

## Bridgnorth Town Council Working Group - Summary Document

### Tree Planting scheme Working Group

**Members:** Cllrs: Chetter; Rochelle; Neal

**Authority:** Town Council minute 0012/2122c(i) dated 18th May 2021

#### **Background:**

The WG was formed in 2019 (Town Council meeting dated 3rd March 2020 Minute 0442/1920). A number of discussions occurred however there have been no recommendations to Council to date (May 2021)

#### **References / Meetings / Discussion**

14/06/21 Meeting of the Working Group took place in Crown Meadow

- Chair Elected; Cllr Neal

- Vice chair elected; Cllr Chetter

- Tree Town planting proposal for Crown Meadow discussed. Support from Football and Tennis clubs was noted. Consultation with local community and positive responses and interest received noted. That all trees, guards and sundries will be funded by Tree town. That a community tree planting event managed by the charity 'Possible' can take place in the winter under their insurance and liability. That field grown Oak trees and small varieties beside play area will not require extensive management and are unlikely to need any management for several decades, also that this type of tree does not present an issue for the Council currently.

-The Tree management policy was discussed and it was felt that while this was a useful step forward it would be useful to update the TC land ownership and management map to include trees that may be of concern or on boundaries. This will allow the group to better understand the scale of the challenge of managing the Councils tree stock and effectively plan for it.

- An update of the remit of the group was discussed to broaden the remit to include all green spaces / grounds maintenance and it was resolved to produce a suggested Terms of Reference for consideration by the full Council.

#### **Initial recommendations:**

1)

To support and approve the Tree Town Plan (agreed unanimously) with some amendments:

- Reduction of number of trees in open space, namely 3 trees beside Skate park
- Removal of trees in hedge line beside Tennis club boundary in line with comments by tennis club and Grounds Maintenance lead.
- Exchange 'spiky' thorn varieties proposed with non-thorn varieties in hedge line beside tennis club boundary to prevent puncturing of footballs or other potential injury.

Tree Town Plan:

- 120m new hedge, tennis club boundary, hornbeam or similar native non-thorn variety.
- x6 standard Oak trees, 15m+ spacing along bank beside top pitch (not interfering with pitch at full maturity)
- x2 standard 'other' trees, Towards Victoria Rd entrance.
- x5 medium sized trees, whitebeam or similar, around children's play area.
- Community planting weekend to be organised by the charity 'Possible' during planting season (Nov-March) by arrangement.

Attached: Tree Town Plan, correspondence with Tennis and Football clubs, example community flyer, FB and email comments from community. (request addition of correspondence related between residents and clerk).

2)

To request that the ownership / management map provided to the Town Council by the Climate advisory group is updated to check accuracy and include potential and actual 'problem' trees. i.e. trees that have had work previously; trees on boundaries with other property; trees expected to be of issue.

**Officer Comments:**

(nb from Cllr Neal) : please include example costs of tree maintenance to similar openly grown park trees and Street tree type when commenting on maintenance costs).

Outdoor and Property Manager:

In general terms we would agree with the plan for Crown Meadow with the proposed amendments in place. However, there is a Fields in Trust covenant on this open space and checks will have to be made that the planting of additional trees is acceptable.

We were asked to comment on costs and as last year during the pandemic was not a typical year for tree works and I will use relative costs from the autumn/winter period 2019/20, and whilst we appreciate that there will little costs involved in the first 5-years or so, there will be additional costs further down the line. Especially, with the increased number of sites to look after as well as increased travelling time, fuel costs and wear and tear on the equipment. Using the 2019/20 period the Council spent £6,600.00 on arborist contractors alone. A further £1,200.00 on a 4-month hire of a woodchipper, a spend of £7,800.00. This is without considering the DLF man hours and equipment costs. It would not be unreasonable to estimate an overall cost of £10,000.00 per annum. There should also be a contingency for the effects of severe weather storms that we witnessed in 2018 which decimated the ancient Cedar trees in the Cemetery, and more recently the Ash dieback disease now affecting large areas of the County.

Town Clerk:

In general terms it appears the vision for Crown Meadow, as I understand it, can be realised with relative ease.

The schematic and of the revised plan for Crown Meadow is not attached to the report and neither are the comments from the football and tennis clubs. However, from the verbal description of the plans for Crown Meadow the plan seems achievable. I am not sure which works are proposed for the Council grounds team (if any) and which are to be undertaken by the charity – but that would not prevent the work being undertaken. I would just need to understand expectations of the WG so that I can manage any competing demands for the workforce. This should not be too difficult as we have a few months to timetable in the works.

I note there is a recommendation for a reduction of a number of trees, does this mean a crown reduction, or removal to reduce the number of trees by the skate park. Either way there will be some cost however it is likely that the current tree works budget can accommodate this.

I am unclear as to who 'the charity is' – it would be useful to document that in the report. Support from AFC Bridgnorth and the Tennis club and is indicated but not attached. Have you considered asking Bridgnorth Town Juniors (who are separate from AFC Bridgnorth) for their views as they are the Team that play football on the Crown Meadow. Are, you planning for the Council to undertake some consultation of its own? As with all such matters and initiatives I would be mindful of confirmation bias.

I have provided the WG with a copy of the most recent tree surveys (3) which include information on trees that are or worthy of mention and an indication of works that are or might be required. These surveys are the prime (but not sole) director of major tree works activity.

I have had sight separately of a draft revision of the TOR's (I have also attached the current TORs). I think it would be preferable to include the proposed Changes to the TOR's within the recommendations of this report (attach it as a draft) and make a recommendation that it be adopted. Generally, the work of a working group will be to work on a time restricted and single issue (or a narrow set of issues) in a relatively informal manner, meet ad hoc, communicate via email – something with a defined outcome at the end. The draft TORs produced include aspects that would sit within a formal committee e.g. ongoing oversight of a continuing activity. The definition of green spaces could benefit with some definition or categorisation. (e.g. are we talking about Town Council owned spaces only? Some of the green spaces that we own and maintain have competing demands and a variety of uses at different times to different people. We, under contract from Shropshire Council maintain some areas and these are done so as per their requested specification, do you intend to include the cemetery and would you wish to include wider cemetery management (e.g. interments) in this). A WG would not normally have delegated powers to oversee matters that would require the direction of staff and neither would it need to have a quorum (because activity can take place outside of formal meetings).

I have provided the WG with copies of some emails that relate to comments about trees and vegetation. I have not had time to trawl through all staff email boxes to identify all tree related correspondence and sift out those which might be relevant.

#### **Review by WG members:**

Tree Planting on Crown Meadow – See Tree WG summary recommendation (Crown Meadow), enclosed.

Terms Of Reference – Change of name for the Working Group and change to Terms of Reference to be forwarded to Town Council for consideration.

#### **Recommendations for Full Council:**

**To receive a report from the Tree Planting Scheme Working Group and consider its 3 recommendations:**

- To support and approve the Tree Town Plan with some amendments:
  - Reduction of number of trees in open space, namely 3 trees beside Skate park
  - Removal of trees in hedge line beside Tennis club boundary in line with comments by tennis club and Grounds Maintenance lead.
  - Exchange 'spiky' thorn varieties proposed with non-thorn varieties in hedge line beside tennis club boundary to prevent puncturing of footballs or other potential injury.

Tree Town Plan:

- 120m new hedge, tennis club boundary, hornbeam or similar native non-thorn variety.
- x6 standard Oak trees, 15m+ spacing along bank beside top pitch (not interfering with pitch at full maturity)
- x2 standard 'other' trees, Towards Victoria Rd entrance.
- x5 medium sized trees, whitebeam or similar, around children's play area.
- Community planting weekend to be organised by the charity 'Possible' during planting season (Nov-March) by arrangement.

2- To rename the Tree Planting Working Group the 'Bridgnorth Green Spaces Working Group'

3- To approve Terms of Reference for the Bridgnorth Green Spaces Working Group draft attached.

**Councillor L Neal**  
**For Tree Planting Scheme Working Group**

**Supporting Documents:**

1. Current Terms of Reference
2. Draft Terms of Reference
3. Tree Town Plan
4. Tree Guard Images
5. Correspondence from AFC Bridgnorth and Bridgnorth Tennis Club
6. Facebook Comments Tree Town
7. Leaflet responses.
8. Tree WG summary recommendation (Crown Meadow)
9. Poster Tree Town – Crown Meadow.

## **Tree Planting Scheme Working Group – Terms of Reference**

The Working Group will comprise up to 5 Members.

The working group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -

1. To make recommendations to Town Council in relation to where and how trees should be planted in Bridgnorth and the surrounding area, given the available root stock and funding.
2. To undertake reasonable activity that can capture the opinion of the electorate, if considered necessary.
3. To liaise directly with Shropshire Council and other bodies, including funding bodies.
4. To agree implementation of any activity, once approved by Town Council.

(Approved at - Town Council meeting dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 Minute 0442/1920 refers.  
Reviewed without amendment at - Town Council meeting dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Minute 0012/2122 (c) refers.)

## Tree Planting Scheme Working Group – Terms of Reference to be changed to “Bridgnorth Green Spaces Working Group”

The Working Group will comprise up to 7 Members, 3 of which to be council members others can be co-opted from the public, voluntary groups or interested parties.

### **Background**

The role of the 'Green Spaces Working Group' is to enable the most efficient management of Green Space in Bridgnorth while enhancing the natural capital of the Town for the benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors. High quality green spaces enhance the health and wellbeing of communities and feeds into the visitor economy. Green spaces can also help to meet the councils' commitments under the Climate Motion & Tree Charter as well as addressing biodiversity loss.

The working group shall undertake the following roles and functions: -

- 1) To support the creation and updating of management plans for green spaces maintained by the TC, in consultation with DLF staff & residents & other agencies (e.g., Bug life / Wildlife Trust)
- 2) To assess / appraise management plan annually considering resident's comments (recorded through year)
- 3) To liaise with residents and volunteer groups of the town to ensure the smooth running of maintenance works and identified areas requiring attention.
- 4) Develop a pragmatic H&S process for volunteering in green spaces based on the current sign off process used by DLF
- 5) Communicate the management plans to residents to help with understanding across the community of what they include.
- 6) Seek funding, grants and support to help achieve management plan vision wherever possible via the council office
- 7) Explore opportunities to link up with younger people (Schools, Youth Groups) to facilitate an understanding of the philosophy of green spaces and how they can contribute
- 8) Inform the maintenance of the risk register where appropriate

### **Quorate**

3 council members should be present to be quorate.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The group should meet as required but at least 6 times per year.

### **Governance**

This working group reports into the full Council Committee. A quarterly summary report to be submitted to the Full Council to be considered.

Once the management plans are signed off by full council the working group can oversee their operationalisation.







5

## Correspondence with Tennis and Football club

On Mon, 9 Nov 2020 at 09:36, Luke Neal <[luke.neal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luke.neal@yahoo.co.uk)> wrote:  
Dear Mark and Lorna,

Thank you for meeting with Lara and me to chat about trees in the Crown Meadow. We really appreciate your support.

We agreed that there would not be standard (tall individual) trees in the hedgerow beside the tennis club in order to avoid leaf fall and overhanging branches on the courts.

You were both happy with our plans to plant the hedge long the concrete panel fence, an avenue of Oaks across the park along the ridge and other small trees around the childrens play area.

If you could reply to this message confirming the above then I will be able to forward your responses to the Town Council and this will be a big step forward to gaining the permission we need from them.

We hope to run a community tree planting weekend towards the end of Feb and hope you will be able to join us.

You can see a bit more info here: [Tree Town — Possible](#)

Yours sincerely,

Luke Neal. 07786 101 789 [luke.neal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luke.neal@yahoo.co.uk)

--- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Lorna Dexter <[info@bridgnorthtennisclub.co.uk](mailto:info@bridgnorthtennisclub.co.uk)>

**To:** Luke Neal <[luke.neal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luke.neal@yahoo.co.uk)>

**Cc:**

**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 November 2020, 18:26:48 GMT

**Subject:** Re: Tree Town

Afternoon Luke

Lovely meet yourself and Lara.

Yes happy with your plans affecting the fence line of the Crown Meadow to Bridgnorth Tennis Club. I can confirm our conversation concluded with agreement for a hedgerow planting no higher than the existing concrete fencing with no individual tall trees to be planted due to anticipation of maintenance required owing to leaf fall and branch cutting.

Best of luck with you plans

Kindest

Lorna  
Club Secretary

**Mark Weale** <[markweale@mail.com](mailto:markweale@mail.com)>

**To:** Luke Neal

Mon, 9 Nov 2020 at 17:50

Hi Luke

Just to confirm from our conversation yesterday there are no issues from AFC Bridgnorth and we fully support your venture

Mark Weale  
AFC Bridgnorth Chairman

Sent from my iPhone

### Facebook comments:

- **Louise Elkes**

How can people help with watering?

#### Tree Town

At the tree planting day we hope people will sign up to stay in touch so we can organise watering in the summer. The tennis club have kindly offered use of their tap.

If you want to message us your details we will start making a record to get in touch ...

#### Tamsin Preece

If you stand by the skate park and look towards Vic Rd at the existing trees by the pedestrian entrance they were obviously planted with landscaping in mind and look beautiful in the summer. I think what you're doing is a lovely idea and as one of the residents who will benefit most - thank you x

#### Jules England

How lovely. X

- **Mel Garside**

Amazing Lara! Well done you clever bean 😊 xx

#### Kev Adams

Excellent work Lara and Luke 👍

#### Beki Storybun

Go go Lara ❤️

- **Christine Ward**

What a wonderful idea. I've never been round there but it sounds lovely xxx

#### Tree Town

Come and join us in Feb to plant a tree!

#### Christine Ward

I will do xx

#### Tessa Rose

Love oak trees

#### Tree Town

Us too! Probably take 30yrs before they look their best mind you!

## **Tessa Rose**

Yes but they are the best, I grew 4 saplings from the acorns off the oak tree by the entrance to the castle walk, they are now on a farm in the country

**Responses to leaflet delivery 21/12/20**

**Leaflets delivered to all streets backing onto Crown meadow – Victoria Rd, Innage Lane, Hookfield and crescents.**

**Posters put up 09/01/21**

To lara I would like to plant some trees with you. My name is Rupert and I am 6 and I live 1 house a way.

I like your Idea. And I go to st johns and I can bring my own spade.

From

Rupert

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Hi Luke and Lara,

Thank you for the flyer that arrived the other day. What a great idea you've had! We would love to help with the tree planting, and adopt a tree (or trees) to water over the summer, if you haven't already been overwhelmed with offers.

Please keep us updated with your plans.

With best wishes,  
Catherine, Harvey and Hope Brown

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Luke.

Hi. Your leaflet came through recently, and we think it's a great idea. Apart from all the benefits you listed, the nearby cricket pitch looks so much more attractive with its perimeter of mature trees adjacent to the car park behind Sainsburys. It doesn't take a huge leap of imagination to picture Crown Meadow similarly planted - yes, we'll support. Both in planting, and happy to adopt one, and keep it watered in summer.

Besides, think my favourite saying of recent years is the old Chinese proverb:

Q. When's the best time to plant a tree?

A. 25 years ago.

Q. When's the next best time to plant a tree?

A. Now.

Afraid I don't do Facebook, so unable to look at the plans, but keep us in the loop, and count us in.

Martin Green & Linda Munday

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### Recommendation of the Tree Working Group

We propose to full council:

To support and approve the Tree Town Plan with some amendments:

- Reduction of number of trees in open space, namely 3 trees beside Skate park
- Removal of trees in hedgeline beside Tennis club boundary in line with comments by tennis club and Grounds Maintenance lead.
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- Community planting weekend to be organised by the charity 'Possible' during planting season (Nov-March) by arrangement.

The Tree Planting proposal is widely supported by the community, leaflets have been delivered to all houses adjacent to the park and posters were put up at all entrances to the park. We have the support and backing of both the Football club, of which Lara is a member, and the neighbouring tennis club with whom we have discussed our plans.

Crown Meadow is widely regarded as bare and lacking variety or interest and so the trees are welcomed. Furthermore the concrete fence between the tennis courts is ugly and the proposed hedge is also welcomed.

During the last summers heatwave the Crown Meadow became largely unusable, we know that summer heatwaves are set to become hotter and more frequent and without shade the park will be an unpleasant place to visit. The trees beside the top football pitch are expected to provide much needed shade for spectators during football matches as well as pleasant shade to enjoy for sitting as will the smaller trees beside the play equipment. It is incumbent on the the Town Council to plan for how its green spaces will continue to provide enjoyment for all in the face of a changing climate.

#### **From Tree Hazard Report 2020 conclusion 3.2:**

*3.2 To ensure the benefits that trees deliver are maintained for future generations, a proactive and sustainable tree planting initiative is recommended. This should strategise new tree planting, promoting a resilient urban forest with species diversity that can adapt to climate change.*

#### **This plan meets the remit of the Tree Committee, namely:**

1. *To make recommendations to Town Council in relation to where and how trees should be planted in Bridgnorth and the surrounding area, given the available root stock and funding*
2. *To undertake reasonable activity that can capture the opinion of the electorate, if considered necessary.*

#### **Bridgnorth Town Council is a signatory to the Woodland Trust Tree Charter in 2019 pledging to:**

*Sustain landscapes rich in wildlife*

*Plant for the future*

*Celebrate the power of trees to inspire*

*Grow forests of opportunity and innovation*

*Protect irreplaceable trees and woods*  
*Plan greener local landscapes*  
*Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees*  
*Make trees accessible to all*  
*Combat the threats to our habitats*  
*Strengthen our landscapes with trees.*

The Tree Town plan meets these commitments very well, in addition to strengthening the commitment to the Climate Change motion the Council also adopted in 2019.



## Crown Meadow

We know that in 20-30 years time summers will be much hotter than they are now. Heatwaves will increase and without shade, it will be too hot to enjoy our parks and open spaces.

### Fortunately, Lara, age 9, has a plan!

During Lockdown 1, Lara and her dad measured out the Crown Meadow, looked at where trees could be planted without blocking peoples light or interfering with games and sports (Lara plays football for Bridgnorth Town so its really important to her that we can use the pitches properly). She has spoken with the Mayor and the Town Council Tree Committee to make sure they are happy. She has been in touch with the Tennis Club and the Football club and made adjustments to the plan to meet their needs. Trees will be well spaced and positioned to provide shade and enjoyment for all in years to come. She has raised money with the Charity 'Possible' and we have funds to buy the trees and organise a community tree planting day:

<https://www.wearepossible.org/tree-town>

### SO NOW WE NEED YOU!

If you want to know more – please get in touch: [Luke.Neal@Yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Luke.Neal@Yahoo.co.uk)

See our plans on the FaceBook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TreeTownBridgnorth>

Join us to plant a tree in February – we also need people to adopt a tree and help keep them watered over the summer!

**FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE  
ONE TREE AT A TIME**