



STONEHOUSE TOWN COUNCIL

Members of the Town Environment Committee

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Environment Committee to be held on Monday 25th March, 7pm at Stonehouse Library, High Street, Stonehouse, GL10 2NG.

Committee Members:

Councillors: Rachel Armstrong, Deborah Curtis, Marcus Dixon, Neil Gibbs (Committee Chair), Carol Kambites (Chair/Town Mayor), Val Randell, Keith Terry (Committee Vice Chair) Theresa Watt.

A period of up to 15 minutes will be set aside at the beginning of the meeting for members of the public to raise questions.

Carlos Novoth
Town Clerk
19th March 2024

Attendees are reminded that the Proceedings of this meeting may be filmed, photographed or recorded.

A G E N D A

E/759 To receive apologies.

E/760 Declarations of Interest

E/761 To approve the minutes of the Town Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 26th February.

E/762 To receive the latest updated Environment Budget.

E/763 To receive the tree inspection from Glendale Services and approve recommended works.

E/764 To consider developing a Biodiversity Policy for Stonehouse.

E/765 To consider the request for:

- a. The relocation of a bench in Laburnum Park
- b. The siting of a memorial bench at Doverow Hill Woods

E/766 To approve the purchase of self-watering bags for the towns recently planted trees.

E/767 To comment on planning applications.

E/768 To receive Working Groups updates. Members may wish to note any reports from the following: Comms, Stroudwater (Bristol Road) Station, Canal Rejuvenation, Transport and Highways, Public Rights of Way and Recreation.

E/769 To receive a report on planning decisions received from Stroud District Council.

E/770 To approve communications in support of the meeting's decisions.

E/771 Date of next Environment Committee meeting: Monday 29th April 2024.

Minutes (subject to agreement at the next Committee meeting) of a meeting of the Town Environment Committee on Monday 26th February, 7pm at Stonehouse Library, High Street, Stonehouse, GL10 2NG.

Present:

Councillors: Debbie Curtis, Marcus Dixon, Neil Gibbs (Committee Chair) and Theresa Watt.

Also present: Carlos Novoth (Town Clerk) and a representative of Transition Stroud

Attendees are reminded that the Proceedings of this meeting may be filmed, photographed, or recorded.

E/745 To receive apologies.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Rachel Armstrong, Carol Kambites, Val Randell and Keith Terry

E/746 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

E/747 To approve the minutes of the Town Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 29th January.

Committee APPROVED the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting

E/748 To receive the latest updated Environment Budget.

Committee NOTED the updated report showing a total 'Actual Net' Income of £2,019.64; 'Actual Net' Expenditure of £51,839.67 and Reserve Expenditure of £5,191.70

E/749 To discuss and agree a proposal, to present to Stroud District Council to secure Market Towns Vitality Fund for Stonehouse.

Committee proposed the following initiatives:

- Erection of additional planter posts throughout the town for 'In Bloom'
- Improvements to shop frontages
- Improved and coordinated signage within the town and between the town and the canal
- Re lining of the High street car park
- Improvements to Church walk - the main pedestrian route into the town
- Producing a graphic that could be used as an identity for the town on its streetscape assets
- Funding a Road Traffic Order (RTO) to provide additional on street parking



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E/750 To note a new project called Wild About Nature, which lists a wide range of wildlife events taking place in the Stroud District.

Whilst the council are active in a number of projects, only two activities were thought relevant to add to the Wild About Nature project - the walking festival and a 'Bug Hunt' activity based on the Ship Inn site.

A representative of Transition Stroud arrived at the meeting in support of agenda item E/751 - with agreement of the committee, the Chair invited the representative to provide an overview of the initiative.

E/751 To approve a spend of £2000 from the Climate budget to match funding for Transition Stroud E-bike project.

The initiative is based on encouraging people to consider the use of electric bikes as an alternative to cars; a combination of normal sized adult bikes and 'Cargo' type bikes are to be provided in two locations within the District; Brimscombe and Minchinhampton; it is hoped that Stonehouse will also be able and willing to join and provide financial support. 'e' bikes will be made available for individuals to hire for a set period of time with a view to encouraging them to purchase an electric bike for themselves. It is anticipated that the two bikes allocated to Stonehouse will be based at Bridge Café where staff will hire them out and provide some basic training on their use. The initiative has received funding of £20,000 through Stroud District Council's 'Access Travel Fund'. Further funding has also been secured but in order to provide the best possible outcome, additional funding is required. The scheme will be fully insured by Transition Stroud. The Chair thanked the representative for attending the meeting. Committee wished to be part of this new initiative and **APPROVED** the £2,000 financial support requested by Transition Stroud.

The representative left the meeting.

E/752 To note the proposed 20mph zone on various roads in Stonehouse.

Committee supported Gloucestershire County Council's road traffic order to reinforce the 20 mph limit in certain parts of Stonehouse but asked Officers to feedback the town council's view that there should be a blanket 20mph limit throughout the town.

E/753 To seek retrospective approval for:

- the funding associated with the revised ecology report £800 plus VAT
- the required surface water flood risk assessment for the whole of Stagholt field £650 plus VAT
- costs associated with re-application for the change of use for the site (additional allotments).



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Committee were made aware of the need to progress quickly with the necessary reports requested by Stroud District Council's Planning department. The Clerk discussed the matter with the Chair of Council and Chair of Environment Committee prior to placing the order.

Committee retrospectively APPROVED the expenditure totalling £1,450 plus vat in addition to any necessary planning fees.

E/754 To comment on planning applications.

S.24/0194/TPO Sperry Way, Stonehouse

T2. Lime - fell tree and grind out stump. T3. Lime - remove side branches to monolith tree. T4, T5, T7 Lime trees - remove regenerative growth back to trunk (re-pollard).

Response: Council notes the essential tree works that need to be undertaken. There is some confusion with regards to tree numbers however the town council has no objections

S.24/0136/FUL Site Of Former Reliance Works, Downton Road, Bridgend

Proposed industrial unit.

Response: The town council OBJECTS to the proposed B2 use of the Reliance works; the land should be allocated for light industrial use only (a maximum of 6 units) bearing in mind the close proximity of the nearby housing estate. The adjacent industrial estate already has a shortage of parking spaces and so adequate parking will be essential. Screening from the housing estate should be in the form of trees rather than fencing.

S.23/2391/FUL Greiner Bio-One Ltd, Unit 2, Pear Tree Way, Stonehouse

Erection of 2m high black paladin fence and manual access gates. (Revised drawings received 16.2.24)

Response: The town council continues to OBJECT on the basis that the facility needs to be bunded by trees as per the original application

S.24/0312/HHOLD 6 Meadow Road, Stonehouse

Erection of a two storey side extension

Response: No objection from the town council if none from neighbours

E/755 To receive Working Groups updates. Members may wish to note

any reports from the following:

Comms - There are no updates.

Stroudwater (Bristol Road) Station - there was a really good article in the papers recently.

Canal Rejuvenation - this is progressing on a number of fronts albeit, there have been quite a number of hurdles to be overcome.

Transport and Highways - There have been no highway meetings lately - mention was made of commitments made by Highways that have not been progressed - the Clerk has been asked to pursue these



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Public Rights of Way - There have been no further movements on the Town Green application - it was felt that this may be for GDPR reasons - the clerk to pursue
Recreation - There have a small number of issues raised by the planning department in relation to the planning application for Stagholt. In order to progress matters quickly with the extension to the allotments, a separate planning application for the allotments will be pursued at this time; this will include an ecology report and flood risk assessment

E/756 To receive a report on planning decisions received from Stroud District Council.

Committee NOTED the latest planning decisions

E/757 To approve communications in support of the meeting's decisions.

Mention to be made of the Market Town's Vitality Fund and ideas for the town.

E/758 Date of next Environment Committee meeting: Monday 25th March 2024.

Committee NOTED the date of the next meeting

Financial Budget Comparison

for Town Environment Committee

Comparison between 01/04/23 and 18/03/24 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions. Includes commitments.
Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/23

		2023/2024	Reserve	Actual Net	Balance	Bal %age
2010	In Bloom					
2010/1	Contract Planting	£0.00	£2,677.98	£0.00	£2,677.98	100.00%
2010/2	Non-Contract Planting	£3,000.00	£0.00	£2,209.06	£790.94	-26.36%
2010/3	Watering Services	£3,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,000.00	-100.00%
2010/4	Other	£1,000.00	£0.00	£3,971.33	-£2,971.33	297.13%
2010	Total	£7,000.00	£2,677.98	£6,180.39	£3,497.59	-49.97%
2050	Cultural Events & Studies					
2050/1	Goodwill	£5,000.00	£0.00	£4,765.10	£234.90	-4.70%
2050/2	Civic Awards	£300.00	£0.00	£111.34	£188.66	-62.89%
2050/3	Other	£3,000.00	£930.92	£1,224.54	£2,706.38	-90.21%
2050/4	Communications	£1,000.00	£0.00	£300.00	£700.00	-70.00%
2050	Total	£9,300.00	£930.92	£6,400.98	£3,829.94	-41.18%
2080	Neighbourhood Plan Review	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	0.00%
2090	Planning Specialist Advice					
2090/1		£0.00	£0.00	£884.00	-£884.00	100.00%
2090/2		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	0.00%
2090	Total	£0.00	£0.00	£884.00	-£884.00	100.00%
Total Town Environment Committee		£69,600.00	£5,191.70	£57,130.92	£17,660.78	-25.37%

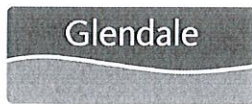
Stonehouse Town Council - Visual Tree Assessment 2024.



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A 'Duty of Care' in relation to tree inspection is owed to persons who may be reasonably contemplated (by tree owners, tree managers and tree inspectors) to be affected by their action or inaction. This duty means that the actions of these persons need to meet a standard of care. If they do not, then negligence in Common Law may be proved and result in a claim for damages.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Stonehouse Town Council are the local authority with responsibility for the town of Stonehouse in Gloucestershire

1.2 Duty of Care

Stonehouse Town Council has all the normal responsibilities of being a landowner, including the duty of care with regards to harm to those who may foreseeably be affected by use of the land, or harm caused to neighbouring property or people.

1.3 History

Glendale undertook a full tree inspection during September 2022.

Stonehouse Town Council has a requirement for regular reinspection of their tree stock.

1.4 Instruction

Glendale has been instructed, by Stonehouse Town Council, to carry out a re -inspection of trees on their sites in January 2024

2.0 Specification

2.1 In summary the standard specification applied is as follows

- To identify, locate and inspect all trees on the properties
- Property to be mapped via Google maps. Output files available in other GIS formats.
- Trees to be identified by species and size.
- Trees to be assessed for risk of harm to users of the site and 3rd parties.
- Recommendations for works to be noted.
- A summary of the site with any recommendations for woodland management to be provided if appropriate.
- Inspection will be a ground based Visual Tree Inspection (VTA).
- The main purpose of the inspection is to assess the tree's general condition and additionally evaluate any risk to site users or 3rd parties.
- General management observations for longer term management may be included if appropriate.

3.0 Methodology.

3.1 Timing

The entire inspection works were concluded during **January 29th, 30th & 31st 2024.**

3.2 Qualifications

All elements of assessment/survey & inspection were undertaken by Glendale surveyor/Inspectors Peter Jackson & Joel MacIntyre

These Inspectors have more than 25 years experience in tree /vegetation management and are both qualified LANTRA Professional Tree Inspectors and registered users of the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment system (QTRA).

Both inspectors have recently attended PTI refresher training (Nov 2023)

3.3 Limitations

All trees have been assessed, as specified, using the recognised system known as **VTA** (Visual Tree Assessment) "Dr. David Lonsdale (Ref. Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment & Management 1999) and Mattheck & Breloer (Ref. The Body Language of Trees 1999)."

All trees have been inspected from ground level only. Whilst obvious aerial defects can be identified, often the structure of the crown, or position of the tree, will restrict vision and identification of others.

Trees are dynamic living organisms, whose health and condition can be subject to rapid changes, depending upon a number of internal and external factors. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are based on the trees at the time of inspection. It should be noted that even apparently sound, healthy looking trees, can fail.

The observations gathered during VTA do not account for a tree's response in extreme weather conditions.

This report represents the state of the trees on the day examined. Where no timed recommendations are made then the currency of this report will expire after 3 years from the date of inspection.

3.4 Full Site Survey/Tree inspections

3.41 Dataset

The following dataset was collected as appropriate for each tree as required:-

Site Name	Name of asset, as work instruction
Tree ID	Individual ID number.
Location - Coordinates	Coordinates obtained on site using WAAS enabled handheld devices. This data has also been converted to Lat/Long Coordinates.
Group or Single	Individual tree or group of trees
Species	Common name
Height (M)	Average height of tree
DBH (Cm)	Average diameter of main stem or stems at 1.2M above ground level
Average Crown Width (M)	Average width of crown
Tree Age Class	Newly Planted, Young, Semi-mature, Early Mature, Mature, Over Mature & Veteran
Physiological Condition	Dead, Poor, Fair or Good
Structural Condition	Dead, Poor, Fair or Good
Target Type	Vehicle, Person, Property or Occupation
Target Range	1 to 6 , 1 being highest value
Size of Part to Fail	1 to 5, 1 being highest size

Probability of Failure	1 to 7, 1 being highest probability
Risk Of Harm	Calculated from the above 4 fields and expressed as a probability of harm
Defect 1	Description of observed defects
Defect 2	Description of observed defects
Defect 3	Description of observed defects
Programme Priority	An indicative time period during which any work is suggested to be undertaken
Works required	Brief specification of works recommended

3.42 Definition of key inspection terms

Age :

Subjective assessment of the life stage of the tree given species specific characteristics and the environmental context.

Physiological Condition :

The condition of a given tree is considered in light of typical characteristics for that particular species in typical circumstances. The overall tree condition takes into account a synthesis of tree vitality, physiological & structural condition and contrasts these findings against what is typical for that species and that environment.

Dead : Dead

Poor : Several occurrences of pathogens, parasites or disease which are having a notable effect upon the tree.

Fair : Isolated minor occurrences of pathogen, parasite or disease associated with average state for species and environment.

Good : No evidence of pathogens, parasites or disease.

Structural Condition :

The condition of a given tree is considered in light of typical characteristics for that particular species in typical circumstances. The overall tree condition takes into account a synthesis of tree vitality, physiological & structural condition and contrasts these findings against what is typical for that species and that environment.

Dead : Dead

Poor : Several structural defects which are having a notable effect upon the tree

Fair : Isolated minor structural defects associated with average state for species and environment.

Good : Notably good structure for species and environment

Risk of Harm :

The QTRA system defines the final risk of harm in 4 bands of probability

<1:1,000,000 - Green - Acceptable risk

1: 10,000 to 1;1,000,000 - Yellow - Tolerable risk

1:10,000 to 1:1,000 - Amber - Only acceptable if the risk is not imposed on other people

> 1:1,000 - Red - Unacceptable risk

4.0 Survey

4.1 Site Observations

The properties surveyed and assessed consisted of two main categories.

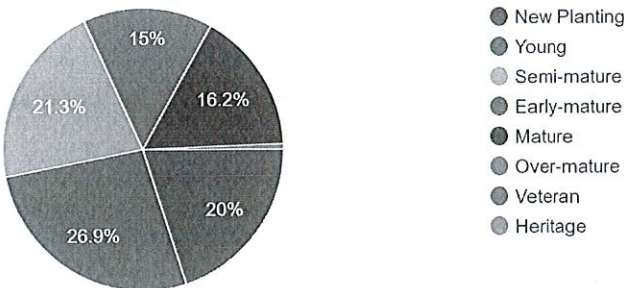
- Urban/Suburban open spaces
 - A mixture of semi/early mature native trees with the addition of a significant amount of recent planting of relatively exotic specimen species.
- Doverow Wood. (2.79 ha amenity woodland)
 - A mature to over mature mixed woodland of native species in a rural location.
 - A walkthrough survey by exception was undertaken as there is little value in attempting to individually map each tree

4.1.1 Tree population

The properties contain a wide range of native deciduous tree type and age in addition to a large number of recently planted specimen species

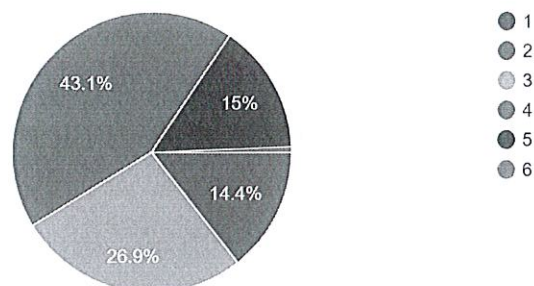
Age Class

160 responses



4.1.2 Target Value Assessment

Target Range
160 responses



Open space usage-

Target value varied greatly from site to site within this group from property or traffic on the main street to low usage around the edges of allotment areas.

The highest value target has always been used.

Woodland usage-

The woodland area has paths which roughly follow the boundaries of the woodland in addition one path dissects the site NW to SE and one path runs in the field below the southern property boundary parallel to the wood.

The central areas of woodland with no paths are not commonly used.

For this reason the centre of the woodland has been zoned as low risk and the trees in this area have not been inspected. (*HSE Guidance Management of the risk from falling trees or branches SIM 01/2007/05*).

The existing pathways in the woodland are well worn, during our period on site we observed several walkers in the woodland.

From these observations and conversations with the users of the woodland we have assigned the usage as **Target value 3 in the QTRA system.**

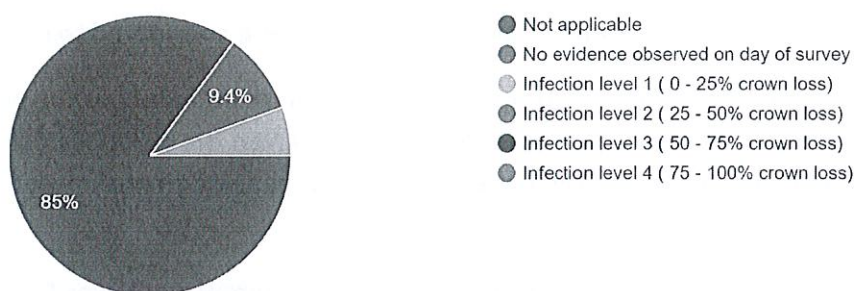
This value is defined as between 7 pedestrians per hour and 2 pedestrians per hour on average over a 365 day/24 hour per day basis.

4.1.3 Summary Findings

Ash Dieback-

The Ash trees inspected were generally healthy with little or only early signs of infection with *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*.

Is Ash Dieback present
160 responses



Work Required -

Open spaces

12 trees or groups have been identified as requiring work

1 tree (T63) was identified as Amber risk (Risk of harm between 1:10,000 & 1:1,000), given that this level of risk is unacceptable when being "imposed" upon the public users of the space this tree also should be treated as soon as is reasonably practicable.

5 trees were identified as Yellow risk (Risk of harm between 1:1,000,000 & 1:10,000). This level of risk is generally seen as a tolerable level of risk for the natural environment and a local decision can be made about undertaking these works. Works recommended may be for aesthetic reasons or to facilitate further inspection.

6 trees were identified as Green risk (Risk of harm , 1:1,000,000). This level of risk is generally seen as being broadly acceptable and works recommended may be for aesthetic reasons or to facilitate further inspection.

Doverow Wood

As is normal for a wood of this age there are many trees in suboptimal condition. However this is to be considered as a natural part of the life cycle of woodland trees.

It is also the case that trees around the relatively low value target of the footpaths can be tolerated in worse states than say on the high street.

However, whilst a 3 year reinspection protocol may be suitable for the High street this would not capture the relatively quick changes associated with woodland trees.

For this reason a yearly walk through inspection by a competent person is advised.

During the 2024 walkthrough inspection no trees were considered to require work.

It was observed that the Ash trees along the southern boundary of the woodland were in decline and some failure was observed. However given the distance of the path from the woodland edge the calculated target value is low meaning the risk posed by these trees is still acceptable.

The average crown loss category for ash trees in Doverow wood was Category 2 75% to 50% crown remaining. No work is recommended other than continued observation.

4.1.3 Data

A full data set is included as Appendix A.

This data is also appended as a spreadsheet

4.2 Conclusions/Recommendations

4.2.1

- **Work is required on the Amber risk rated tree. (T63 - London Plane by School)**
- **Work should be considered on Yellow/Green risk rated trees.**
- **Controls may need to be established with regards to birds and bats prior to any tree works taking place.**
- **Doverow Wood should be reinspected every year to manage the declining tree population and assess the Ash trees for Hymenoscyphus fraxineus infection.**

Globe Willow

Despite discussions around the tree failure safety factors associated with the tree's current condition we still consider the tree to be at risk of unpredictable failure.

We maintain that management of the risk by reducing the target value is still appropriate.

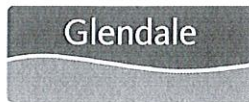
As such continued management as below is recommended.

“Heritage tree. Recommend fencing or stop mowing out to falling distance to deter the public from sitting below the tree. Continue to manage as a pollard.”

Open Spaces

Tree ID (only enter tag numbers)	Site Name	Tree species (common name)	Risk of Harm	Recomm endation s	Detail work required	Work priority	Resurvey s	Provide notes on recomme ndations/ further investiga tion site limitation
T69	Stagholt	Common Ash	1,000,000 to 10,000 (Yellow)	Work	Strip ivy to 4 m to allow inspection	Low - within 3 months		Reinspect after ivy has been removed
T2	Oldends Lane	Goat Willow	<1,000,00 0 (Green)	Work	Fell stem and treat stump to prevent regrowth	Low - within 3 months		
0175	Town Gardens 2	Norway Maple	1,000,000 to 10,000 (Yellow)	Work	Repollard	Low - within 3 months		
T26	Oldends Lane	Liquidam bar	<1,000,00 0 (Green)	Work	Remove and replace	Low - within 3 months		
T32	Town Gardens 4	Rowan	1,000,000 to 10,000 (Yellow)	Work	Crown clean, remove hung up limb and any deadwoo d.	Low - within 3 months		Reinspect annually
T132	Town Gardens 3	Weeping Willow	1,000,000 to 10,000 (Yellow)	Work	Heritage tree. Recomme nd fencing or stop mowing out to falling distance to deter the public	Ongoing		

					from sitting below the tree. Continue to manage as a pollard.			
T45	High Street 1	Hornbeam	<1,000,000 (Green)	Work	Crown lift to give 2.4m clearance	Low - within 3 months		
T56	Elm Road 2	Plane	<1,000,000 (Green)	Work	Repollard to previous knuckles	Low - within 3 months		School pick up zone
T62	Elm Road 2	Plane	<1,000,000 (Green)	Work	Repollard to previous knuckles	Low - within 3 months		School pick up zone
T63	Elm Road 2	Plane	10,000 to 1,000 (Amber)	Work	Remove cobra bracing. Remove 2x south facing stems and re-pollard remaining stems to previous knuckles.	Medium - within 1 month		School pick up zone
T37	Oldends lane	Sophora japonica	1,000,000 to 10,000 (Yellow)	Work	Check the crown for vitality. If dead remove and replant	Low - within 3 months		
G27	Arrowsmith drive 1	Hawthorn, Hazel, Goat Willow	<1,000,000 (Green)	Work	Reduce to 1m	Low - within 3 months		Optional maintenance work



4.26 The recommended removal or pruning of any specific tree does not imply that either treeowner or statutory consent has been gained for any works.

5.0 Data & Appendices

Appendix A - Data

The Inspection data has been provided as a spreadsheet copy in this appendix.

Appendix B - Maps

Maps have been provided as a Google map (Link below) and as a KML file to allow manipulation in GIS software.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1VHTuyANVSsn8XIWoQ_qBQyO39KLIwrJk&usp=sharing

Financial Budget Comparison

for Town Environment Committee

Comparison between 01/04/23 and 18/03/24 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions. Includes commitments.
Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/23

		2023/2024	Reserve	Actual Net	Balance	Bal %age
INCOME						
Town Environment Committee						
200	Stonehouse in Bloom	£1,500.00	£0.00	£0.00	-£1,500.00	-100.00%
205	Event Income/Donations					
205/1	Events	£1,200.00	£0.00	£1,110.00	-£90.00	-7.50%
205/2	Donations	£0.00	£0.00	£259.64	£259.64	100.00%
205	Total	£1,200.00	£0.00	£1,369.64	£169.64	14.14%
210	Planting Sponsorship	£1,500.00	£0.00	£650.00	-£850.00	-56.67%
215	Grants	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	0.00%
Total Town Environment Committee		£4,200.00	£0.00	£2,019.64	-£2,180.36	-51.91%
EXPENDITURE						
Town Environment Committee						
1190	Amenity Areas					
1190/1	Grounds Maintenance (contract)	£25,000.00	£0.00	£24,177.98	£822.02	-3.29%
1190/2	Grounds Maintenance (in-house)	£2,000.00	£0.00	£978.09	£1,021.91	-51.10%
1190/3	Play Equipment maint/repairs/insp	£2,500.00	£0.00	£2,418.74	£81.26	-3.25%
1190/4	Public Space Improvements	£5,300.00	£1,582.80	£5,377.49	£1,505.31	-28.40%
1190/5	Tree & Hedge/boundary maintenance	£6,500.00	£0.00	£2,942.00	£3,558.00	-54.74%
1190/6	Waste Collection	£5,000.00	£0.00	£5,174.00	-£174.00	3.48%
1190	Total	£46,300.00	£1,582.80	£41,068.30	£6,814.50	-14.72%
2000	Christmas Lights	£5,000.00	£0.00	£2,597.25	£2,402.75	-48.06%
2005	Climate Change	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	-100.00%

RESPONSE TO THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY

30 October 2023

INTRODUCTION - STATUTORY DUTY

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and must reconsider the selected actions within five years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- note what action they are already taking to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree what further steps they should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Such steps may include:

- reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities, e.g. potential for jointly-supported wildlife corridors.
- making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation.
- carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area, potentially involving residents in a "BioBlitz"
- gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity, such as from Caring for God's Acre and the Eco Church initiative in respect of churchyards
- drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

Whatever action is agreed, as a minimum local councils could ensure they address biodiversity concerns when commenting on planning applications.

All these steps may inform an agreed biodiversity policy for which a model example is attached. Guidance for town and parish councils on developing a local nature action plan has been published by South Gloucestershire Council, as well as a field guide for those with little or no ecological background.

MODEL BIODIVERSITY POLICY

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, **[insert council name]** (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- encourage and support other organisations within the **parish / town** to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.

- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

Land and property management

The Council will:

- carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's regulations for plant protection products.
- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on **xx** (Minute reference **yy**) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate / each year at the Annual Meeting. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

DRAFT MODEL ACTION PLAN

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Connect & diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
Cemetery / churchyard	<p>Additional planting</p> <p>Maintain and renew bird boxes as required.</p> <p>Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance.</p> <p>Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates.</p>	<p>Increased diversity of habitats and food sources</p> <p>Increased cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.</p> <p>Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.</p>		
Recreation ground	<p>Sympathetically maintain hedging.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown.</p> <p>Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions.</p>	<p>Food sources and cover</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p> <p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p>		
Common / other open spaces	<p>Adopt a management plan.</p> <p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> <p>Work with the county council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.</p> <p>Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, making it clear what is expected e.g. peat free compost and no chemicals.</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats.</p> <p>Protecting habitats</p> <p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Regular attention.</p>		

SITE / OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
The Built Landscape	<p>Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries</p>	<p>Protecting/enhancing habitats</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p>	Ongoing	
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the parish.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine.</p> <p>Create a page on the parish council website for photographs / information / links</p> <p>Encourage local farmers to contribute.</p> <p>Provide seed bombs / bulbs etc. for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals.</p>	Ongoing	Neighbourhood plan consultation
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p> <p>Promote biodiversity.</p>		

FW: Laburnum Park - Request to Relocate a bench

Town Clerk <townclerk@stonehousetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Thu 21/03/2024 10:56

Carlos Novoth
Clerk to Stonehouse Town Council
01453 822070

From:

Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:49 AM

To: Town Clerk <townclerk@stonehousetowncouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: Laburnum Park - Request to Relocate a bench

Carlos

Firstly many thanks for your time this morning to discuss my request to locate one of the benches in Laburnum Park to another location in the park.

As I explained, having lived alongside the park for some 3 years now, at times we have been affected by noise and rowdy behaviour / bad language coming from just over the fence in the park. Whilst this can happen at any time of day it does appear more prevalent in the evenings when I guess children have finished school and down to the fact that this bench in question sits under one of the street lights with easy access to the High Street through the Old Chapel Garden. Children playing etc and making use of the park is great to see but the behaviour at times verges towards antisocial and the language unacceptable.

We fully accept that we bought the house alongside the park knowing it was there, and also alongside the OCG (which is great asset for the Town). We are keen supporters of the Stonehouse in Bloom team and would hate to see any changes there but it is just the bench in the park which affects us the most.

As such I would like to request that the bench opposite our property is relocated and would suggest that it goes down by the swings to provide some seating for parents with their children. This is away from house and so should have no impact on other residents around the park and could be an asset for when / if the swings are reinstated.

For ease I have attached a quick plan showing the current location and proposed location of the bench and would be grateful if you could consult and consider this request. As I mentioned I would be happy to contribute to the cost of materials etc for the move.

Should you have any questions please let me know and I look forward to hearing from you on this in due course.

You also raised the odour in the OCG. As I mentioned we have noticed this ourselves and will look to follow this up whenever it appears but I do still feel that some of it may be originating from a plant.

Regards

