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KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- 2024/041

Committee:-	Council
Date:-	23 rd October 2024
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Town Clerk
Report Title:-	Review of Town Centre Planting Scheme
Wards Affected:-	Mostly William Knibb but also St Michaels and Wicksteed

1. Purpose of Report

To review the delivery of town centre planting in 2024 and to consider the details of the 2025 scheme

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to agree to fund the planting scheme in 2025 including the improvements listed in this report, for a total cost of £32,000.

3. Information - 2024 scheme

3.1 The Council agreed to fund the continued provision, by NNC, of hanging baskets and other highway planting in the town centre of Kettering, from this year, at a cost of £28,000 including new signage for troughs. A review of the scheme was required at this point in the year before committing to future year's schemes.

3.2. The Council paid for:-

- 30 x hanging baskets on lamp posts through town

- 84 x Barrier troughs on pedestrian safety railings at Rothwell Rd, Northampton Rd and London Rd
- 16 x three tier planting tubs in Gold St and Lower St
15 x other planting tubs including the horse trough outside the library and 9 granite tubs on the market place
- 9 x planting beds on Bowling Green Rd, on Sheep St outside the library, and at the bottom of Northampton Rd



- 3.3. NNC provided the plants, containers and maintained the beds, tubs, troughs and baskets throughout the year. They also continued to be responsible for the baskets and bedding on NNC land, parks and open spaces at their own cost.
- 3.4. The planting was installed in June, a week or two later than planned, because the colder spring weather had retarded growth, and will be taken away in October. One of the granite tubs in the Market Place had to be removed when it was damaged by a vehicle reversing into it.
- 3.4. Feedback was that the planting remains popular with local people, and indeed, there were a number of expressions of anxiety when the planting had not appeared in late May, resulting in some press coverage.
- 3.5. The absence of any visible planting in May had been exacerbated by NNC not providing the winter planting that had traditionally taken place in previous years (last done in 2022). That planting had taken place in November each year and had been

removed in May – whilst not extensive, it had given the impression of continual displays in the main beds throughout the year. To re-introduce winter planting, at least eight months notice is required to order and grow the plants required.

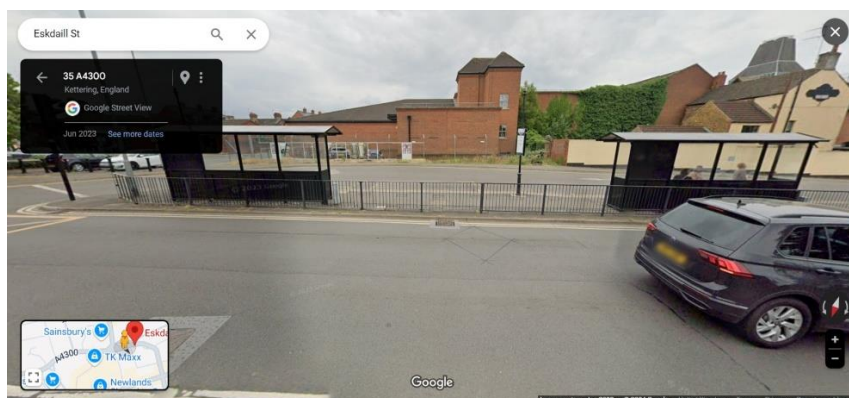
- 3.6. The Civic Society have chosen to recognise the quality of the planting scheme by awarding it their 2024 Rose Bowl prize – this is an annual award to the project which most enhances Kettering. The Rose Bowl was jointly awarded to the Town Council and the gardeners working for the NNC grounds team at an event on 27th September.



- 3.7. At the time that the scheme was agreed for inclusion in the budget members raised two other locations which had the potential for inclusion in the budget. These were:-
- the large planter in the pedestrian area between the Grange shops. This has been taken on by NNC and recently improved as part of a wider street scene improvement plan for the area.
 - two street tubs in Scotland St, one of which was being looked after by local residents and one of which was neglected; it has been agreed with the residents would look after the second tub as well.

4. Proposed scheme for 2025

- 4.1. On the assumption that members wished to continue to provide the scheme in future years, discussions have taken place with NNC offices about changes and improvements to the scheme for future years.
- 4.2. It is possible to provide more hanging baskets on existing unused poles in Silver St and to put baskets down Station Rd to help connect the railway station more with the town centre. This would add a total of 10 new baskets.
- 4.3. The barrier planting on the traffic island at the bottom of Northampton Rd is difficult to maintain from a highway safety point of view and potentially obscures driver and pedestrian sight lines, so it is proposed to relocate these troughs to Eskdail St



- 4.4. It is additionally proposed to plant up the old horse trough on the verge near the junction of London Rd and Barton Rd.



- 4.5. Two further enhancements are possible
- Improving weed spraying in the areas where barrier troughs are located – the prevalence of weeds on the pavement in these areas does detract somewhat from the flower displays. Three extra sprays in April, July and October
 - Re-introducing winter planting in beds – not hanging baskets or barrier troughs . This would start from winter 2025.

5. Consultation and Engagement

Consultation on the budget in 2023 saw overwhelming support for the Town Council to take on the costs of this scheme. The budget consultation for next year can seek views on extending the scheme as proposed above.

6. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

6.1. The Council paid NNC £26,700 for planting schemes and spent £444 on signage for the planters and troughs, which can be used in future years.

6.2. The proposed budget for 2025 is £34,000. This comprises:-

- Base scheme	£27844.00
- Extra hanging baskets	£ 1318.00
- Horse trough, Barton Rd	£ 316.50
- Winter planting	£ 3323.25
- Weed spraying	£ 900.00
TOTAL	£33703.75

7. Climate change implications

The provision of these planting displays, whilst not directly having any climate change implications, does create a connection with the natural world and will help pollinators. Weed spraying using chemicals may have some harmful effects normally, but it is applied to hard surfaces in these instances.

8. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is to support the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to visit and to encourage pride of place in Kettering.

The provision of planting is recognised to help improve people's outlook and mood.



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Background Papers

None

11.10.24