

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIO
COUNCILLOR H E SKINNER****Report to Council – 12 July 2023****Environment:**

The Environment team have been working hard to deliver on its commitment to 'Protect the Environment for the future'. To help support this work two new posts have been created and recruited to focus on Waste and Recycling and Climate Change. If Members are interested in organising a community litter pick, or if you know of any local community groups wanting to know more about Climate Change or Waste and Recycling, please get in touch with the Environment team who will be happy to help.

Climate Strategy Consultation

As you are aware, in 2019, Broxtowe Borough Council made an ambitious commitment to become carbon neutral by 2027. As a result, in 2020, the Council created its 'Climate Change Strategy and Green Futures' Programme to provide strategic direction on how this target would be reached.

Climate change is complex and dynamic and as such the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy was revised to reflect this. The strategy was adopted last week at Cabinet. One of the first actions implemented as an outcome of the revised Strategy has been the undertaking of a public consultation exercise with all our stakeholders. This will help ensure that future revisions of the document are comprehensive and inclusive.

To facilitate this, a public consultation exercise on the draft strategy was undertaken by two MSc Environmental Leadership and Management students from the University of Nottingham.

The consultation process took place over four weeks in June and consisted of an online survey (access to paper copies were made available across a number of locations across the borough) and a number of focus groups sessions.

Results from the consultation are currently being analysed and an update will be provided to Members in due course.

Green Rewards

The Green Rewards platform is an online platform using gamification to incentivise, encourage and inspire residents to take positive environmental behaviour change.

The ground breaking programme has a clear carbon reduction focus and is utilised by residents across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. It allows residents to accumulate points for undertaking sustainable actions (these actions lower their carbon footprint, which in turn helps to tackle climate change), as well as capturing the

user's carbon avoidance metrics, helping support the Nottinghamshire Partners' commitments to work towards becoming carbon neutral.

As Members are aware, the Green Rewards platform was shortlisted for two awards this year.

Household registration numbers across the Borough continue to grow. Currently, there are 2,454 households taking part, which equates to 5% of all households in the Borough.

To date Broxtowe Borough residents, have:

- Saved enough water to fill 37,000 baths by having a four-minute shower
- Saved enough energy to power 8,000 homes by switching off appliances that are not being used
- Avoided using 170,000 single use plastic items by switching to a reusable cup or bottle
- Avoided emitting 146 tonnes of carbon (which is the equivalent of filling 146 hot air balloons).

Green Festivals and Community Engagement Events

Building on the success from last year, the Environment Team are running two Green Festival Events in 2023. At the Hemlock Happening in June, the team had a 'green zone' area. A range of stalls and activities were available, raising awareness on environmental issues, which in turn will have helped to influence positive behaviour change. The next Green Festival event is taking place on the 23 September 2023, on Coronation Park in Eastwood. Planning and promotion is well underway and I would ask you all to show your support and promote this event as widely as possible.

The Environment Team will also be attending all the Play Days planned across the Borough in the summer. They will be offering sustainable crafting activities for the children and will be available to offer advice on environmental issues.

The delivery of engagement events (including community litter picks and talks to local community groups) by the Environment Team has significantly increased this year. These events have helped to raise awareness and drive positive behaviour change around the themes of littering, waste, recycling and climate change. So far the team have undertaken 34 community engagement events, this is up 55% compared to the same time last year.

Parks and Green Spaces

Over the past few months the Grounds Maintenance team have been working on a number of summer bedding projects. Over 20,000 bedding plants have been planted at various locations across the Borough which include Geraniums, Salvias, Marigolds and Petunias. The team have also designed and installed a United Kingdom Flag bed at the Sherwin Island in Bramcote, to commemorate the recent coronation of King

Charles III and to celebrate the life of Elizabeth II. This has been planted using a combination of red & white Begonias and blue Petunias.

Pride in Parks

The 2023/24 Pride in Parks projects are now in the planning stage with improvements planned for Bramcote Hills Park, Sandy Lane Open Space, Queen Elizabeth Park, and Banks Road Open Space. There are also a number of resurfacing projects happening at the moment which are a result of the annual parks and asset inspections regime.

Enhancing biodiversity

Enhancing biodiversity across the Borough is a key priority for the Council and to help support this action, one of the flower beds at Queen Elizabeth Park has been turned into a haven for pollinators. A mixture of flowering shrubs and herbaceous perennials were selected for the bed and were chosen for their bright colours, scent and nectar secretion.

Meadows around the Borough are now in bloom and buzzing with life. Species rich grasslands have a high percentage of flowering plants that support an incredible assortment of insect and animal life. They also have a much greater capacity to absorb and store carbon from the atmosphere. It has been estimated that the soil under a flower rich meadow can contain 500% more carbon than that under plain grass.

Research has shown that vegetation helps slow rainfall run-off, directing water into the ground where the organic content of the soil holds the moisture, helping reduce flood risk. The Environment Team are working to retain, improve and extend areas in local nature reserves and open spaces. Last spring, installation of new signage began, highlighting the positive management of grassland areas and how these help promote the growth of wildflowers and their subsequent support of pollinating insects. The team are now extending this signage to cover all key sites, including Brinsley Headstocks and Toton Fields.

Environmental Protection

The Annual Status Report for Air Quality is currently being written for submission to DEFRA – this confirms that we have had no exceedances of the Air Quality Monitoring Objective for nitrogen dioxide at our sites in 2022.

We are in the process of reviewing the Smoke Control areas within the Borough and working on a consultation in respect of this.