

Dunstable Town Council
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Paul Hodson Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: 30 August 2024

Dear Councillors

A meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee will be held on **Monday 9 September 2024 at the Council Chamber, Grove House commencing at 7.00 pm**. To view the meeting live or afterwards please use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. Where possible, we ask that anyone who wishes to ask a question contacts the Council beforehand to enable a response to be prepared, via democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 6 September.

Please scan the below code to view the full Agenda:



This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

Paul Hodson
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Public Question Time
4. To agree the minutes of the meeting of 11 June 2024 as a true record (see page 3)
5. To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 10 June 2024, 8 July 2024, 5 August 2024 and 19 August 2024 (see page 8)
6. Action Tracker – to receive updates on previous actions (see page 18)
7. Bennett’s Splash Park and Café – Information Report (see page 19)
8. Grounds - Information Report (see page 22)
9. Maintenance of Priory Churchyard – Information Report (see page 29)
10. Frenchs Avenue Footpaths – Decision Report (see page 33)
11. 40th Anniversary Celebrations – Decision Report (see page 37)
12. Salting and Gritting in Dunstable – Discussion Report (see page 40)
13. Reports from Outside Organisations:

CBC Development Committee – Cllr Nicholas Kotarski
14. RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.
15. Dunstable Bowls Club Relocation – Verbal Update
16. Date of the next meeting – Monday 11 November 2024 at 7.00 pm.

To: All Members of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Chair), Phillip Crawley (Vice-Chair), Johnson Tamara, Robert Blennerhassett, Trevor Adams, Matthew Brennan, Matthew Neall, Kenson Gurney, Mark Davis, Michelle Henderson, and other Members of the Council for information

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,
DUNSTABLE**

ON MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024 FROM 7 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Chair), Phillip Crawley (Vice-Chair), Matthew Brennan, Matthew Neall, Kenson Gurney and Mark Davis

In Attendance: Councillors Liz Jones and Peter Hollick with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Dimitrisz Sopisz (Grounds Operations Manager), James Slack (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager), Lauren Swinnerton (Splash Manager), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Katherine Doyle (Parks and Green Space Development Officer) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Trevor Adams

Public: 2

119/24 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richard Attwell declared an interest in item 12 of the agenda as the Council’s representative on Men in Sheds.

120/24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 11 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

121/24 PLANS-SUB COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive updated members regarding the Vernon Place planning application; this application will be reviewed at the Development Management Committee of Central Bedfordshire Council on 26 June 2024. Dunstable Town Council will be having an additional meeting of the Plans-Sub Committee to discuss this application.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 4 March 2024, 26 March 2024, 15 April 2024, 7 May 2024 and 28 May 2024 be approved.

122/24 ACTION TRACKER

Members received and noted the updates on actions from previous meetings.

123/24 BENNETTS SPLASH PARK

The Splash Manager summarised the report provided to members.

The Splash Manager has been in contact with Central Bedfordshire Council's parking enforcement team to ensure plans are in place to work together to respond to pressures regarding parking around the area through the season.

Councillor Hollick suggested selling items from the Priory House shop within the Splash Park as well as advertising each service within both locations. The Splash Manager will explore this.

ACTION: Splash Manager

Councillor Attwell mentioned the signage in the Splash Park's car park. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services undertook to investigate the quality and visibility of this signage to ensure it is clear for users.

ACTION: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

124/24 GROUNDS – INFORMATION REPORT

Members received the report circulated.

Cemetery

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

The Council were advertising for a full time Cemetery Assistant, with the closing date for applications to be on Monday 17 June 2024.

Allotments

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report.

A request was made to investigate the upkeep of grass at the entrance of Maidenbower Allotments due to overgrowth along the access.

ACTION: Grounds Operations Manager,

The tone of the first warning letter to tenant holders of allotments was raised. The Cemetery Manager offered to review this.

ACTION: Cemetery Manager

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services mentioned to members that there will be a new tenancy agreement in January 2025 which will include a clearer explanation of the cultivation requirements.

Recreation Grounds – Play Areas

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

Sports Pitches and General Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Operations Manager updated members on the key parts of the report. Members discussed the non-mown areas of the Council's recreation grounds and gardens. Members requested that Officers review the communications issued about the Council's approach to see whether any additional information could be provided.

ACTION: Grounds Operation Manager

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report noting that all works were now completed.

Town Rangers

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

Green Space Projects

The Parks and Green Space Development Officer summarised the report.

125/24 BIODIVERSITY POLICY

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report to members and highlighted the key points.

Councillor Brennan asked whether the policy could include a preference for using native species, and whether the Council's Procurement Policy can be extended to mention that any procurement contracts must adhere to this biodiversity policy.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised members that the proposed policy includes a reference to Neighbourhood Planning already.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to adopt the proposed Biodiversity Policy and the action plan provided with the amendments discussed.

126/24 SPENDING PROPOSALS

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of £214,337 from the following reserves:

- Vehicle and Equipment Reserve
£ 92,337
- Developers Contributions Reserve
£ 11,723
- Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve
£ 10,277
- Grounds Depot Extension Reserve
£100,000

Total
£214,337.

127/24 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

CBC Development Committee – Cllr Nicholas Kotarski

Nothing to report.

128/24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

129/24 LEASE OF MEADWAY STORE

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the draft lease terms for the lease and to authorise the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to finalise the lease in accordance with the recommendations made.

130/24 PERGOLA AND KNEE RAIL PROJECT

Members raised concern over the possible use of the knee rail by skateboarders and requested that officers investigate the possibility of amending the design to take account of this risk.

ACTION: Head of Grounds and Environmental Services to consult with designer for a suitable solution.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the pergola and knee rail designs and to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of monies from the Open Spaces Improvement Plan reserve for the pergola and knee rail.

The meeting closed at 9:39 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024 AT 6:15 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Mayor), Richard Attwell, Wendy Bater, Peter Hollick, and Nicholas Kotarski.

Apologies: Councillor Gregory Alderman

In Attendance: Councillors Liz Jones (Substituting for Councillor Gregory Alderman) and Kenson Gurney with Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions put forward to the council ahead of the meeting.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 28 May 2024 were approved as a correct record following one minor amendment and were signed by the Chair.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated:

-
- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | CB/24/01048/FULL: 19 Garrett Close |
| | Proposal: Change of use of a residential dwelling (class C3A) to a residential care home (class C2) and creation of double vehicular cross-over. |
| | Comments: No Objection |
-
- | | |
|----------|--|
| 2 | CB/24/01060/FULL: 49 Poynters Road |
| | Proposal: Removal of existing garage and conservatory, and erection of two storey rear extension with pitched roof. |
| | Comments: No Objection |
-
- | | |
|----------|---|
| 3 | CB/24/01381/FULL: 15 Western Way |
|----------|---|

Proposal: Erection of front porch and conversion of garage. Single storey rear, and first floor side extension. Conversion of loft space with rear dormer and front roof lights.

Comments: No Objection

5. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

6. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

Nil.

The Meeting Closed at 6:25 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 8 JULY 2024 AT 6:15 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Wendy Bater (Vice-Chair), Gregory Alderman, Richard Attwell, Wendy Bater and Peter Hollick

Apologies: Nil

In Attendance: Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and RFO)

Public: Nil

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions put forward to the council ahead of the meeting.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 10 June 2024 and 24 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

5. CBC PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Sub-Committee received and noted the adoption of the revised Planning Obligations Document (SPD) from Central Bedfordshire Council.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated:

1 CB/24/01380/FULL: 21 Lovers Walk,
Proposal: Single storey side/rear extension.
Comments: No objection

2 CB/24/01381/FULL: 15 Western Way
Proposal: Erection of front porch and conversion of garage. Single storey rear, and first floor side extension. Conversion of loft space with hip to gable, rear dormer and front roof lights.
Comments: No objection

3	CB/24/01382/FULL: 4 Kingsbury Avenue Proposal: Erection of single storey side and part rear extension. Comments: No objection
4	CB/24/01142/FULL: 26 Frenchs Gate Proposal: Loft conversion including a rear dormer. Comments: No objection
5	CB/24/01625/FULL: 7 Derwent Drive Proposal: Single storey front extension. Comments: No objection
6	CB/24/01410/FULL: 86 Wilbury Drive Proposal: Single storey side extension with rooflights.. Comments: No objection
7	CB/24/01554/FULL: 64 Garden Road Proposal: Part two storey and part single storey rear extension. Comments: No objection
8	CB/24/01363/FULL: 22 Priory Road Proposal: Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension to rear. Insertion of new French doors & Juliet balcony at ground floor level to rear. External works to comprise new hard surfacing to front parking area and new external decking & paving to rear. Comments: No objection
9	CB/24/01745/FULL: Unit 22, Woodside Industrial Estate Proposal: Change of use from Class B8 Storage and Distribution to B2 General Industrial use. Comments: No objection
10	CB/24/01603/FULL: 8 Woodford Road Proposal: Garage conversion to create ground floor front rear extensions, and first floor side extension with side window. Comments: No objection
11	CB/24/00720/FULL: 18 Matthew Street Proposal: Change of use of an office building to a HMO (House of Multiple Occupation). Comments: Objection due to lack of detail, lack of sanitary provision and potential over development.
12	CB/24/01479/FULL: 94 Chiltern Road, Proposal: Dropped kerb and new driveway. Comments: No objection
13	CB/24/01565/FULL: 285 Luton Road, Proposal: Demolition of existing rear extension and erection of enlarged replacement rear extension. Comments: No objection
14	CB/24/01673/FULL: 7 Kingscroft Avenue Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension, demolition of existing conservatory, internal alterations and garage conversion Comments: No objection

15 CB/24/01695/FULL: 51 Poynters Road

Proposal: Erection of an attached 2 storey dwelling and alteration to the dropped kerb access to the existing dwelling.

Comments: No objection

16 CB/24/01371/FULL: 318 High Street North

Proposal: Advertisement: Relocation of existing totem sign.

Comments: No objection

7. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

8. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

None received.

The Meeting Closed at 7:00 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 5 AUGUST 2024 AT 6:30 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Wendy Bater (Vice-Chair), Gregory Alderman, and Peter Hollick

Apologies: Councillor Richard Attwell

In Attendance: Councillor Robert Blennerhasset with Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions put forward to the council ahead of the meeting.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 8 July 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

5. CBC PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Sub-Committee received and noted the adoption of the revised Planning Obligations Document (SPD) from Central Bedfordshire Council.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated:

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- 1 CB/24/01786/FULL:** Building to the rear of 13 High Street North,
Proposal: Demolition of single storey brick storage building and erection of a two-storey residential building, comprising of two studio flats, together with associated works including the insertion of windows, doors, a refuse store and external staircase.
Comments: No Objection
-
- 2 CB/24/01835/FULL:** 30 Buckwood Avenue

	Proposal:	Erection of a single storey front and side extension and associated works.
	Comments:	No Objection
3	CB/24/01527/FULL:	98 Dukeminster Road
	Proposal:	Erection of a rear conservatory and conversion of garage.
	Comments:	No Objection
4	CB/24/01828/FULL:	6 Hilton Avenue
	Proposal:	First floor side extension with new pitched roof on porch and ground rear.
	Comments:	Application Withdrawn
5	CB/24/01980/FULL:	68 Houghton Road
	Proposal:	Loft conversion with rear dormer.
	Comments:	No Objection
6	CB/24/01964/FULL:	174 Jeans Way
	Proposal:	Single storey front extension.
	Comments:	No Objection
7	CB/24/01939/FULL:	1 Hillyfields
	Proposal:	Proposed single storey rear and side extension and conversion of garage to habitable space.
	Comments:	No Objection
8	CB/24/01946/FULL:	24 Cartmel Drive
	Proposal:	Erection of single storey front extension.
	Comments:	No Objection
9	CB/24/01848/FULL:	40 Linden Road
	Proposal:	Change of use from Class C4 HMO to Class C3 dwellinghouse. Subdivision of building to provide 1no. two-storey house and 1no. ground floor apartment. Alterations to windows and doors.
	Comments:	No Objection
10	CB/24/01787/FULL:	52 Linden Road
	Proposal:	Replacement front porch with pitched roof. Garage conversion with pitched roof to the front, raise external walls and flat roof behind front pitched roof.
	Comments:	No Objection
11	CB/24/01763/FULL:	Unit 21 and 22 Service Yard
	Proposal:	Erection of silos, flour dust extract and ancillary plant units (retrospective).
	Comments:	No Objection
12	CB/24/01660/FULL:	McDonalds, 2-8 Luton Road,
	Proposal:	Installation of four rapid electric vehicle charging stations and ancillary equipment. Six existing parking spaces to become EV charging bays.
	Comments:	No Objection

7. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

8. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

La Pasteria, Pizza Bar, 36 High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LA

Licensable activities

- Recorded music indoors and sale of alcohol on the premises Monday to Sunday 12pm until 11pm.

Comments – No Objection

The Meeting Closed at 6:49 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD AT GROVE HOUSE, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 19 AUGUST 2024 AT 6:30 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Wendy Bater (Vice-Chair), Gregory Alderman, Richard Attwell and Peter Hollick

Apologies: Nil

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager)

Public: Nil

2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions put forward to the council ahead of the meeting.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Sub-Committee held on 5 August 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

5. CBC PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Sub-Committee received and noted the adoption of the revised Planning Obligations Document (SPD) from Central Bedfordshire Council.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Sub-Committee considered all planning applications submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of Dunstable since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the following comments be forwarded to Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of the applications indicated:

-
- 1 CB/24/02168/FULL:** 49 Benning Avenue
 Proposal: Single storey front extension
 Comments: No Objection
-

7. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the decisions of Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of recent planning applications.

8. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

None Received

The Meeting Closed at 6:33 pm

GES	182/23	11/09/2023	Planters damage	To request that the planters be fixed. Councillor Jones raised a concern about damage to the planters along Middle Row and Ashton Square. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services informed Members that discussions with CBC Highways were ongoing. CBC are responsible for the upkeep/replacement of the planters should there be any damage, however discussions had begun to establish whether the Town rangers will be able to carry out minor repairs.	Head of GES	CBC have now asked the Council to organise the repairs to the planters on their behalf, with the company who originally supplied the planters. Minor repairs have been completed but some damage is beyond repair and planters therefore require replacement. Officers will report this to CBC.	Ongoing
GES	224/23	06/11/2023	Allotment Land at each recreation ground	To consider opportunities to develop allotment land at each recreation ground as part of the management plan development scheme.	Head of GES	The process will commence in April 2024 as part of the agreed programme	Ongoing
GES	15/24	15/01/2024	Action Tracker	Officers had requested that CBC repair the outside of some of the Urbis planters in town. Cllr Kenson Gurney advised members that he will investigate further with Central Bedfordshire Council to see if they could extend their contract to maintaining planting beyond March 2025. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services advised members that he has been in contact with the client officer at CBC to ask that very question and will provide an update once known.	Head of GES	See Minute 182/23 above for further update. No decision has yet been communicated to DTC by CBC about extending the current contract beyond March 2025 despite the HoGES seeking confirmation	Ongoing
GES	73/24	11/03/2024	Closed Cemetery Churchyard	Members requested a future report on the closed cemetery churchyard at Priory Church which Dunstable Town Council maintain.	Head of GES	A report is provided in the agenda to the September GES meeting.	Complete
GES	73/24	11/03/2024	Green Space Projects	That officers explore the option to install a defibrillator in the red K6 phone kiosk on Church Street, now adopted by the Council, along with an interpretation panel and additional containerised flower displays.	Parks and Green Space Development Officer	A further update on progress is included in the Grounds Information report to the September GES meeting.	ongoing
GES	73/24	11/03/2024	Mentmore Recreation Ground	Councillor Attwell asked officers to look at the possibility of using any spare matting from Frenchs Avenue at the entrance to Mentmore Recreation Ground.	Parks and Green Space Development Officer	This will be looked into further once the link path has been installed.	ongoing
GES	123/24	11/06/2024	Bennetts	Councillor Hollick suggested selling items from the Priory House shop within the Splash Park as well as advertising each service within both locations. The Splash Manager will explore this.	Splash Manager	A verbal update will be given at the meeting	Complete
GES	123/24	11/06/2024	Bennetts	Councillor Attwell mentioned the signage in the Splash Park's car park. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services undertook to investigate the quality and visibility of this signage to ensure it is clear for users.	Head of GES	The car park has signage at the entrance stating that it car park is for the use of park visitors only to deter those using it for the doctors or other local purposes. Visitors for the Splash and Play facilities are advised to use Ashton Square car park and this later sign was installed to help manage parking away from the entrance and adjacent roadway.	Complete
GES	124/24	11/06/2024	Allotments	A request was made to investigate the upkeep of grass at the entrance of Maidenbower Allotments due to overgrowth along the access.	Grounds Operations Manager	The grass was cut shortly after the June meeting and continues to be cut on a regular basis	Complete
GES	124/24	11/06/2024	Allotments	The tone of the first warning letter to tenant holders of allotments was raised. The Cemetery Manager offered to investigate this.	Cemetery Manager	The Cemetery Manager and the Head of GES have reviewed and made some minor amendments to the letter to soften the tone whilst still ensuring that it is sufficiently robust.	Complete
GES	124/24	11/06/2024	Sports Pitches and General Grounds Maintenance	Members discussed the non-mown areas of the Council's recreation grounds and gardens. Officers agreed to review the communications issued about the Council's approach to see whether any additional information could be provided.	Grounds Operations Manager	At the start of the next grass cutting season in 2025 officers will use social media to provide improved information about the reasons and benefits for maintaining some areas as islands of longer grass	Complete

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024****BENNETT'S SPLASH UPDATE**

Purpose of Report: To provide a progress report on operations at Bennett's Splash & Cafe.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report provides the Committee with a summary of performance to date, including an update on repairs, income and expenditure to date, and initiatives being developed.

2. OPERATIONAL AND BUILDING UPDATE

- 2.1. The Splash Park has benefitted from the pleasant weather this summer and there have been many busy days after a wet start. There has been vandalism on several occasions, where the extractor fan vent has been kicked off the roof which has led to multiple repairs being required. As a result of this, Officers are looking into trying to secure a cage around it to reduce the ongoing risk. A key challenge of keeping the café running through the winter is that the changing rooms are required by football teams during the football season. In the splash season food is stored in the changing rooms area. Officers are currently looking into storage solutions for the out of season period.

3. SPLASH AND CAFÉ UPDATE

- 3.1. The Splash Park has been running well this summer. There was a brief issue with a fuse causing the Splash to sporadically turn off during the first week of the season, however it was easily managed and quickly resolved. The Splash Park welcomed beaver groups, school groups and individuals on work experience this summer which was a great success and has created relationships with a local school to pave the way for future work experience initiatives. Through communications with schools, the team are also looking to provide deals for them for next year to generate cafe income and elevate their outing to the Splash Park to be more of a trip, inclusive of lunches. Colouring and crafts are still being offered as rainy-day alternatives and they have been popular. The team are also creating a timetable of seasonal themed activities for the half term holidays. Going into the off season we will trial the cafe being open Wed – Sun. We are aiming to utilise the footballers using the park at weekends and keep open for clubs/group sessions. The remaining time will be available for venue hire.

4. PARKING & RESIDENTIAL UPDATE

- 4.1. During peak season there have been a few parking complaints. Officers have been in regular contact with CBC's parking enforcement team. After conferring with the Parking Enforcement Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council it is suggested that the most effective resolution would be to apply for seasonal parking restrictions for Bennetts Close during May to September from 10am to 6pm. This would minimise disruption to residents

and keep the road into the close accessible for emergency vehicles. CBC will consider taking this forward.

5. MARKETING, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

- 5.1. An aspiration was described at the last meeting of the Committee for the cafe to become a community hub. Officers are making strides towards this goal with the already established groups being hosted weekly. They are already proving a benefit to the community as we have had a member explain to us that they have agoraphobia and have pushed themselves to reintegrate through 'Knit and Natter' as it is viewed as a safe space with like-minded individuals. To further meet this goal, we have an upcoming 'Hedgehog Talk' being hosted at the start of September, which will kick start our venue hire through the off season, with enquiries from OpalArts and Yoga groups hopefully filling some of the other available times. We are working closely with Grove Corner, and they will be utilising our space for their youth cafe from September through to May, creating a safe space for their detached youth workers to interact with the local youth. The team are hoping to develop this into a space where they can learn key skills such as customer service and food hygiene. There are also several coffee mornings booked in through Grove Corner. Enquiries have been made to utilise the inside space for seasonal events. With the drive to create a community space, a rebranding of the cafe to 'Bennetts Cafe and Community Hub' throughout the off season is being developed, because Splash Café is misleading when the splash park is closed out of season:



6. INCOME & EXPENDITURE

6.1. Splash Park Catering takings comparison EX VAT

Week		2023 Weekly Income	2024 Weekly Income	23/24 Income Difference	Actual Cumulative Total (£)	Budgeted Cumulative Target (£)	Difference between Cumulative Actual and Budgeted
			Target (2176.47p/week)				
MAY	6th - 12th	£732.72	£1,530.96	£798.24	£1,530.96	£2,176.47	-£645.51
	13th - 19th	£1,033.36	£939.68	-£93.68	£2,470.64	£4,352.94	-£1,882.30
	20th - 26th	£1,739.46	£827.43	-£912.03	£3,298.07	£6,529.41	-£3,231.34
	27th - 2nd	£2,192.04	£1,372.61	-£819.43	£4,670.68	£8,705.88	-£4,035.20
JUNE	3rd - 9th	£2,010.08	£940.52	-£1,069.56	£5,611.20	£10,882.35	-£5,271.15
	10th - 16th	£2,169.15	£356.56	-£1,812.59	£5,967.76	£13,058.82	-£7,091.06
	17th - 23rd	£2,559.49	£3,120.07	£560.58	£9,087.83	£15,235.29	-£6,147.46
	24th - 30th	£781.24	£3,134.05	£2,352.81	£12,221.88	£17,411.76	-£5,189.88
JULY	1st - 7th	£1,046.26	£353.25	-£693.01	£12,575.13	£19,588.23	-£7,013.10
	8th - 14th	£477.76	£732.89	£255.13	£13,308.02	£21,764.70	-£8,456.68
	15th - 21st	£1,064.76	£2,984.32	£1,919.56	£16,292.34	£23,941.17	-£7,648.83
	22nd - 28th	£957.96	£2,988.02	£2,030.06	£19,280.36	£26,117.64	-£6,837.28
AUGUST	29th - 4th	£649.44	£5,114.32	£4,464.88	£24,394.68	£28,294.11	-£3,899.43
	5th - 11th	£2,813.31	£2,185.66	-£627.65	£26,580.34	£30,470.58	-£3,890.24
	12th - 18th	£2,594.40	£4,065.70	£1,471.30	£30,646.04	£32,647.05	-£2,001.01
		£22,821.43	£30,646.04	£7,824.61			

6.2. The table above demonstrates that after a slow start we are to date outperforming last year. The Splash Park has had some of its best performing weeks to date this year. Looking at performance this year alongside feedback from the cafe, a review on pricing ahead of the next summer season will be conducted. Income is always significantly dependent on the weather so will vary year to year.

7. AUTHOR

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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024****CEMETERY, ALLOTMENTS, RECREATION GROUNDS, TOWN CENTRE GARDENS,
RANGER SERVICE - INFORMATION REPORT**

Purpose of report: - To update the Committee on the management and maintenance of the town's cemetery, allotments, recreation grounds, town gardens, floral displays, play areas and Ranger Service.

1. DUNSTABLE CEMETERY

- 1.1. The table below provides a comparison for the number of burials for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 August 2024 against the same period for the previous year:

	July 2023 – August 2023	July 2024 – August 2024
New earth grave	7	11
Re open earth grave	6	9
New ashes	9	4
Reopen ashes	8	6

- 1.2. At the time of writing this report, 472 burials will have taken place in the lawn section of the cemetery extension since February 2016.
- 1.3. The floral displays at the Cemetery have been well received by visitors and are looking particularly full and colourful this year.
- 1.4. The grounds team have increased the areas of differential mowing in the Cemetery, to allow wildflowers to flourish amongst longer grass. These longer grass areas are created as islands of long grass surrounded by close mown grass which helps in making them more acceptable to visitors.
- 1.5. A Tier 3 Groundwater Risk Assessment report for a proposed new burial site has now been completed in line with Environment Agency (EA) requirements following additional groundwater monitoring undertaken since December 2023. The EA will consider the report and findings to determine whether it will licence the site for future burial and what, if any, mitigations may need to be put in place.
- 1.6. Members of the Cemetery working group will be undertaking visits to new burial and cremation facilities at Berton, near Aylesbury, and the new Oakfield Gardens Crematorium, near Flitwick, on 9 September 2024. The visits will allow the working group to gain

knowledge and ideas for a new burial ground and look at modern designs, options for future memorialisation and the use of innovative technologies.

- 1.7. Cemetery expenditure and income for 1 April to 31 July 2024 is provided at Appendix 1. The overall positive variance against budget is largely as a result of over achieved income in April, May and June.

2. ALLOTMENTS

- 2.1. At the time of writing this report there are 302 people on the waiting list. Appendix 2 provides some detail about the make-up of the current list.
- 2.2. Further inspections took place on the 10 July 2024. Thirty-seven notices to cultivate were issued. As a result, 22 tenants contacted us with an acceptable reason for non-cultivation and 6 tenants have given up their tenancy. Following further re-inspections 3 notices to quit have been issued. The next inspections will take place in October.
- 2.3. In line with the current Allotment Improvement Plan, which was agreed by Members on the 13 June 2022, Officers will shortly be installing 3 new notice boards at the Meadway, Westfield and Catchacre sites. Officers are also investigating options for installing composting toilets in 2 of the sites and further details will be brought to Members in due course. Tree works have been completed at Hillcroft with overhanging trees, owned by CBC, having been cut back to the allotment fence line.

3. RECREATION GROUNDS

Play Areas and Grove Skate Park

- 3.1. Since the last report to this Committee there have not been any incidents of vandalism to play equipment.

Sports Pitches and General Grounds Maintenance

- 3.2. As the grass cutting season draws to a close, all grass areas that have been left to grow longer to encourage wildflower growth and increased biodiversity, will be cut down and the arisings removed.
- 3.3. The 2024/25 football season has commenced. The renovation of football pitches at the Recreation Grounds was completed during the summer and routine pitch maintenance activities, including white lining, will now be ongoing throughout the playing season.

- 3.4. Following the vehicle and equipment spending approval authorised in June 2024, the new ISEKI ride-on mower (pictured) has been purchased and has been used extensively this summer across all areas.
- 3.5. The two new Ford Ranger pick-up vehicles, also approved in June 2024, have been ordered and have a lead in time for delivery of around 25 weeks. The estimated delivery is therefore December 2024 at the earliest.



4. TOWN CENTRE AND TOWN RANGERS

- 4.1. This year's floral displays have been well received and have provided good colour throughout the summer. Dunstable in Bloom volunteers have helped the Council to maintain the displays by carrying out deadheading of faded flowers.

- 4.2. Green Flag judging took place at Priory and Grove House gardens on 30 May and the Council has retained all 4 of its Green Flags as well as Green Heritage status for Priory Gardens. The award ceremony, held near Coventry, was attended by the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and one of the Grounds Supervisors. The Town Mayor, Councillors, Officers and volunteers came together on 1 August for a flag raising event in Priory Gardens to mark these achievements.



- 4.3. The Council has been approached by the Legend on the Bench Charity, via the Town Mayor and a local resident. The charity has a simple aim of installing benches in public areas that can be used by anyone in the community needing time to reflect. This special bench includes a lit at night plaque with phone numbers of organisations ready to listen when required. The bench was provided and installed free of charge with the Council providing a

solid base for fixing. The bench reveal took place on Friday 30 August in Grove House Gardens with the Mayor in attendance. The Council covered the event via social media and a press release to raise awareness of this generous donation and the organisations who can be contacted.

- 4.4. The Rangers have completed more than 53 job requests received from public and internal clients in the last couple of months. The wide range of requests such as tidying the alleyway at Howard place, excessive graffiti removal at Dog Kennel Walk, excessive dirt/stain removal at the raised seating area front of Santander. All these activities were in addition to their other routine maintenance works such cleaning the Aston Square toilets, litter bin cleaning and maintaining the Eleanor's Cross shopping area and Maypole Yard.

5. GREEN SPACE PROJECTS

Priory Gardens Pergola and Knee Rail Project

- 5.1. Officers applied for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) from Historic England (HE), on the 12 July 2024. HE acknowledged receipt of the application and advised that, pending a decision from the Secretary of State, a response will be drafted within 42 days of receipt of the application. Officers are expecting an update from HE by the end of August.
- 5.2. The Friends of Priory House and Gardens, (FOPHAG), continue to work in partnership with the Council to support the delivery of the project. FOPHAG have applied for an award of £20,000 to the National Lottery's 'Awards for All' program to contribute towards funding the new pergola. The application was submitted in the first week of June. Applications can take up to twelve weeks to process and FOPHAG are expecting a response by the end of August.
- 5.3. FOPHAG have also undertaken a survey to gain people's views about the new pergola to support the 'Awards for All' funding bid. At the time of writing, 30 responses have been received and overall, the comments were positive including the following:

'The pergola needs improvement and would benefit the gardens greatly if it was repaired or replaced for new.'

'It's gorgeous but could use a renovation.'

'The gardens are a very important part of the town whether you just want to wander through the lovely green space with colourful flower beds, or just sit and reflect, with the beautiful Priory Church in the background.'

- 5.4. Subject to securing SMC, it is expected that the project will commence in Autumn 2024. Officers will raise further public awareness of the project on the Council's social media platforms prior to commencing any works.

Church Street Phone Box

- 5.5. The Council is currently seeking additional quotations for the refurbishment of the phone box because the initial quotation obtained has come in higher than the budget provision of £5,000. Depending on the outcome from the additional quotations it may be necessary for officers to bring a further report to the committee to seek additional funding.
- 5.6. Officers are continuing to work with the charity SADS UK (Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome) and a local fundraiser, to provide a defibrillator at no cost to the Council. Prices are also being sought for a new defibrillator sign, an interpretation board detailing the history of the K6 Kiosk, and new stand-alone planters.

Anglia in Bloom 2024

- 5.7. The Anglia in Bloom judges visited Dunstable on Tuesday 9 July. The judges were hosted by the Council and Dunstable in Bloom and were given an extensive tour of the town and shown a number of community projects and Council managed green spaces.
- 5.8. The judges were shown the 2024 Dunstable in Bloom short promotional film created in partnership with local media and film making students who attend Bedfordshire College. The film was well received and a credit to all those involved.
- 5.9. The results will be announced at the Anglia in Bloom Awards Ceremony being held in Thetford, Norfolk, on Friday 6 September 2024. A verbal update will be given at the Committee meeting.

6. AUTHORS

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Appendix 1

Cemetery Profiled Income and Expenditure Report as at 31 July 2024

	April	May	June	July
Budgeted Expenditure	£13,323	£13,323	£13,323	£13,323
Actual Expenditure	£7,825	£8,867	£9,053	£20,142
Variance	£5,498	£4,456	£4,270	-£6,820

Budgeted Income	£17,846	£17,846	£17,846	£17,846
Actual Income	£26,923	£29,224	£13,337	£35,155
Variance	£9,077	£11,378	-£4,509	£17,309

Overall Variance	£40,659			
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Appendix 2 – Allotment Waiting List

Waiting list	Total	Resident	Non-Resident
Willing to accept any plot/site	47	44	3
Specific plot/site requested	242	242	0
Second plot requested	4	4	0
Offer made - not yet accepted	9	9	0
TOTAL	302	299	3
Added to list since last report (included in above total)	19	19	0
On list but do not want plot yet (included in above total)	0	0	0

Site	Catchacre	Hillcroft	Maidenbower	Meadway	Pascomb Road	Westfield	ALL SITES
Total available plots on site	24	20	25	125	16	87	297
Vacant plots	1	0	2	4	0	2	9
Notice to Cultivate	5	1	7	16	2	6	37
Notice To Quit	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Plot under offer	1	0	2	4	0	2	9
Plot Given up	1	0	0	3	0	2	6
Inspection Dates	Next inspection to take place in October						

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024****MAINTENANCE OF PRIORY CHURCHYARD**

Purpose of Report: To inform and remind members of the Council's statutory obligations associated with the maintenance of the Priory Churchyard.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. That Members note the Council's responsibilities associated with maintaining the Priory Churchyard and the current reserve balance and future contributions.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Council has assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the churchyard associated with the Priory Church of St Peter. The maintenance of the churchyard was passed to the Council in accordance with provisions made within the 1972 Local Government Act which place a duty on local authorities to maintain churchyards which have been formally closed for burial even though the church retains ownership of the land.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1. The Council currently undertakes routine maintenance of the churchyard including grass cutting, litter and leaf clearance, tree management and other similar grounds related tasks. The Council is also responsible for the regular inspection and testing of grave memorials. A plan showing the extent of the churchyard is given at Appendix 1.
- 3.2. Every 5 years the Council receives a copy of the quinquennial report on the Priory Church prepared by the Diocesan appointed architect. Whilst the report is primarily associated with the condition and management of the Priory Church building it does include and make reference to the churchyard.
- 3.3. The last quinquennial report was provided to the Council in 2021. The report covered trees, boundary walls, fences, gates, paths, headstones and tombs.
- 3.4. The report provides detail of the condition of the various features and each element is given an indicative category rating indicating the timeframe within which repairs, or other action should be undertaken. A summary of the priority rating is shown below:

Category 1: of utmost urgency

Category 2: essential within the next 18 months

Category 3: essential within the next 5 years

Category 4: within the next 10 years

Category 5: items of routine maintenance and re-decoration

Category 6: items requiring specialist advice

Churchyard Summary

- 3.5. The 2021 report considered that the churchyard is generally well maintained by the Council and paths are generally in fair order. The brick boundary walls are generally in fair order. Some minor decay and bulging of walls are evident but they remain in good order. It was noted that the Priory Gateway has been fully repaired.
- 3.6. The report further noted that there are some free-standing headstones and the stability of these should be periodically checked to ensure that they remain sound. It further recommended that loose stones should be resecured upright to enhance and inform the setting of the site.
- 3.7. Members should note that the Council has recently applied for a faculty to undertake stability testing, and this has now been granted. The Council can therefore now undertake the inspections of memorials and organise any necessary repairs.
- 3.8. Overall, there were no priority works listed for the churchyard and the recommendation on the regular inspection of trees is covered by the Councils wider tree management and risk assessing arrangements.
- 3.9. The lighting columns and lamps which light the main footpath through the churchyard are managed and maintained by Central Bedfordshire Council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Council utilises existing revenue funding and allocated reserves to undertake routine maintenance of the churchyard and receives no funding or financial support from the church.
- 4.2. The earmarked reserve for the Priory Churchyard, established in 2012, has to date largely been used for the repairs to the Priory Gateway. In January 2023 (minute no. 41/23) the Council took the decision to utilise the full balance of the reserve £44,862, to contribute to the Priory House additional works. The reserve currently stands at nil and the 5-year budget forecast includes a £10,000 contribution to the reserve in 2026/27 and again in 2027/28. This coincides with the receipt of the next quinquennial report in 2026. Members should note that there is no immediate cause for concern relating to the boundary walls and should the situation change the Council will consider what action to take to rectify the matter.
- 4.3. The Council also makes a contribution to the electricity costs associated with the architectural lighting of the Priory Church. This is associated with an agreement made between the Council and the Church prior to 2009 and it is understood that the reason for the support was to assist with making the churchyard feel safer during the hours of darkness.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Maintenance of the churchyard is on keeping with the Corporate Plan, specifically Priority Three: To improve further and develop the provision of green and open space in the town and in particular to maintain the priory churchyard in a good state of repair. Members should note that the churchyard is also included within the Priory Gardens Green Flag area its associated management plan.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The regular inspection and management of trees and free-standing headstones in the churchyard is in accordance with the Council's obligations regarding Health and Safety.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The maintenance of the churchyard has passed to the Council in accordance with provisions made within the 1972 Local Government Act which place a duty on local authorities to maintain churchyards which have been formerly closed for burial.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Council has recently introduced a differential mowing regime in the churchyard where certain areas are left as longer grass throughout the summer. As a result, a number of flowering meadow plant species, such as Lady's Bedstraw are emerging to the benefit of wildlife and biodiverse habitat creation.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1. Appendix 1 - Plan of Priory Churchyard

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1. None

12. AUTHOR

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Appendix 1 – Plan of the Priory Churchyard



DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

RESERVE SPENDING – FRENCHS AVENUE FOOTPATH

Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to request authorisation from this Committee for a revised spending proposal associated with the Frenchs Avenue footpath improvements and repairs.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. That the Committee considers the additional cost implications associated with undertaking the footpath improvement works at Frenchs Avenue Public Open Space with a view to either approving additional funding or revising the original proposal as outlined.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Following the spending proposal agreed at the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee in June 2024 the Grounds Operations Manager contacted the company who provided the lowest quotation for the purpose of arranging a site meeting to discuss a start date and the practicalities of implementation.
- 2.2. At the site meeting it became apparent that the contractor had not visited the site prior to providing the quotation and subsequently advised the Council that a revised quotation was required because the work could not be completed within the price given. The reason given was that the original price did not take account of remedial works required to the existing surfaces and encroaching grass.
- 2.3. Members will recall that the original approval was to install a SUDS rubber bonded surface to create a link path from Riley Grove to the existing path and to resurface the existing circular path in the same material.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The Grounds Operations Manager has sought revised quotations from three contractors including the company that originally gave the lowest quotation.
- 3.2. The table below provides details of the original approval given by Members and the lowest current quotation. Appendix 1 provides Members with a plan showing the footpaths in question.

	SUDS rubber bonded circular path	SUDS rubber bonded link path	Total
Original Member Approval	£20,000	£2,000	£22,000
Current Lowest Quotation	£27,060	£6,900	£33,960
Shortfall	£7,060	£4,900	£11,960

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Members originally approved a total of £22,000 for both footpaths by releasing £11,723 from the Developers Contributions (S106) Reserve (specifically set aside for Frenchs Avenue Public Open Space) and £10,277 from the Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve.
- 4.2. Taking account of existing commitments, the Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve currently stands at £17,788 and the Developer Contributions Reserve is fully committed.
- 4.3. If Members are minded to approval the shortfall of £11,960 to complete all the works originally approved this will leave the Open Spaces Improvement Plan Reserve with a balance of £5,828.
- 4.4. Alternatively, Members may wish to review their original decision and approve either the circular path or the link path only.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The recommended actions are in line with the Corporate Plan priority to improve and develop the provision of green space within the town.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The spending proposals detailed in this report all contribute to managing both public and employee Health and Safety.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Footpath resurfacing will use recycled materials.

8. HUMAN RESOURCE, EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None

9. AUTHOR

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Appendix 1 – Footpath Plan for Frenchs Avenue Public Open Space

New Link Path



Existing Circular Path



DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024
DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL 40TH ANNIVERSARY – GROUNDS AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

<p>Purpose of Report: For members to consider and agree upon the options to mark the Town Council's 40th year, 2025/26.</p>

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 It is recommended that Members identify which of the initiatives outlined in section 3.2 should be included in the draft budget for 2025/26, to be considered at the next Committee meeting.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 May 2025 will mark 40 years since the establishment of Dunstable Town Council in its current form. 2025 will also mark 160 years since the establishment of Dunstable as a "body corporate and politic" along with the office of Town Mayor. To mark the Council's 25th anniversary in 2010 the Council created a new event (Party in the Park) and created some community public art (sculptures in Grove House Gardens).
- 2.2 It is proposed to do something different to mark this new milestone. Each Committee is receiving a report in this round with relevant options to ensure the celebrations are shared across services. A series of activities and actions to celebrate the anniversary are being suggested to each committee. These will include celebrating the Council's past achievements, providing a range of events which make reference to the anniversary, and promoting the Council's new Corporate Plan and new brand.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The grounds service has reviewed a number of options and initiatives for Members to consider and these are detailed below:
- Plant 40 sustainable climate resilient trees across Dunstable, at various parks and recreation grounds, or in a single area, during the period October 2025 to March 2026. This could be organised as a volunteer community activity.
 - Develop a series of social media posts throughout the year encouraging gardening and growing activities with a '40 ways to' theme. Posts could identify, for example, 40 ways to encourage wildlife into your garden, 40 ways to grow organically and so on.
 - Explore options to have a Rose named 'Dunstable Town Council' or 'Dunstable'

- Plant and naturalise 40,000 spring flowering bulbs. Planting would take place during Autumn 2025 for flowering in Spring 2026. Some of the planting could be organised as a volunteer community activity.
- 3.2 Members should note that the naming of a Rose has a minimum two-year lead in period and at the time of writing this report the costs are unknown.
- 3.3 With the exception of the social media articles, delivering the initiatives identified above will have financial implications for the Council as it will not be possible to cover the costs from existing revenue budgets. The table below provides some cost estimates, and the financial implications are dealt with more fully in Section 4 of this report.

Initiative	Cost Estimate
Planting 40 trees	£5,500 to £6,500
Rose named after Dunstable	To be determined
Planting 40,000 bulbs at 40 locations.	£8,000 to £10,000 including purchase of bulbs and hire of equipment for mechanical planting.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of preparing social media articles linked to the 40th anniversary can be covered in house using existing Officer resources.
- 4.2 The tree planting, a named rose and the bulb planting costs will require members to approve additional funding as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Whilst these suggested initiatives do not deliver on one individual specific corporate plan action, they will all contribute to the Council's corporate priorities to further improve and develop the provision of green and open space in the town and also help to enhance the identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All of the suggested initiatives can be undertaken within the Council's current health and safety processes and risk assessments.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All of the initiatives can be delivered within the Council's current staffing structure for Grounds and Environmental Services.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY POLICIES

- 9.1 Tree and bulb planting initiatives will contribute to habitat creation and supporting pollinating insects in spring insects in line with the Councils Biodiversity Policy.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Officers will give consideration to ensuring that services and projects delivered as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations will be as accessible as possible to as wider section of Dunstable residents regardless of all protected characteristics.

11. APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Officers believe that it is important to mark the Town Council's 40th year and to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements made during this time. Marking the anniversary will help to foster a sense of place and pride and create positivity about the town.

13. AUTHOR

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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

GROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

SALTING AND GRITTING IN DUNSTABLE

Purpose of Report: To inform Members of the current Central Bedfordshire Council arrangements for gritting and salting roads and footpaths in Dunstable and for Officers to obtain a steer on what more the Council might consider doing in the future.

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. That the Committee determines one of the two following recommendations:
 - 1.1.1. To accept and continue with the current arrangements as detailed in this report.
 - 1.1.2. Provide an indication of what more the Council might consider doing to assist with winter salting and gritting and instruct Officers to provide a further report to Committee on the options and implications.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. During the last winter period some Members asked whether the Council participates in obtaining gritting salt from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) as part of the free salt scheme. Furthermore, Members have also questioned whether the Town Council could and should do more to assist with local gritting and the provision of salt and gritting bins.
- 2.2. The Council has in the past taken delivery of some salt offered by CBC, when it has been made available, and this has been used in a few public locations including access to Creasey Park, Ashton Square and a few key connecting routes and thoroughfares across the towns open spaces. However, delivery of salt from CBC has in some years been sporadic when requested.
- 2.3. The following information regarding arrangements for CBC to grit and salt roads and footways has been taken from their website.

2.3.1. Winter Road Gritting

CBC salt just under half of the roads in Central Bedfordshire. Roads carrying the highest volumes of traffic, with the greatest risk of accidents or providing key access are given priority. These include all A and B roads and most smaller roads, especially if they are busy commuter routes, routes to hospitals, schools, or key to the emergency services.

The CBC web pages provide a search facility to help the public find out if a particular street or road is on the gritting run. If it is not listed, then it is not salted or gritted by CBC.

CBC have provided the following priority information on their web pages:

- **Priority 0 gritting routes** - Roads that CBC will treat in the rare event that resources are not available for treating priority 1 networks. This includes A and B class carriageways and the emergency services.
- **Priority 1 gritting routes** – This includes all A and B class roads, most C class roads, some UC class roads, busy peak commuter routes, main peak hour bus routes, routes to fire stations, ambulance stations and hospitals, most school bus routes.
- **Priority 2 gritting routes** – This includes roads that CBC will treat when the Priority 1 network has been treated and resources are available.

With regard to local roads the CBC website states that some town and parish councils provide a local gritting service with delegated authority from CBC. Dunstable Town Council does not have a delegated authority arrangement in place with CBC.

2.3.2. Footway and Footpath Gritting and Salt Bins

CBC do not grit footways and footpaths. They state that they provide salt bins to Town and Parish Councils, where requested, to enable them (Towns and Parishes) to grit key areas within their towns and villages.

In addition, salt bins are provided for the public to use on roads and footways and are generally sited at bends or hills where the risk of slipping on ice is greater. Salt bins are not provided for people to use within their own private property.

The website has a salt bin location checker and a review of this indicates that there are some 24 bins salt bins located in Dunstable with the majority being in the east and south-east areas of Dunstable.

CBC also operate a salt bag scheme for town and parish councils. They will deliver either a one tonne or a half tonne bag of road de-icing salt, free of charge, to any town or parish that requests it, during December, January and February. Delivery is limited to one unit per month over the 3-month period.

3. **DISCUSSION**

- 3.1. Dunstable Town Council has arrangements in place to grit some of the key footpath network that it maintains across its own parks and open spaces when conditions become very icy or as part of snow clearance activities to prevent re freezing. Salt and grit are purchased using existing budget resources.
- 3.2. In addition, the Council also grits and salts areas such as The Square and Middle Row when it is holding market or other winter activity events. It is for activities that the one tonne of salt from CBC is used, when available.
- 3.3. Whilst the CBC free salt bag scheme may well benefit places far smaller than Dunstable, it has only a very limited impact in Dunstable, due to the size and nature of the town, as one of the largest urban areas in Central Bedfordshire. CBC do not differentiate their offer based on size or population.

- 3.4. With regard to salt bins, which it is understood that CBC refill once installed, Officers have not directly approached CBC for the installation of bins at specific locations. It is possible that local ward Councillors may have in the past, made individual requests direct to CBC but this is unknown at present. It is also not clear from the CBC website what is meant by enabling Town and Parishes to grit their own key areas or how this operates.
- 3.5. Members should note that undertaking direct additional salting and gritting works across the whole town centre or other areas of the town will have a direct impact on existing grounds related routine activities and associated staff resources and would likely incur additional costs for the Council.

4. FINANCIAL, POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN, HEALTH AND SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY, HUMAN RESOURCE, EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no direct implications associated with this report at present. The full implications of any future actions by the Council will be considered within further reports to Committee. This includes any budget and human resource implications.

5. AUTHOR

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