

## Questions from Members of the Public

### Community and Environment Committee 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

We have received 12 questions for the 15 minutes of question time. Questions on No Mow May have been raised in two of the questions and as this is covered in a paper on tonight's agenda and will be raised within that item. Susie Mead and Olga Whitmore posed a similar question, and it was agreed that Susie will ask the question.

#### **Jackie Kay**

- 1. Does CTC have any plans to eventually become a Pesticide-Free Town?*
- 2. Which areas will be left during No Mow May?*
- 3. Why are hedges cut so harshly and what is the schedule for cutting them?*
- 4. Is the Streetscape contract available for the public to view and if not then why?*

#### **Answers**

1. Congleton Town Council has stopped using Glyphosate as a weed killer, we only use a very small amount of weed spray now which is the new product (no glyphosate) on path edges (kerb line) to stop the deterioration of our paths by weeds uprooting etc,

There is no use of weed killer in play areas and open spaces which CTC manages. Becoming a Pesticide-Free town is a much wider campaign than just the Town Council - if a group like your Climate Action Emergency Group wished to lead a campaign for the Town to become Pesticide-Free then I am sure the Town Council and the Green Group would do what we can to support you, as we did with the Plastic Free Congleton Campaign.

2. No Mow May is on the agenda and will be discussed on the agenda.

3. The Town Council cuts the hedges that it is contracted to do once a year, these are mainly around play areas. Some hedges are now cut on a three-year cycle. Without more information, it is hard to know which hedges are being referred to in the question. Hedges in Congleton are also be cut by highways, by private contractors or by other service providers. If you wish to give us more information about the hedges you are referring to, we will try and get you an answer.

4. The contract is an agreement between Congleton Town Council and Cheshire East Council to deliver the grounds maintenance and street cleansing for Congleton to at least the same standard as delivered by Ansa throughout Cheshire East. This service is then enhanced by Congleton Town Council. The green spaces looked after by Congleton Town Council Streetscape services on behalf of Cheshire East Council can be seen on the [map](#) on the [Streetscape Services](#) page of the town council website.

Susie Mead's question about Bromley Farm Community Development Trust - also asked on behalf of Olga Whitmore.

*I would like to ask why the council are not helping the residents to address the problems in their community with the Bromley Farm Community Trust. 11 recommendations have been made and the trust is not meeting these recommendations.*

*The "steering group" has not allowed Councillors that have asked to support the community to join meetings. Why is this trust still not having proper AGMs where members of the community can vote and have access to their community centre fairly?*

*Can the residents of Bromley Farm request the council hold a residents meeting to discuss and address concerns about the trust independently as they have a number of grants from the council and the centre is a community asset?*

### **Answer**

Thank you for your question. As you are aware Congleton Town Council is not responsible for the Bromley Farm Community Development Trust, the group has its own constitution. Cheshire East Council is the landlord of the Community Centre. Last year some of the Town Councillors and Ward Councillors attended the trust's AGM in order to support the residents and build a relationship with the trust.

Congleton Town Council has offered to:

- support with the residents' steering group in order to help implement the 11 CEC recommendations to drive transparency, democracy and accountability
- help the Trust with its website and social media
- put the Trust's survey online with our own SurveyMonkey Platform in order to help ensure maximum response from residents
- None of these offers has been taken up by the Trust so far.

Congleton Town Council is not aware of the current status of the implementation of the 11 recommendations, and hopes the Trust will publish an update soon. We will let them know that residents are interested in finding out more and will re-offer our help with the website, social media and survey monkey platform.

**Olga Whitmore – not present at the meeting, questions read by the Chair**

*1. Are the plants in the troughs on Mountbatten Way troughs going to be replaced by other perennial plants for summer? What is the rationale behind the summer replacements? If the plants are going to be changed, will they be replaced with bee pollinator plants?*

*2. Can CTC guarantee that the bedding plants Streetscape buys from Cheshire nurseries are raised in peat-free compost?*

*3. And a question about what No Mow May will mean for Congleton which we will cover on the agenda.*

**Answers**

1. The plants in the troughs will be replaced each year and then offered out to local community groups, school, care homes and Congleton residents, everything is recycled. Please look out for a survey regarding what our Congleton Residents would like to see within their town on planting scheme, types of plants and colour scheme shortly
2. As part of our contract for our main purchase of summer and winter bedding plants our plants are grown and come in peat-free compost, we then carry on using peat-free compost when transplanting into hanging baskets, mangers and planters etc. We work with two local Congleton Nurseries to help support the local economy and some of their plants are still grown in compost containing peat. These nurseries are looking and trialling different types of peat and peat-free compost. Any plants from these nurseries when transplanted are transplanted into peat-free compost.
3. Is on the agenda later

**Lisa Hargreaves not present at the Committee – Chair read out the questions**

*1. where are the new areas for the wildflowers going to be situated in Congleton? (I ask as I'd like to make a post on my plant swap page in order to publicise how beautiful they look)*

*2).are the grass verges on Mountbatten way going to be left wild?*

*3. how are we going to measure if biodiversity is improving in the town?*

**Answers**

1. The Streetscape manager has informed me of 14 areas where we will be encouraging Wildflowers to grow – these will be mailed out and also listed on our website.
2. Yes – The verges from Soapy Joes to MAC Tool Hire along Mountbatten Way will be left and wildflowers planted
3. We will be carrying out quadrat sampling on each site every two months, this will be done by a local specialist who carries out surveys for developments and heritage sites – we will be measuring the number of individual species, species richness and percentage cover within a metre square quadrat.