

Agenda item 5

For discussion and decision - Strategic Tree Management & Tree Planting in Frome

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Summary

This report proposes an initial set of actions & ideas that, in combination, will mean that we can plan for succession planting of mature trees and new planting year-on-year to ensure a natural succession of healthy trees for Frome.

Starting Point

Trees play an important and significant part in the town and in Frome's surrounding landscape and its biodiversity. Yet there's no strategic plan to guide or even influence tree planting and tree management across the town.

And all the while trees naturally fail and die, especially mature and over-mature trees. Replacing such trees at the time they fall or they're felled is important, but it's also far from ideal. Better to have a plan that means a variety of new trees are planted year-on-year to ensure a natural succession of healthy trees.

Better yet that the authorities responsible for Frome's public spaces plan their planting together, for all the benefits that would bring.

Useful Information

- Frome Town Council (FTC) looks after most of the town's parks and green spaces
- Between them, Mendip District Council (MDC) & Somerset County Council (SCC) look after most of the green verges in the town, and the majority of the other public green spaces
- Other green spaces, including fields and gardens, are privately owned

Discussion items

The ideal: a strategic plan developed by FTC, MDC & SCC – informed by the town. Including an adopted Supplementary Planning Document. This will take time or might not be supported by other local authorities.

An alternative first step is for FTC to start this process by:

1. Identifying the mature or over mature trees across the town and plan for succession planting.
2. Identifying where new trees in roads and pavements are needed possibly developing new avenues. Like Park Road & Beechwood Avenue
3. Establishing a tree planting project starting over the coming winter focussing on private front gardens in order to increase canopy cover in select parts of the town
4. Identifying where new tree planting could be done in open spaces in the town, including car parks

5. A Selwood Forest project? Celebrating and re-creating elements of the town's tree history
6. The Frome Arboretum? Walks and guides focused on trees across the town

Other Discussion Points

- Projects to mark & celebrate the Copper Beech recently felled in St John's churchyard
- Ash die-back in Frome

Recommendations

To be discussed & developed during the meeting.