

Agenda item 3

For information - Review of Nurture Open Spaces Work Programme

Author: Rob Holden, Environment Manager

Update on Open Spaces for Oversight Committee 11 December 2024

The work programme update is up to date and summarised at the end of the report. Below are highlights.

Welshmill and The Otherside

This area has received quite a focus of work since the last update and this focus will continue for a further few months.

Welshmill wall – a wall on the roadside collapsed, near the play area. This is the responsibility of the highway’s authority, but we have coordinated works to ensure works take place quickly, the works have been funded by SC.



Environment Agency Boat Access – This was a project requested and funded by the Environment Agency. They require access to the river to manage flood risk by ensuring river flow blockages are removed - a particular priority near a weir. The need to improve access is due to the steep bank and vegetation (improving access recently became a higher priority due to a fatality involving an Environment Agency operative). The platform size needed to accommodate the weight of the vehicle that brings in the boat and lifts into the water and to take away larger material removed from the river. The management and reduction of the canopy layer by a riverside is important for improving light to the river which Improves the quality of river habitat. Mitigation works for the trees removed were agreed, with new trees to be planted replacing those that have been removed. Note: The Environment Agency made a planning pre-application to Somerset Council and undertook appropriate environmental impact assessments.



Roundhouse - A sizeable project to complete fully replace the roundhouse was undertaken in October / November. The old structure had rotted, and the roof was falling in and the beams no longer safe. A new structure with much sturdier timbers lifted off the ground by metal supports has recreated the very popular meeting point and is designed to stand the test of time. The look has been enhanced to make it more of an engaging feature. It was officially opened on 4 Dec 2024.

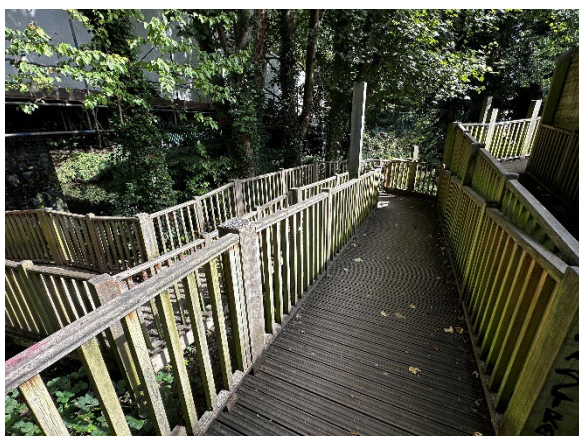




Welshmill Play Area – The tower in the sandpit in Welshmill play area is about to be removed – again due to rotting wood – and replaced with a much more inclusive design with wheelchair access.



Henley Way – The wooden ramp leading from Henley way to the Otherside has been deteriorating over time and has reached the point where it now needs to be replaced. The budget for this larger scale project is in this year's work programme and an open tender for bids is currently live, closing on 13 December. If a successful contractor is appointed, it is hoped that works can begin before the spring.



Projects in other areas

Broadway Community Gardens - path and entrance – Following a discussion with local residents the Broadway entrance to the path leading through Broadway Community Gardens is about to be improved, with vegetation clearance, trip hazards removed and new signage.



Egford Play

Many of the wooden play structures were originally built by Mendip and installed at a similar time and many are failing at a similar time. Several features have already failed and been removed at Egford Park and the process of replacing with new equipment will begin in March.



Trees highlights

A summary of the tree planting results for the last year. [The full report can be read on the website at Appendix 3.1.](#) A total of 3,670 trees and hedging plants have been planted, as follows:

- 45 large trees planted
- 3 Heritage oaks
- 3362 whips planted all sourced for free.
- 130 scions from heritage apples grafted onto M27 Dwarfing rootstocks.
- 200 plants planted within the Showfield playpark for landscaping and sensory purposes.
- 20 berry bushes planted for edible hedge in the Showfield



Tree surveys

To manage the risk to pedestrians, road users and nearby structures, every year we commission a specialist arborist to conduct an annual survey of tree health and identify any trees that need works to ensure risk mitigation. This survey was conducted during September and October (sites are surveyed every other year, so not all sites are included within this report). The survey identified 83 trees that need safety work – either reductions or removal. Much of this will be done in house during the busy winter period. Larger works will be undertaken by contractors. The highest priority works have already been undertaken.

Works Priority	Chateau Gontier Walk	Egford Lane Park	Frome Town Hall	Mary Baily	New Road Play Park	North Parade	Packsaddle, Chapmans Close & Pedlars Grove	The Old Showfield	Tower View Play Area	Victoria Park	Total
Urgent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
High	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Non-urgent	-	-	-	6	-	3	1	8	-	18	36
Pragmatic	1	-	-	1	-	14	-	5	6	4	31
Advisory	-	2	4	1	1	-	1	2	1	3	15
Total	1	2	4	8	1	17	2	16	7	25	83



Purchase of Land at Adderwell – Final stage of agreeing legals is happening with a view to completion imminently. The crowdfunding programme, run by Friends of the River Frome, to raise the final £25,000, has just gone live.

Explore +Extra funding Stories About

Adderwell Water Meadow

by Friends of the River Frome in Frome, Somerset, United Kingdom

Project Facebook forforome Environment, Community

Help us to acquire a 3.5 acre water meadow by the river Frome as a new public space for people and nature in Frome

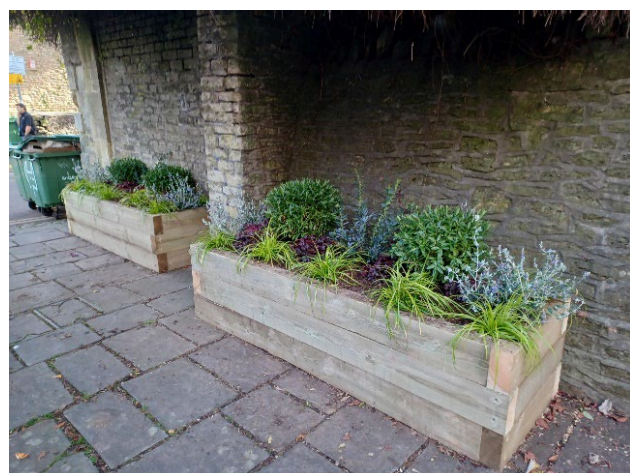
0% raised Not live

Community Woodland – Efforts to begin communication with the horse owner are underway. This will take some time to see if communication can be established in order to avoid more direct means of removing the horse.

Assistant Ranger – We have successfully recruited our Assistant Ranger who starts on 9 December 2024.

Town centre – Works continue to maintain the town infrastructure including repainting of bins and service boxes and road sweeping. In addition, 3 new planters at the top of Catherine Hill have been made, installed and planted up. These will be handed over to local businesses to manage. We are also undertaking a major review of options for controlling the weeds that currently takes up a significant amount of ranger resource. The results will be presented at Oversight Committee in January. The new Christmas cross street lights are installed including an extra set running from Fat Face to Shoezone.

Top of Catherine Hill



Examples of Street Sweeping



Examples of service box refreshes



New cross-street Christmas Lights

The previous cross-street Christmas lights had been used for nearly ten years and they were starting to fail so this year they were replaced with new designs that feature some small animation. The Christmas Tree lights themselves are in their second year.



Working with Frome College

The Rangers undertook one further day in a series of works to enable the pupils themselves to improve their outdoor space. On this occasion the team enabled an overgrown area to be cleared, and a new hedge planted. 30 pupils worked very enthusiastically planting 370 hedge plants for ½ day to get this work done and now the school can look back on a well cared for area and newly established hedge that improve the appearance and be beneficial for biodiversity all thanks to their own hard work with some guidance by the ranger team (Mark S and Asia).




Future Project – Tiny Forest at Oakfield School

An exciting potential future project is setting up a new tiny forest within one of the schools in Frome that can be accessed by multiple schools. Tiny Forests can generate great interest and citizen science, as seen with the one in Egford Park, and this would be an ideal engagement asset for schools. We have been reviewing whether multiple schools could share one resource. The advantage of multiple school access is that it can nurture cross-over working where joint groups from multiple schools work collaboratively. Oakfield school are very interested in the project, and this could provide a resource for Oakfield, Trinity and Critchill schools with the possibility support from older children at Frome College. The site has been identified on Oakfield School grounds and the next stage is to see if the necessary £25,000 funds can be raised. As with the Egford tiny forest this would be a partnership project with Earthhouse.



Open Spaces Programme:

Project	Update	Status
Convene people who use our open spaces to ensure existing groups are represented but also to reach out to other users whom we have not yet engaged	Findings from review of MB/VP and Skatepark fed back late Nov Next steps is to review planning for Skatepark and review with Cllrs Mgmt plan for MB/VP to be updated	
Work with the forum to consider resident involvement in the maintenance and development of open spaces	Ditto above	
Identify open spaces that we want to take on during the creation of the new Unitary	Devolution deal taking final shape. Latest internal meeting on 21 November, next step PW/PW to meet with SC	
Consider how FTC would service and maintain a growing number of open spaces	Assistant ranger starting 9 December. Final stages of negotiations with SC over lease of Depot. Some significant works needed before use can begin – approx. £45k	
Work with housing and planning to agree which open spaces should be maintained and which could be made available for housing	Ongoing	
Ensure our parks and open spaces are places that people value highly to enjoy, are accessible and inclusive, and support a wide range of outdoor activities and bio-diversity	Review of management plans to ensure inclusivity (see above for MB/VP) Broadway Community Garden – review and consult on improvement to Broadway entrance underway now Milk Street – final stage of review of amended plans underway, practical works soon after the community has agreed a proposal Biodiversity assessed through iNaturalist record keeping Town Centre Ranger – ongoing works for presentation and maintenance. Capacity increased with assistant ranger post. New comms channel for key Cllrs to report work tasks Henley Way – The project is now on My Tenders and closing date for submissions is this month. Companies have so far recorded their interest in the tender. If there is a successful bid the aim would be for work to begin in Jan	

Other - Collaboration with partner agencies on land, works and maintenance across Open Spaces and the town	Ongoing as discussions arise Working with Frome Medical Practice Community woodland site – Lease signed. Initial approaches made to fly grazing horse owner – still awaiting first on-site meeting Purchase of land at Adderwell – Awaiting final legal details to be confirmed	
--	--	---