

Report to: Environment Committee

Report Ref: ENV1912
Meeting Date: 14th October 2019
Agenda Item: 7
Prepared By: Town Clerk



Subject: Nature and Biodiversity

1.0 BACKGROUND

At the June committee meeting the committee resolved [EGP19/015] to look at developing ideas for habitat reinstatement. Members have also approached the Town Clerk with a desire to see the council undertaking more environmental projects.

In September, Cllrs Power, Abel and the Town Clerk met with a representative from the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, a local conservation specialist and the former lead member of the Environment and Open Spaces working group of the Neighbourhood Plan to discuss '*What can Knutsford do for Nature?*'.

This report outlines the product of that meeting as a first step to developing a strategy and to stimulate discussion at committee.

2.0 POTENTIAL PROJECTS

2.1 TREE PLANTING MISSION

This project would be to aim for a net increase of 1,000 trees in Knutsford over a defined period (two to five years). This would be a community wide project involving for example:

- a) The council arranging to plant a number of trees across different open spaces
- b) Encouraging residents and community organisations to plant trees in their gardens and register them to count towards the number
- c) Encouraging those felling trees to consider replanting
- d) Encouraging tree planting as part of the planning process

This project would include some education, advising on the most appropriate species in different areas and encouraging a mix of trees, predominantly native species and those with fruits/berries for wildlife.

2.2 WILDFLOWER AND POLLINATOR FRIENDLY PLANTING

This project would be to increase the amount of wildflower and pollinator friendly planting across the town. This could include:

- a) The council reinstating the wildflower meadow on the Barncroft using perennial and locally sourced seed



- b) Ensuring that planting schemes in public areas are predominantly pollinator friendly flowers
- c) The council identifying areas in public open space and on verges that could feature wildflower/pollinator planting, working with residents to implement this and educating on why 'grass isn't being cut'.
- d) Undertake bulb planting projects with residents



Perennial wildflower meadow at Swettenham

2.3 ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN CORRIDORS

This project would look to connect wildlife corridors and increase the number of habitats. This could include:

- a) Encouraging and installing bird and bat boxes and bug/bee hotels
- b) Encouraging the use of hedges rather than fences, or the installation of hedgehog holes
- c) Planting native hedges along the edges of open spaces where appropriate
- d) Work with landowners to plant trees and shrubs from Bluebell Wood to the Heath and Booth's Mere to St John's Wood to enhance the wildlife corridor network
- e) Encouraging landowners to plant trees and hedges
- f) Support wetland plants around ponds

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cheshire Wildlife Trust has quoted £820 to develop a wildflower meadow on the Barncroft for 2020. The Friends of the Moor have supported the development of a wildflower meadow but also has some aspiration to install trim trail equipment in this area; they will need to be consulted on the detail before this can proceed. It is recommended the committee considers approval of the installation of a meadow to enable CWT to source local perennial seed stock.



It is recommended that the committee consider the ideas outlined and advise the Town Clerk on the projects it would like to see taken forward and any other projects not outlined they wish to see. The Town Clerk will then develop a costed strategy for approval at the next committee meeting.



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