

# Council Meeting - 11 December 2018

## Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Sports, Parks and Leisure

*Good sports, parks and leisure facilities improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.*

### 1. Community Leisure

#### Play and Recreation

1.1 **The following works have been advanced**, since the last report, using either the Council's replacement play equipment budget and/or Section 106 Agreement funding:-

- Comeytrove Park – installation of a log cabin climber. These works are now complete;
- Victoria Park, Taunton - the 7.5 m tower slide has been manufactured and installation works are underway. The Baseball pitch is currently under construction, as is the Beach Volleyball court;
- Blackthorn Gardens - replacement swings;
- Carey Grove, Creech St Michael - Supernova roundabout and balance beam;
- Colman Road, Taunton - replacement flat swings and pod swing;
- Galmington Park, Taunton - replacement slide and multi-unit climbing frame;
- Gillards Close, Rockwell Green - replacement cradle swings;
- Lyngford Park, Taunton - replacement for removed under-5's springy tractor;
- Pyrland Avenue, Taunton - replacement for removed roundabout;
- Redlake Drive, Taunton - gravity bowl and mini nest swing; and
- Taunton Green - four redundant single red, green and blue arch swings have been replaced with a hexagonal swing unit.

#### Play Equipment Repairs

1.2 Work continues from within the Open Spaces Team on the maintenance of our play equipment stock. All known repairs to our play equipment are currently up-to-date or have the replacement parts on order. As far as is

reasonably practical, works are being carried out whenever possible (spares permitting) to ensure equipment is not out-of-service for longer than is necessary.

### **Section 106 Agreement Funding for Play, Sport, Allotments and Community Halls**

- 1.3 Work continues monitoring housing developments for payment trigger points and assisting communities and organisations with their on-going projects.
- 1.4 Assistance has been offered to Creech St Michael Allotments in deciding on a suitable project for S106 Agreement funding, for which a decision from the allotment committee is awaited.
- 1.5 Stoke Road Allotments, Taunton continue to complete their improvement projects and are drawing down S106 Agreement funding.
- 1.6 West Monkton Village Hall are continuing on their agreed improvement works to the hall.

### **Capital grant scheme for Voluntary Village Halls, Sports Clubs and Allotments and the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme**

- 1.7 The awards made to halls, sports clubs and parish play areas are being drawn down as projects complete. Assistance is being given to potential applicants for projects next year.

### **Friends of Netherclay (Bishops Hull)**

- 1.8 A new group, the Friends of Netherclay, has been formed. Support and advice are being offered to the group as they start out together.

### **Carols around the Bandstand**

- 1.9 The ever popular Carols around the Bandstand are planned to take place during the evening of Monday, 17 December 2018 in Vivary Park, Taunton.

### **Staffing**

- 1.10 My thanks go to Debbie Arscott and Julie Watson for their dedication and unstinting enthusiasm for this community leisure work.

## **2. GLL (Taunton Deane)**

### **Community Sport and Health**

#### **Walk Well in Taunton and Wellington**

- 2.1 Six new Walk Leaders attended walk leader training at Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa at the beginning of October 2018. They all completed the session and have now started to lead walks in their local communities of Taunton and Wellington.

## **Escape Pain**

- 2.2 Two Healthwise Instructors attended a training workshop for a brand new programme called Escape Pain. The programme is aimed at adults aged 45+ who are experiencing knee or hip pain. This is a six weeks course and attendance at two sessions per week is required. Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Wellington Sports Centre will be launching the programme in January 2019.

## **Facilities**

### **Wellington Sports Centre**

#### **Wacky Wednesday - Wellington**

- 2.3 An autumn themed Wacky Wednesday was held at Cades Farm during half term. Over 100 children and their parents attended the session and participated in sports, table tennis, arts and crafts. Police horses were also in attendance and proved a star attraction.
- 2.4 Wacky Wednesdays are supported by Wellington One Team and a number of local partners including GLL, Live West, Reminiscence Learning, Churches Together and the local getset staff.

### **Wellsprings Leisure Centre**

#### **Stand Up to Cancer**

- 2.5 Wellsprings Leisure Centre held their Go Orange day on 26 October 2018 and encouraged all of their customers and staff to wear orange to support this fantastic campaign. A total of over £180 was raised.

## **3. Leisure Procurement Project**

- 3.1 The project to secure an Operator for the new leisure contract from August 2019 continues to progress on target.
- 3.2 Following evaluation and moderation of submissions, the Authority decided to reduce the number of bidders to three following the receipt of detailed submissions. We have subsequently conducted Competitive Dialogue (CD) with each operator.
- 3.3 CD involved detailed meetings with each bidder to conclude any final clarification points and legal matters prior to the bidders being invited to develop their Final Tenders.
- 3.4 The Authority has now 'closed dialogue' and has invited bidders to submit their final tenders. These will be evaluated and moderated before Christmas 2018 and a preferred bidder will be identified early in 2019.
- 3.5 The Scrutiny Committee received a detailed report on the progress of the

project in November 2018 and all Councillors received an update via a newsletter shortly after the meeting.

- 3.6 The project remains on target in terms of timescales and in terms of meeting the major objectives of the Authority as set out at the start of the process.

## 4. Parks and Open Spaces

### Staffing

- 4.1 This last quarter has seen Richard Burge take up a new role in the transformed organisation, where he is now responsible for customer contacts. Richard Brown has extended his role as a Project Manager responsible for the refurbishment of The Deane House to include oversight and leadership of the Open Spaces Team.
- 4.2 Transformation will see 18 members of the Open Spaces Team leave their roles: this includes 13 members of the external contracts team who will be taking voluntary redundancy.
- 4.3 Changes have been programmed to the flexi system to deal with the changes in staffing levels. This will mean that the flexi can be taken up to 31 March 2019, which will create capacity as the workforce reduces during this period.
- 4.4 With a view to increasing resilience and broadening knowledge, manager Darren Hill has organised training so that more members of staff can undertake additional tasks. This training has been very well received and further training is planned.
- 4.5 These photographs show some white line training – a key element of marking out school pitches for sports activities:-



## **Grass Cutting**

- 4.6 The 2018 grass cutting season has now ended and the machines are undergoing their annual maintenance programme. The six oldest mowers were returned to the leasing company at the end of October 2018 and their replacements are eagerly anticipated by our Grounds Team in February 2019. The mowers' use in future will be scheduled carefully, so that their wear and tear is equalised.

## **Winter Planting**

- 4.7 Our Parks Team have now planted out all the bulbs and winter bedding plants. The containers in the centres of Taunton and Wellington have also been replanted, brightening the winter scene.

## **Arboriculture**

- 4.8 Both Mark Holloway, specialist Arboriculture Manager, and Simon Garrett, Tree Surgeon, have been welcomed back to the team after a long period of absence.
- 4.9 Arbortrack Limited have been appointed to examine 7,000 of our trees to ensure they are safe. This work will be completed by the end of the year.
- 4.10 The tree surgeons also work in partnership with the Council's Housing Grounds staff - for example, restoring a neglected garden into a safe environment, where it can be handed over to the new tenant to enjoy and maintain.

## **Langford Lakes Christmas Trees**

- 4.11 Our thanks go to the Hendy family at Langford Lakes for the magnificent Christmas trees they have again so generously donated to enhance the centres of both Taunton and Wellington during the Christmas season.

## **Vivary Park, Taunton**

- 4.12 A tree will shortly be planted in Vivary Park in memory of Cyril Rowe, the former Open Spaces Manager who died earlier this year, shortly after he retired. This tree will replace the Whitebeam which was lost in February 2018. It will be planted close to the War Memorial.
- 4.13 The postponed project to desilt the Lake in Vivary Park is now scheduled to take place in the first half of December and will result in a much improved watercourse for wildlife and the public's enjoyment. Any subsequent reinstatement works needed will be undertaken in early 2019.
- 4.14 For safety reasons, the bridge at Wilton Lands has been taken out of action. A temporary bridge has been installed until the work is completed.

## **Wellington Park**

- 4.15 Work is about to start to clear out the rubbish and tidy the pond in Wellington Park.

## **Comeytrove Park**

- 4.16 At the request of the hard working Friends of Comeytrove Park, an advisory notice has been put up at the gated entrance to this area that no vehicles should enter other than emergency vehicles. Two posts have also been installed at the open pedestrian entrance as a further deterrent to unauthorised vehicles damaging the grass.
- 4.17 Daffodil bulbs have been provided by Deane DLO to the Friends to help them further enhance this local haven.
- 4.18 The extensive roadside hedge is being trimmed by our Open Spaces Team before the bird nesting season.
- 4.19 It is very much hoped that the Friends of Comeytrove Park will enter the area into the Green Flag competition in 2019 and they are receiving guidance from our Open Spaces Team to help them achieve this ambition.

## **Somerset Wood**

- 4.20 This memorial wood is being created for future generations to enjoy in memory of the fallen from Somerset who lost their lives in World War One.
- 4.21 The wood will cover 23 acres next to the planned Country Park west of Monkton Heathfield and east of Nerrols Farm, and is an integral part of Taunton's Garden Town status.
- 4.22 It will be planted with about 14,000 broad-leaved trees provided by The Woodland Trust and it is hoped that residents, especially local youngsters, will get involved in planting the trees.

## **Swains Lane Nature Reserve, Wellington**

- 4.23 The hard working volunteer group at Swains Lane Nature Reserve (SLNR) have also received another sack of daffodil bulbs from Deane DLO to help ensure the further enhancement of this delightful area.
- 4.24 It was noticed, at the small ceremony to hand over this year's Green Neighbourhood Flag, that the supporting front beam of SLNR's well used barn was showing signs of movement. Repairs have thus been carried out to ensure it is safe.
- 4.25 Transition Town Wellington held an enthusiastically attended apple pressing afternoon in the barn in October 2018, when everyone who took part in the fun was able to take home a bottle or two of fresh apple juice.

## Abandoned Vehicles

- 4.26 During the past 3 months, there have been service reports of 114 abandoned vehicles. These include cars, motorcycles and caravans in both Taunton Deane and West Somerset. Five cars and one caravan were removed and disposed of. The remainder were either removed by the owner or ownership was claimed.

These photographs show a car, caravan and van that have been removed to make areas safer:



## 5. Property

### Station Road Swimming Pool, Taunton

- 5.1 Repairs have been carried out to the exterior wall damaged by a fire started by a rough sleeper. This has enabled the external redecoration of the whole building to take place.

### Vivary Park Golf Course, Taunton

- 5.2 Essential tree surgery work has been carried out on the golf course.

### Wellington Sports Centre

- 5.3 Tarmac repairs are being carried out in this popular car park.
- 5.4 Extensive work is also being carried out on the exterior of Wellington Sports Centre. Panels are being re-rendered, brickwork repairs and pointing are being executed and the whole outside of the building will then be repainted and refreshed.

Wishing you all a happy and relaxing time at Christmas.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams