

## Agenda item 5

For information - An update on our Wild about Trees project

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### Summary

This report provides an update on the Wild about Trees project, detailing what has been happening during lockdown and discussing the next steps for the project, including planting ideas for Mary Baily and Rodden Meadow.

This report follows the Wild about Trees reports that were presented to and discussed at Council meetings in September 2019 and November 2019. Those reports outlined the principles, scope, and ambitions of the project. They also identified the project costs, including the Project Officer post.

### Season one planting

We learnt some valuable lessons from the planting days at Weylands and Birchill Lane in February and we are now looking ahead to the second planting season of the project.



## An overview of season two

Planting: Between October 2020 and March 2021

Financial year: 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

- Planting at Mary Baily
- Planting at Rodden Meadow
- Planned planting of two Tiny Forests
- Planting at Egford Lane
- Planting at Packsaddle
- Planting with schools
- Planting at Frome Dissenters Cemetery
- Discussions with Active and in Touch about them being directly involved with planting and tree care
  
- Following up on the planting projects at Weylands and Birchill Lane
- Talking to the managing committee about possible tree planting at Whatcombe Fields
- Talking to Mendip District Council about tree planting on their land – initially focusing on the green spaces and verges off Brunel Way
- Developing a scheme whereby people can make financial contributions or donations to support the wild about trees project through tree planting and offsetting their carbon

## Season two in more detail

### Planting at Mary Baily

- Focused along paths and around the edges of the space; leaving the main grassed area for play and recreation, planting will consist of mainly whips, though several more established trees will be planted at a few key spots.
- Trees to create shade will be planted along part of the children's play area.
- A Tiny Forest will be stretched along the dipped land adjacent to the line of mature trees.
- Benches will be positioned in between trees along the line of the tennis courts; and bulbs will be underplanted.

### Planting at Rodden Meadow

- The main meadow area will remain open and hold focus to the single mature Oak situated there; planting around the edges and directing pathways will be a focus.
- A Tiny Forest will be planted to the eastern end of the meadow; and more trees will be planted within the central hedgerow.
- Some key planting will bring seasonal colour and areas of shade around the planned pond.
- Succession planting will be important. Smaller trees and two picnic benches will create a focus in the smaller area by Willow Vale.

Keeping sight lines will be important for both spaces.

We are excited that a Tiny Forest will be planned for both spaces, the aim is to plant 600 native trees with over 30 different species in an area the size of a tennis court. Evidence supports that Tiny Forests can absorb carbon dioxide up to 30 times better, can be 30 times denser and see 100 times increase in biodiversity.

Consultation will happen in both spaces – likely in mid to late September - and we will also promote the planting proposals on our notice boards, our website and on social media - so people will have the opportunity to comment on the plans.

#### Planting at Egford Lane

- We will be consulting and working closely with the community group at Egford about planting plans for Egford Lane.
- When Frome Town Council has been formally granted responsibility for the space, we are keen to consult with the residents and start tree planting as part of the wider changes and improvements we are looking to make here.

#### Planting at Packsaddle

- We hope to be working with the residents up at Packsaddle to plant a small number of trees around the edges of the space; and to discuss the possibility of a foraging hedge.

#### Planting with Schools

- During lockdown we were able to source 1,000 Oak trees that otherwise might have been lost; and as part of marking this time in our history, we want to donate one or more Oak trees to every school in Frome.
- In this way, these trees will become part of our town's story – with the Oaks growing and flourishing just like our students and our communities.
- One Oak will be planted at the Old Showfield with Selwood Academy; and three will be planted on Mary Baily as part of our overall planting scheme there with Vallis, Avanti and St John's.
- Oakfield School and Frome College both have said they would like to plant in their own grounds, and we are in conversations with the remaining schools.

#### Planting at Frome Dissenters' Cemetery

- We are delighted we will be working alongside Frome Dissenters' Cemetery who are keen to see more trees planted on their grounds. We look forward to supporting this project and seeing it develop.
- Active and in Touch are keen to be involved in this project in particular; and we look forward to working with them on some planting projects over the next coming months.

#### Birchill and Weylands

Back in February 500 to 600 trees were planted at Birchhill and 700 to 800 trees were planted at Weylands.

Since February we have experienced some very dry months and partly because of this not all the trees have survived. We expected this and considered it when the initial planting took place.

Due to lockdown, our initial planned community care and maintenance events were put on hold. However, we have now been able to organise this in a fashion; and the residents and nearby community have helped us to mulch and water the trees at Weylands. The trees which have survived are establishing well on both sites.

Sadly, somewhere between 100 and 200 trees have been removed at Weylands. This seems to have been done to take back some of the space for recreational use; and as such this is something we will recognise and reflect in how we look after the space and the establishing trees. This means we are not planning to re-plant the trees in this particular area.

Some of the trees that were taken were part of a line of smaller, flowering Cherry trees along the main path, though – and we are thinking about re-planting these trees. This is something that we will discuss with the residents and other interested people and parties first though.

### Upcoming work

We have contacted the managing committee about possible tree planting at Whatcombe Fields.

Mendip have informed us that they would like the green spaces and verges off Brunel Way to be part of their rewilding project. We are in conversation on how we can work together and enhance the spaces with future planting in these areas.

Currently we are developing a scheme whereby residents, organisations and businesses can make financial contributions or donations to support the Wild about Trees project and part of this will include offsetting their carbon - including quantifiable measures. There will also be an opportunity for businesses to offer land that they would like to see planted.

It is important to us that whoever we partner up with they are gold standard and ethical. We also want this to be accessible and easy to understand. By Supporting the Wild about Trees project, you will be investing in and improving the local environment, increase biodiversity, offset some of your carbon footprint, improve wellbeing and air quality in Frome as well as create places of natural discovery.... Gift the project to celebrate a birthday, birth, an anniversary, a marriage, or someone's life.

We are putting together simple tree planting and tree care sheets for people to download and print.

We hope to offer smaller trees to residents, homeowners, and businesses.

Apple Day is tentatively being planned for October – but this will only happen if we are fully confident it can be delivered safely and in line with where we are at this time.

Talking to Somerset County Council about streets and pavements that could be opportunities for planting.

Talking to local churches about opportunities for tree planting in Frome's churchyards.