

Town Managers Report

Councillor Vacancies

There are four vacancies at the Council in wards:

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

One of these vacancies is likely to be filled at this meeting of Full Council. Please continue to promote the Councillor vacancies to any of your Syston-based friends, acquaintances and family.

Captain Sir Tom Moore

Those that have been out and about in Syston will have noticed that the flags at the Community Centre and at the War Memorial are flying at half mast. This is in memory of Captain Sir Tom Moore. Charnwood Borough Council have led the way on this. It is normal to raise the flags after the funeral has taken place.

Several floral tributes and messages have been left at the War Memorial and also at the Chapel, Barkby Road.

Syston and District Cemetery

- A notice board has been ordered
- 20 A4 loose leaf binders have been ordered to house the burial/interment booklet – this can be easily updated at little cost. The Panel originally agreed on a Navy Blue binder but the reality turned out to be closer to royal blue and so I changed the colour choice to black
- The interment price lists have been amended in line with Council decision January 2021; website also updated
- Estates team are investigating the soil management before the purchase of trees, hedging and additional roses
- Panel requested two quotations for the flail mowing of the cemetery and the cutting of the four open spaces of land on Millstone estate and the three balancing ponds. I found a second supplier and passed it onto JG to get the quote. This will now be JG responsibility.

Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people.

Religious, belief-based or commemorative events linked to a person's death, such as stone setting ceremonies, the scattering of ashes or a wake, can also continue with up to six people in attendance.

Caretaker is stewarding toilet usage at Barkby Road Cemetery (one in the area at one time) and Cllr DP is stewarding the Syston & District Cemetery toilets.

Pavilion

The funding bid was submitted is currently in assessment stage.

The Pavilion is not being used during Tier Five restrictions and no football pitch hire. Plans are in place for servicing the pitches in line with FA advice as part of the funding bid.

£15,005 has been applied for reimbursement under our S106 agreement.

Wreake Valley Runners are interested in using the pavilion for their club house and have put in a few requests that are being considered by Amenities.

System Allotments

Allotment plot rental payments are coming in for the year, there are a few outstanding and a reminder letter is being sent (different to the usual one), in that plot holders are being advised of the different ways they can pay without coming to the office. (KL).

I am attending the East Midlands Allotment Forum on 16 March (via Zoom) and System committee are considering any questions they would like raising on their behalf.

IT Support

Supreme have been working with Berry Telecoms and BT in the introduction of the new office telephone system. (KL)

System Topic

January edition is published. SB now working on February edition. Any Councillor wishing to make an editorial contribution either about themselves and their work or a System related issue, please contact the office or Sophie directly.

Friends of Barkby Road Cemetery – Barkby Road

The Friends recently decorated the Chapel in memory of Captain Sir Tom Moore.

Next meeting is 23 March at 11 am.

CCTV Melton Road, by the Railway Station

Western Power have been provided with the necessary information to allow them to quote for an unmetered electricity supply.

Litter and Litter Bin Update

Recycling of paper, cardboard, plastics and tins is now available at the community centre and working well, with a weekly collection. We are now reducing the collection to twice monthly whilst the office is being used less.

The bin has been removed from outside the house at St Peters Street, a replacement bin was installed at Melton Road near to Broad Street and has proved to be popular. CBC have confirmed that they will also install a bin near to the bench at Broad Street, as we originally requested.

Dual waste/dog waste bins will also be placed in the following areas (agreed with CBC):

1. Winfield Park (near the Litter bin within the circle)
2. Oxford Street area at the top of the Black Pad
3. East Avenue, at top of Mostyn Avenue
4. Deville Park near the basket-ball net area
5. Cross Street – (top of the jitty)
6. Barkby Road - two bins already there

60-litre dog waste bins would be installed at both Winfield Park and Deville Park.

Council agreed to support Syston and Thurmaston Litter Wombles by supplying them with litter pickers and bin bag hoops as well as an appropriate risk assessment form. One of the “wombles” is collecting the equipment from me on Friday.

Bus Shelters

The updated list of bus shelters that we have acquired (LCC have now taken back three):

- Melton Road – one opposite health centre and one outside health centre
- Melton Road – adjacent to Barkby Lane
- Melton Road – opposite Tentercroft Avenue
- High Street with Fosse Way

A condition report on each shelter has been acquired and two quotations based on the repair/refurbishment recommendations will be taken to Development Committee in March.

Website Accessibility

In line with new legislation, the STC website has a number of changes required to bring it in line with the Accessibility requirements. This is a large project and I have delegated the task to US and SB to work through the website, identify the changes needed and take corrective action. This is an excellent “work from home” project.

Prices are also being collated for the design of a new “accessibility compliant” website. US and I have watched two webinars from prospective suppliers.

Skatepark Flood Lighting

Western Power have been provided with the necessary information to allow them to quote for a metered supply point; if this proves to be too expensive, a quote is also available from Metric to source electricity from the fuse board at the brook.

East Midlands in Bloom Competition 2021

Plans are underway for the competition to go ahead. The first Panel meeting for February has taken place. I am attending the East Midlands in Bloom AGM on 24 February where I will find out more information, as well as have some input on how the competition will run. The next Bloom meeting is scheduled for 12 March.

Monthly Councillor Surgery

These are still being held, the next one is Saturday, 6 March at 10 am via Zoom. Cllr Tom Barkley is in charge of arrangements for this.

Diary Dates

6 March 2021, Councillor Surgery by Zoom 10 – 11 am

Please remember to join up to our Facebook page for further developments at Syston Town Council.

Website: www.systontc.org.uk

Twitter: @Syston_TC

Deputy Town Manager's Report

Tree Panel

A Tree Panel meeting was held last week and a list of priority work on trees was produced. Four companies have been approached for quotes but so far only one has been received. When I have at least two quotes these will be taken to Amenities. The work will have to be carried out in the next financial year due to the tree budget being spent this year.

The Estates team have felled one tree in Central Park, four trees in Deville and four trees in Memorial Park, which were urgent work detailed on the Tree Survey.

Two trees on Central Park are still waiting to be felled by Tindle's due to the bad weather.

Churchyard Panel

A Churchyard Panel meeting has been organised for Friday 19 February; permissions have now been granted from Charnwood and from the Diocese for work to be carried out on four trees in the Churchyard.

However, the Tree Survey has now highlighted more trees that need urgent work in the Churchyard, so the original work may have to be put on hold.

Website

I have been doing a report for March Resources into looking at alternative ways to make our website accessibility compliant. TM and I have had two remote sessions looking at alternative websites.

Compost and Fertiliser

I have been obtaining quotes for mushroom compost and osmocote, to add to the baskets and beds this year. This will add nutrition to the soil enabling the bedding plants to thrive.

Pension iconnect

All iconnect spreadsheets for Pension contributions are up to date and the final one will be in March for year end.

Budgets

Budgets are being closely monitored on a weekly basis now that we are in the final quarter of the financial year.

Internal Audit

The Asset Spreadsheet has been updated as the Internal Audit will begin shortly.

In Bloom Meeting

Attended an In Bloom Meeting to catch up and discuss how we move forward this year with the East Midlands in Bloom Competition.

Plans for Summer Bedding

Drawn up planting schemes to show Estates staff where the plants will be going for the summer bedding.

LCC Clerks Meeting

Attended this meeting for TM.

Working from Home

I am working from home more frequently as required due to lockdown, but still also attending the office once a week.

The above work is in addition to my normal work duties.

Facilities Manager Report (January 2021)

Community Centre

- All relevant building safety checks such as fire alarm, emergency lighting, fire extinguisher and water flushing, and water temperature checks completed across the whole estate (All buildings). Everything in order.
- Risk assessment obtained for balancing ponds from Davis Wilson (ROSPA risk assessment)
- Produced landscape maintenance specification for Millstone Estate / Syston & District cemetery.
- Meeting with Roma Landscapes regarding landscape maintenance contract.
- Report completed for council regarding contractor quotes for landscape maintenance at Millstone estate/Syston & District cemetery.
- Report completed for council regarding fencing on Central park. Paint costs.
- Report completed for council regarding dead legs within water system and their removal.
- Completed 1 x Risk Assessment for Litter Picking (General)
- Counted and recorded all benches withing Syston town centre, 5 x parks 2 x cemeteries. Information forwarded to Charnwood borough council.
- Locations of 2 x new dog bins recorded and maps sent to Charnwood borough council.
- Brookside suite flooring sanded and lacquered.
- Attended Melton Road Toilets to unblock toilets twice.
- Glass washing machine cleaned thoroughly and emptied.
- All community centre paths cleared and gritted during cold / snow weather.
- Room sets ups and sanitising for exempt groups attending centre.
- Meetings weekly with estates staff. Work completed and planned works report completed.

Training / Staff

- PPE supplied to estates staff – Hard hats / ear defenders.

Pavilion / Memorial Park / Football

- I have produced a pitch works specification for contractors to quote for works recommended by the FA that our estates staff cannot complete as we do not have the heavy plant machinery required.
- I have contacted 3 x companies to produce quotes for works listed in specification. I have received 2 x quotes, waiting on one other.
- Football pitches are still having lines remarked.

Barkby Road Cemetery

- Estates staff have now removed all heather beds and put down membrane. Gravel (14 tonnes) placed on 4 x beds.
- Arranged for contractor to remove faulty smoke detector (High level)
- Met with 2 x contractors regarding CCTV installation onsite.
- Have attended all 2 x funerals to ensure toilet facilities are accessible.

Syston & District

- Attended 1 x funeral.

Parks

- All weekly park checks / playground checks completed.
- All 3 x de-fibs in town checked weekly and all fine
- Estates staff completed a lot of work in relation to the recent tree survey on all parks.
- Extra slabs placed in front of bench on Central park.
- Estates staff working on replacing old rotten posts on Central park with recycled railway sleepers. Rather than use plaswood.
- Zip wire extended as requested.
- New chain links fitted on swings at Central park due to worn old ones.

Senior Administrator

Allotments

Most allotment holders have paid their fees, this year there have been more payments made by card transaction over the telephone and by bank payment online. There are now four allotments available and I have offered these to the people at the top of the waiting list. I have started to make enquiries regarding the possibility of online card payments via the STC website in the future.

Cemetery

I am waiting for another person to send in their completed documents on a deed transfer. This has been taking some time because five members of the family are required to sign one of the documents. Lockdown has been slowing things down, as people need to make appointments for their documents to be witnessed.

Three ash interment enquiries have been made recently and forms and information have been sent out to the applicants.

Fertiliser Quotes

I have been assisting the Facilities Manager, to obtain quotes for the annual purchase of fertilisers, ready for approval by Amenities Committee.

Football

No football matches have taken place due to COVID-19 lockdown 3.

Telephone System

The take-over of the analogue line which hosts the new telephone system and internet was held up by Openreach/BT. There were errors made at the BT exchange, which resulted in an Openreach technician having to make a visit to the Community Centre to correct things. A technician for Supreme Systems (our IT Support provider) visited the office to facilitate a test of the jack point and liaised with Berry Telecom to run the test. There was disruption to the telephone and internet service at the Council Office for a few days before the problem was identified and sorted out.

Training

My ILCA course organised by SLCC has been delayed because the SLCC learning portal being updated, access is not available until 1 March.

I am due to attend online Year End training hosted by Scribe Accounts, on 24 February.

Working from Home

I am working from home more frequently as required due to lockdown, but still also attending the office as required.

Assistant to the Town Manager Report

Syston Topic

The latest edition of the Syston Topic has been circulated to all councillors as well as being posted on the website and our social media platforms. If any Councillors would like to get involved in the next issue of the Topic please contact me.

Website Compliance

I have been working with the Deputy Town Manager to make our website compliant and accessible to all. I have changed all of the Agendas over to the correct font as well as the minutes of Development and Full Council from September 2018. I am now working on changing the Topics so that they are compliant.

Minutes

I attended the Cemetery, Tree and Bloom for syston meetings to take the minutes for the Town and Deputy Town Managers.

Training

I am now all caught up with the required Ellis Whittam training. I will be taking part in an LRALC Report Writing training session next week.

Home Working

Due to the current lockdown I am working from home part of the week and going into the office around two days a week.