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Meeting: Recreation, Amenities & Environment Committee, Item RAE3.14

Date: 10th August 2021

Author: Assistant Town Clerk (Planning & Amenities) and Town Clerk

Subject: Collett Park Management Plan and Environmental Initiatives

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update councillors that It Is necessary to create a new management plan for Collett Park, and to also to seek views on enhancements to the park (but not Including the future development of the play and amenities area). The Ecology report that was commissioned In 2020 Is used as a base line reference and the Town Clerk and Contractors are using this to make small but sustainable changes to the environmental management of the park.

2.0 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Initiatives

- 2.1 Her Majesty the Queen celebrates 70 years on the throne In 2022 and as such there are national Initiates to celebrate this milestone. One of which Is In conjunction with the Horticultural Societies to plant trees to create a legacy of the Queen's tenure on the throne. The SM Horticultural Society have approached the town council to see If it can work with the town council and that trees can be planted In Collett Park as part of the national initiative entitled the Queen's Green Canopy (QGP). This committee had previously discussed the creation of a copse In the top of the park (near Allen Saxon Drive) and had been donated some historic gate posts that could be positioned here as hard landscaping. Due to the pandemic It has not been possible to further earlier suggestions, but the proposal Is now that the copse be created with community Involvement, and incorporating the celebration of the Queens Jubilee, and also National Tree Charter Day (in November, a day when communities can come together the appreciate their trees, via further tree planting). The council then has the opportunity to contribute to the national scheme and register Its planting on a QGP map. Anyone wishing further Information about the national Initiative can find It at: www.queensgreencanopy.org.
- 2.2 Therefore, the proposal Is to create a mixed copse of approximately 25 to 35 new trees (either free from the Woodland Trust, via a scheme operated by Mendip District Council, or purchased

to ensure the right mix of trees), to see advice from the MDC tree officer, for the gate posts to be fixed into position to form a gateway into the area with the area to be left mainly uncut but with a meandering path to be cut through the area, for interpretation boards to be erected, and maybe the copse to be named appropriately in line with the Platinum Jubilee. To involve the community and the Horticultural Society and others, and to celebrate National Tree Charter Day at the same time. In conjunction, there is also an opportunity to encourage as many people as possible to plant trees in their own personal spaces too, be that in their garden, in a container on a balcony or in the grounds of work and office spaces.

- 2.3 For the Town Clerk to get quotes for the scheme that includes the installation of the gate posts, the trees, tree supports, preparation of the land. For the Marketing, Communications and Community Engagement Officer to be involved with the project to assist with community engagement and information sharing.

3.0 Rewilding of green space - Wildlife Corridor

- 3.1 In order to increase the biodiversity of both flowering species and insects it is proposed to create a wildlife corridor (between 8 and 15 feet deep depending on the area) between the boundary walls and the amenity grass in the area from Allen Saxon Drive (and where the proposed copse would be) around the edge of the park along Collett Avenue. The areas would be allowed to grow longer and be maintained as required. Signs would be added to explain that the wildlife corridor is to create a buffer zone which creates a flight line for insects. Some wildflowers will be seeded there. In addition, some of the hedging that borders the amenity area will also be left to grow in a more natural manner, so that animals can live amongst it.

4.0 Bird and Bat Boxes and Insect Hotels

- 4.1 The Council has been approached by Young Somerset, who wish to undertake some projects with young people in the park, and being outdoors. It is suggested that they are provided with the materials to create bat and bird boxes, some hedgehog houses and insect hotels and work with other members of the community and contractors to site these in suitable places in the park. In the fullness of time, to undertake surveys to see if they are providing a habitat to various species.

5.0 Pond

- 5.1 The pond does not currently have any ornamental plants growing in it nor does it have any method for larvae to climb from the pond due to its steep sides. Consequently, it also has few, if any, dragonflies or damselflies. The proposal is to float some small clusters of waterlilies in the pond, that will be held in place by tethered ropes or root cages (to still give an area to the drifters club to use their boats) and to allow more vegetation on the island to reach water level, to act as a ladder for larvae to reach the island.
- 5.2 The outlet stream creates some smaller ponds as it meanders away from the pond. They are overgrown in places and the proposal is to remove some of the vegetation and replant with wetland plant that will attract insects to this area

6.0 Collett Park Management Plan

- 6.1 The Town Clerk is working with the contractor to update the current Collett Park Management Plan that covers all aspects of managing the public open space. This is work in progress but should be presented to the next meeting. The plan will continue making recommendations similar to those made in this report and previous reports, and is vital to continue to secure the Green Flag accolade.

7.0 Town Plan Reference

Protected Environment

Protect and improve Trees, Woodland, Wild Flower Areas and Habitats	Work with partners and landlords to consider opportunities for planting more trees and woodlands and wild flower meadows, hedgerows and open spaces that might be neglected To aspire to owning /managing a community woodland or countryside park
Protect and improve Biodiversity and Ecology	Work with other agents to identify the vast wealth of biodiversity in the area and to ensure that it is provided with the right habitats for growth
Protect and improve Collett Park and its Green Flag Status	Improve the facilities in Collett Park and other open spaces to offer a range of habitats that include new woodland, wild flower areas, edible beds, community gardens, at the same time improving access, information and offering a wider range of activities

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There will be costs associated with the planting of a Jubilee Copse and hard landscaping the area with the gate posts. For a quote to be brought to the next meeting for consideration. All other work is done within the confines of the current contract and budget.

9.0 Recommendations

- 9.1 For councillors to note the report.
- 9.2 For councillors to consider and agree if they wish to work in collaboration with the Horticultural Society to create a Queens Green Canopy in the area described in paragraph 2.1.