

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

NATURE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Report Reference EN-22-07
Meeting Date 25th July 2022
Agenda Item 6
Prepared by Planning and Facilities Officer



1.0 OVERVIEW UPDATE

The Nature Action Plan was adopted by the committee in March 2020 and the committee receives a standing update on progress against the plan. To date 24 of the 29 actions on the action plan have been completed (including ongoing actions).

The five outstanding actions are:

- Launch of the Tree Planting Mission (6)
- Information to be published on website promoting hedges and hedgehog holes (15)
- Engagement with landowners to connect green corridors (19)
- Creation of wildlife corridor between Bluebell Wood and Knutsford Heath (20)
- Engagement with landowners to develop Booths Mere to St John's Wood wildlife corridor (22)

An update on each is provided in the table overleaf.

2.0 TOWN AMONGST TREES

The Town Amongst Trees project commenced in October 2019 to record the large mature tree population of the town, with a view to establishing a plan for succession planting, protecting trees and extending the cover.

Of the estimated 8,000 mature trees within the town boundary, 2,300 have now been surveyed and tagged in public spaces. Other areas surveyed include a part of St Johns Wood, College Wood, and the Heath. All data is mapped using QGIS, including the estimated total tree count of 35,000 provided by Bluesky's National Tree Map™ (NTM™)

The volunteers of the project put together a list of possible initiatives to further develop the original aspiration to plant trees in the parish. These were raised at the KNAP working group meeting and will be discussed in further depth at the next meeting.

3.0 NATURE ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP

Since the previous committee meeting the working group met to review the progress of the 2020-2023 action plan. The working group expressed interest in completing the remaining action plan items and had a brief discussion about creating an action plan for the 2023-2026 period.

Progress of the tree planting plan was discussed and it was agreed for the Planning and Facilities Officer to contact ANSA to establish a timeline for the proposed planting on the Longridge Playing

Area.

Engagement has begun for the bluebell wood wildlife corridor (ref 20: action twelve) and the working group discussed a route to suggest to the landowner. The Planning and Facilities Officer will draw up a proposal for the next working group meeting.

The working group also discussed, fundraising for trees and hedges and the possibility of contacting businesses for tree sponsorship, continuing annual events such as the big bulb plant, and encouraging residents to plant trees for the jubilee and moving into 2023 the possibility of “plant a tree in ‘23”.

The working group considered the purchase of Hedgehog surrounds from a company called Hedgehogs R Us. The company’s aim coincides with the aspirations of the council’s hedgehog highway campaign. The surrounds come with information leaflets and can be bought in boxes of 50. The working group decided as part of the council’s hedgehog highway campaign to purchase a box and see how residents engage before committing to purchase further boxes.

4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

It is recommended that the committee approves the purchase of one box 50 Hedgehog Highway surrounds and leaflets, and to provide these free to residents that engage with the Hedgehog Highway campaign.

ANNEXES

Ref	Action	Task	Responsible	Target	Status	Notes
1	One	Potential tree planting locations identified tree planting proposal prepared for committee.	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Complete	
2	One	Committee to agree tree planting plan	Committee	Sep-20	Complete	
3	Two	Town Clerk to write Cheshire East Council urging permission be given for tree planting on suitable highway verges	TC	Mar-20	Complete	No change in policy appears to be forthcoming.
4	Two	Subject to agreement from Cheshire East Council, verges to be included in the tree planting plan	PFO/ Committee	Sep-20	Complete	Verges included, pending permission.
5	Three	Tree Mission page set up on Town Council website	PFO	May-20	Complete	
6	Three	Launch of the tree mission	PFO	May-20	Outstanding	Tree Mission will be launched with the publicity from the previous planting and publicity surrounding a planting event during the “big green week” in the autumn.
7	Three	Planning logs to be monitored and letters sent to applicants regarding replanting of trees	PFO/ASO	Ongoing	Complete	
8	Four	Tree tracker to be included on mission page	PFO	May-20	Complete	
9	Five	Review of planting areas to be undertaken and planting schemes to be prepared to comply with the policy	PFO	Apr-20	Complete	
10	Six	Cheshire Wildlife Trust to be commissioned to create meadow annually from 2021	PFO	2021	Complete	
11	Seven	Potential verges for planting schemes identified and proposals prepared for committee	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Complete	
12	Seven	Committee to agree verges improvement plan	Committee	Sep-20	Complete	
13	Eight	Bulb planting areas to be identified	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Complete	
14	Eight	Annual bulb planting events to be organised	PFO	Oct-20	Complete	Knutsford Big Bulb Plant was implemented in October 2021.

15	Nine	Information to be published on council website promoting hedges and hedgehog holes	PFO	May-20	In Progress	This section of the website will be added with a number of updates.
16	Nine	Hedgehog highway campaign to encourage creation of hedgehog holes	PFO	Nov-21	In Progress	Preliminary work completed for a launch in the autumn.
17	Ten	Open spaces where hedges could replace or complement fences identified and planting plan prepared	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Complete	
18	Ten	Committee to agree hedge planting plan	Committee	Sep-20	Complete	
19	Eleven	Target landowners identified to encourage planting of trees and hedges to connect green corridors	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Outstanding	Nature Action Plan working group has identified the areas; engagement will take place later this year.
20	Twelve	Project established with landowners to create wildlife corridor from Bluebell Wood to the Heath	WG/PFO	Jun-20	Outstanding	Engagement has begun and the working group are devising a proposed route for a wildlife corridor.
21	Twelve	Planting undertaken on open space on Longridge to extend wildlife corridor from St Johns Wood	PFO	Mar-20	Complete	
22	Twelve	Engagement with Cheshire East Council and Developer to link Booths Mere to wildlife corridor from St Johns Wood	WG/PFO	Jun-20	Outstanding	The determination of the outline planning application will assist in identifying a suitable route.
23	Thirteen	Identification of suitable ponds for planting schemes	WG/PFO	Sep-20	Complete	Pond information to encourage pond creation to be added to website.
24	Fourteen	Bird / bat boxes to be installed in Wallwood	Committee	Mar-20	Complete	Boxes installed.
25	Fourteen	Bird / bat boxes to be installed on Higher Town Green	Committee	Mar-20	Complete	Boxes installed.
26	Fourteen	Bird / bat boxes to be installed near Obelisk	Committee	Mar-20	Complete	Boxes installed.
27	Fourteen	Bird / bat boxes to be installed in Cemetery	Committee	Mar-20	Complete	Boxes installed.
28	Fourteen	Bug hotels to be installed in Wallwood and Higher Town Green	Committee	Aug-20	Complete	Both installed.
29	Fifteen	Project established to undertake tree mapping across Knutsford	WG/PFO	Aug-20	Ongoing	