrade, however, it is a chance to look at what alternative suppliers could offer. I have started to research alternative suppliers to assess the costs and options available.

Quotations

The spring bedding plant quotations are due, I have contacted three suppliers, two have submitted their quotations; the third comparative quote is awaited.

Assistant to the Town Manager Report

Park Inspection Reports

I have scanned in all of the Park Inspection reports from the past three years that John Rogers fills out on a weekly basis. This is so that we have back ups that can be referred to quickly if we ever need to.

Councillor Handbooks

I have completed printing and putting together the handbooks for the three new councillors ready to be handed to them when they have their inductions in the near future.

Christmas Poster

I have made a start on redesigning the Christmas Poster for this year's event. The event this year will be held on Sunday 1 December.

Mental Health First Aid Course

I have booked myself onto the One Day Adult Mental Health First Aid Course with St Johns Ambulance on 9 July.

Room Set Up

The Premises Officer John Rogers and I have been taking photographs of the different room set ups and layouts for the Community Centre users. These have been filed in the office so that if John is off at any time, officers can refer to this when setting up the rooms for Community Centre users.

Poster for Front Garden Competition

With East Midlands in Bloom judging coming up soon we have once again been encouraging residents to enter the annual Front Garden Competition. I have placed application forms on the front desk and I have designed a poster which is being displayed on all of the town noticeboards.

Invitations for Official Cemetery Opening

I am currently in the process of typing up invitations for the opening ceremony of the Syston and District Cemetery which is to be held on Friday 19 July 2019.