

## Planning & Environment Committee

### Environmental Group Feedback

1.1 On Monday 31 January 22, eight Parish Councillors met to review the Parish Council's approach to sustainability. Following this discussion, a number of approaches for 2022 are proposed below:

#### 1.2 Proposals

##### Grass cutting

Delaying cutting and removing vegetation in established fields, verges, parks and grounds will help to lengthen the time the area of grass and flowers can deliver nectar and flower resources for pollinators.

1.3 As a goal to contribute towards reduced grass cutting, it is proposed that

- a) Mowers are set to long cut settings for all areas receiving a regular cut during the season (higher height cuts than used to date)
- b) Designated areas are unmown during the cutting season – Eastleaze field
- c) Parkland designated for cut and bale cycle – Toothill Park
- d) Designated areas for reduced mowing. Ideally this will be on a cycle basis to allow grass to recover. For 2022, it is proposed that the following are approved for reduced mowing:

- opposite side of Whitehill Way



- sections of Saltway field



- field area at Fovant Close



- off Corton Crescent



- 1.4 Reduced mowing is proposed in preference to 'no mow' as it allows the team to leave the grass for as long as it is practical to do so without creating a fire risk or losing the capacity to return to grass thereafter. It also removes the cost and practicalities of how to remove long grass at the end of the season.  
The Parish Council would benefit from a flail attachment to fit an existing mower as this will enable better long grass cutting

1.5. Wilding

The Parish Council has established a number of areas that are actively managed by volunteers and planted to cultivate native species. These are Peatmoor Woodland, Greendown copse (both pre-date the Parish Council), Shaw Ridge FAB and Edgehill haven. Volunteers maintain these spaces with support from the Parish Council. They contribute hours to the Parish Council's Clean and Green fund and have used the fund to purchase kit, bulbs and seeds.

1.6. Wilding and community gardening

Community gardening occurs through one off planting sessions (often Councillor-led) or environmental clean ups – most often bulb planting e.g. Westlea park, Rowton Heath Way. These require little or no maintenance from the Parish Council – ground searches are done before any digging is agreed.

It is proposed that the following principles for the approval of community gardening or wilding projects in public open spaces are agreed:

- a) An informal arrangement is appropriate for the activity
- b) The space to be managed is self contained within an area e.g. not a section of space
- c) It can be restored back to its previous state with low cost/resources
- d) Where it is overlooked, neighbours are in agreement on what is proposed
- e) It does not overflow or infringe on access by public footpaths, roads or parking areas
- f) Use of hand tools and activities are covered by the Parish Council's existing Risk Assessment for volunteers and open spaces

**2. Recommendation:**

- 2.1 That this Committee notes the update and agrees the proposals set out in 1.3 and 1.6

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Parish Manager