

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIO
COUNCILLOR H E SKINNER****Report to Council – 11 OCTOBER 2023****ENVIRONMENT**

The Environment team continue to work hard to deliver on its commitment to 'Protect the Environment for the future', engaging with residents on sustainability issues as well as working on ways to enhance biodiversity and increase carbon capture using the borough's natural assets. I will now highlight some of the key projects that have or will be taking place.

Waste and Recycling – Recycling contamination trial

As Members are aware, contamination rates in the green-lidded recycling bins (this is materials that are unable to be recycled) are increasing across the borough. This means that the likelihood of loads being rejected and redirected to the Energy Recovery Facility for incineration is much higher. Recycling as much waste as possible is beneficial for the environment as it not only conserves natural resources but can have a positive impact on climate change (less energy is used for recycling rather than generating new items from raw materials).

The Council recently employed a new Waste and Recycling Engagement Officer, whose remit is to look at ways to improve the quality and quantity of recycling collected in the borough.

From the end of September, a collection round in Beeston Central has been selected to take part in a trial, with the aim of improving recycling performance. For context, DEFRA has set a recycling target of 65% by 2030, currently the UK average recycling rate is just 44.6%. Last year the Council's recycling rate was just over 37% but the collection round in Beeston Central has a current recycling rate of 28.7%.

Feedback from resident's highlight that they are confused over the items that they can or can't recycle. To address this, the following actions will be undertaken in the trial area over a three-month trial period:

- Refresher training sessions for the crews as to what is acceptable in the green-lidded recycling bin.
- Working with the University of Nottingham community ambassadors to address contamination in student accommodation.
- Increase communication with the residents on the round, which will include an initial leaflet drop, a glass bag and regular monthly updates as to progress.
- Working with the areas local community groups and schools.

The trial will begin at the end of September, which coincides with Fresher Week at the University and will continue until just after Christmas. This will be followed up with a resident survey and extensive data analysis to assess the impacts of the actions. I will report back to Members in the New Year with the results.

Garden Waste

Members will be pleased to hear that this has been the most successful year for garden waste subscriptions since the scheme began in 2014. Currently there are 22,680 subscribers (approx. 44% of the Borough's households), which is a 1% improvement on 2021/22 subscriber figures the previous highest achievement.

I would like to remind Members that residents can still sign up to the garden waste service this year and from the 1 October 2023, the garden waste subscription fee for the remainder of the year has been reduced to £33 for the first bin and £12 for every other additional bin.

Leaf Fall

Climate Change has for the second year affected leaf fall across the borough. The higher temperatures and lack of rainfall experienced in June, caused stress to the trees, which in turn caused their leaves to fall. This has meant that the sweeper teams were busy trying to keep carriageways and gullies clear during the summer.

As we enter the Autumn period, the sweeper and street cleansing teams will need to deal with significant amounts of leaf fall. However, this work is weather-dependant. At times, leaves fall steadily, so that the teams can keep up with the work, at other times, large amounts of leaves fall very quickly across the whole Borough, which can be a major challenge for the section and this generally happens after a period of bad weather. Please can Members report any areas of concern to the Environment Team.

Green Rewards

I am really pleased to inform Members that Green Rewards, the online platform designed to incentivise, encourage and motivate residents to undertake positive environmental behaviour change, has won a prestigious national award. The platform won for the Best Collaborative Working Initiative, at the Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards in September and highlights our outstanding working partnership with the other Nottinghamshire partners in tackling Climate Change together.

Green Festival

In September, over 35 stall holders attended this year's Green Festival held at Coronation Park in Eastwood. The event was a success and offered positive engagement opportunities with local residents around the topic of sustainability and climate change. Stall holders included Severn Trent, Nottingham Energy Partnership, The Butterfly Conservation Trust East Midlands, the Environment Agency, Pulp Friction and Nottingham Youth Climate Assembly.

The team will be looking to build on this success for next year.

Free Trees

The Council will again be launching the popular Free Trees give away in November. This year there are 800 trees available. As last year, residents applying for the trees will need to be members of the Green Rewards scheme. Information on how to join can be found on the Council's website.

The following four species of tree have been selected this year; Spindle, Rowan, Elder and Silver Birch. These trees have been selected due to their ability to enhance biodiversity. The trees are native to the UK and are grown at a UK nursery. Full care instructions will be given with each of the trees when they are delivered to residents early in the new year. Deliveries will take place using the Council's electric vehicles.

Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy Public Consultation – University of Nottingham

As Members are aware, the first public consultation on the Council's refreshed Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy, took place between June and July this year. The consultation was undertaken by two Masters students from the University of Nottingham and the Environment Team have recently received their final report. All feedback will now be considered and incorporated (where possible) into a revised Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy, which will go to Cabinet in March 2024. Please can I ask Members to encourage residents to raise any suggestions or comments that they have about Climate Change with the Environment Team.

Brinsley Headstocks

In January of this year, a condition report on the Brinsley Headstocks, highlighted that the structure was at risk of failure. The Headstocks are located on the former Brinsley colliery coal mine site, which was worked from 1872 until 1934. Once safety concerns were raised, the Headstocks were fenced off from the public.

At the beginning of September, initial works have begun to make the Headstocks safe. The winding wheels from the structure have been removed and are safely stored at Kimberley Depot.

The next stage of the project will be to assess possible future options for the structure. An assessment of the timbers still on site will be made when the remaining structure has been dismantled and inspected.

A decision will be required from Members on how to move forward, once various options have been explored and costs determined.

Ilkeston Recreation Ground, Stapleford

Over the last year a number of sink holes have appeared on Ilkeston Road Recreation Ground, in Stapleford. A contractor was commissioned to scan the site with ground penetrating radar. The radar identified a number of potential disturbances, which have all been investigated. Thankfully none of these were voids and caused no concern. Moving forward the site will still continue to be monitored.

Corporate Volunteer work

The Parks and Open Spaces Team recently worked with a group of corporate volunteers at Bramcote Hills Park. They assisted with the removal of a number of large Rhododendron bushes in the woods. These works will help to encourage and enhance

biodiversity in the woodland The volunteers had a really positive day and if Members are aware of any volunteer groups that would like to be involved in future conservation opportunities, please can they contact the Environment Team.