

Councillors are hereby summoned, and members of the public and press are invited, to attend a meeting of the **Amenities Committee** to be held on **Monday 12 February 2024**, following the Policy and Resources Committee meeting, and not commencing before 19.00 in the Council Chamber, Market Square, Crewkerne.

Note:

- **Members of the public who wish to view the meeting proceedings, either in real time or afterwards, can access the meeting through the following link:**
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTA9K-7L4Onjcli2Gtz7tCg>

K. Sheehan, Town Clerk (signed on original)
6 February 2024

Agenda

Open Forum: Questions may be put to the Committee in person during this Public Participation Session of up to 15 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes per person. Issues notified to the Clerk a minimum of 3 working days before the meeting (i.e., by 5pm on the preceding Wednesday) will receive a response during this session. Issues raised in this session without prior notice may be referred to the Clerk to respond to within 10 working days or listed on a subsequent agenda.

1. **To elect a Chair.**
2. **To elect a Vice Chair (if required).**
3. **To note apologies for absence.**
4. **Declarations of interest** in items on the agenda.
5. **To confirm the minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting** held on 13 November 2023.
6. **Report from the Amenities Chair:** to receive an update report.
7. **Henhayes perimeter path:** to receive a verbal update.
8. **Barn Street trees:** to consider an amendment to the Barn Street planting plan to access Somerset Council's Urban Tree Fund.
9. **Replacement boiler at Town Hall:** to consider quotations to replace the boiler at Town Hall.
10. **Barn Street Beech tree:** to receive an update on planned specialist testing.
11. **Hearing support system:** to consider quotation for hearing support system.

12. To receive Matters of Report (for information only).

13. Next meeting: Monday 11 March 2024, following the Planning and Highways Committee meeting, Council Chamber, Town Hall.

Amenities Progress Report



February 2024

Town Hall / Victoria Hall	
Christmas Lighting Up	A string of the town Christmas lights need replacing – Deputy Clerk is investigating cost. The nativity figures condition has deteriorated and they will need replacing – Deputy Clerk to cost. Brace/collar for town tree to be investigated – Deputy Clerk to investigating.
Town Hall Boiler	Quotes for replacement boiler and boiler system are on February agenda.
Town Hall Exterior Doors	To make good and re-paint all the exterior Town Hall doors and ground floor windows. Following Existing Colour scheme. Is in budget for 23/24 – 3rd quote being sought.
BT boxes	Telephone Boxes need repainting – Town Clerk has obtained confirmation from BT that they will be repainted in their 2024 work programme.
Hearing loop in Chamber	In budget for 24/25. Quote on February agenda.
External power supply	Ops Manager is investigating quotes.
Victoria Hall ladies toilets	Heating and hot water provision intermittent or not functioning – Ops Manager to investigate.
Drainage at side of Town Hall (water accumulating against side of building)	Town Clerk to check deeds to establish ownership. Update – drain is not in TH curtilage, reported to Highways 22.01.24 and Highways cleared 23.01.24 – monitor.
George Reynolds Centre (GRC)	
Solar Panels	Ops Manager to contact Cllr. Steve Ashton to get companies out to quote.

Amenities Progress Report

Leak in Plant Room	Source identified as a water heater that has corroded. Quotes have been obtained for replacement and contract awarded. Work to be carried out at February half term. Additional works to pressurisation unit and valves identified and added to February works. To monitor second tank.
Landlord's inspection - (From 27 th Jun 2023)	1 x Quote received to change position of electrical sockets and replace lights with energy efficient LED lights. Additional quotes required – Ops Manager to chase. Making safe a loose dwarf wall and floor repairs – Grounds Team to investigate – Ops Manager.
Lighting upgrade to LEDs	Ops Manager to obtain quotes.
Kitchen Storage	Remove racking and reinstate with cupboards.
Assembly signage	Requires improvement – Ops Manager to action.
Heating system 'zoning'	Query raised over whether alterations can be made to create heating zones – Ops Manager to investigate. Can't currently see how/if this is possible.
Intermittent light fault at rear of Beech Suite	Ops Manager to investigate.
Flies	Quote has been received for pest treatment, will be required every year. Scaffold to be hired to clear light fittings after treatment (could also be used for fixing intermittent light while in situ). Ops Manager.
EICR due	Ops Manager to arrange.
Lodge and Chapel	
Front Garden	Entrance Gates to the Garden area of the lodge have been installed and painted.

Amenities Progress Report

Replacement gate at side of Lodge	Several options have been costed. Preferred gate to be identified and approved by Cllr. Best.
Exterior Windows	Two front window frames have deteriorated significantly over the summer and require urgent repair. Approval given to proceed and work will be carried out in early 2024. - OUTSTANDING
Pointing & Guttering	Quotes need to be assessed and approval given – To go into 2024/25 to be delivered via underspend in current year.

Playgrounds / Allotments etc	
Henhayes	<p>Perimeter Hedge onto Henhayes Lane was reduced in height by contractors. Grounds Team to cut sides.</p> <p>Disabled swing was destroyed by vandals. Quotes have now been received and progressed.</p> <p>Graffiti on some of the play equipment was removed by the Grounds Team – ONGOING AS IT APPEARS.</p> <p>Perimeter path – quote obtained– Ops Manager to show proposed route – needs site visit.</p> <p>Fence to Henhayes car park keeps getting broken due to people climbing it/cars bumping it – Grounds Team to monitor and repair as needed.</p> <p>No dog signage around play area – Ops Manager to arrange signage for both yellow gates.</p>
Happy Valley	<p>Tunnel section between towers on climbing frame were found to be unsafe and the whole tunnel section was removed.</p> <p>Suitable replacement section – MB agreed bridge section – Ops Manager to place order.</p>

Amenities Progress Report



	<p>Safety matting under swings needs replacing – Ops Manager to cost.</p> <p>Floodlights – New timer unit was installed and 3 out of 4 are now working. 4th light is showing a fault that will require further investigation. May need a cherry picker, if so use to replace bulbs at the same time.</p> <p>Timer box has been vandalised again (since repair in the autumn) – need to investigate a better way to protect the system. Ops Manager to pursue with contractor.</p> <p>Possible question mark over future of sandpit – question for Council/Amenities Committee. Town Clerk to research if area can be fenced to prevent dog fouling.</p>
Bincombe Allotments	Wall to side in poor condition – possible patch repairs? Issues with conservation area and planning.
Pithers Court	Land cleared December 2023. Possible area for an additional allotment space? Site visit required – Town Clerk to arrange.
Ground to rear of Public Toilets	Quote received to level this area - £647.00 + VAT In 2024/25 budget – Town Clerk to contact Somerset Council.
Public Toilets	<p>Floor tiles replaced by grounds staff. Being monitored.</p> <p>Interior handle in 1 toilet has been removed / broken off – now fixed.</p> <p>Legionella contract to be added to existing contract – Ops Manager.</p> <p>Maintenance contract for pods to be investigated now warranty has expired. Now in 24/25 budget to start from 1.4.24 – SLA signed and returned.</p>
Bincombe Beeches	<p>Split tree next to the path was felled by contractor.</p> <p>The three wood sculptures carved at the Bincombe activity day were installed on the woodland trails. Whips from Woodland Trust grant have been planted and additional trees obtained from Branching Out fund now planted – staking and sleeving now complete.</p>

Amenities Progress Report



	<p>Artwork/interpretation boards pending funding application submitted January 2024 – Deputy Clerk.</p> <p>Ash Die Back works and other outstanding works in tree survey need scheduling – Ops Manager PRIORITY for Jan/Feb/March.</p>
Tennis Courts - Severalls	<p>Storage box for donated tennis equipment has been placed in situ. New banner installed and old signage removed. Tennis Courts are now open to the public. Official launch event planned for April 2024 – Deputy Clerk.</p> <p>FAQs sign for gate has been received and installed. Additional signage from LTA expected.</p> <p>Path quotes obtained – more than earmarked reserves. How to proceed? Query over width for DDA compliance – Town Clerk to investigate.</p>
Severalls War Memorial Gardens	<p>Mower for volunteer group has now been replaced.</p>
Allotments	<p>Water trough system at Severalls – equipment purchased. Inspections – to resume following update of Allotments Policy – Deputy Clerk Pillars restoration completed December 2023.</p>
'Tommy'	<p>Funding application for professional cleaning to be determined late January 2024 – Update – funding has been awarded. Listed building consent may be required for any works – Town Clerk.</p>
Air Quality Monitor	<p>Ops Manager to investigate alternative locations.</p>
Aqua Centre	<p>Broken lamp post – Somerset Council has acknowledged they are responsible and have contracted replacement out. Deputy Clerk is chasing the contractor regularly, work expected by March 24.</p>

Amenities Progress Report



Additional Items	
Gutter Cleaning Clearance	Was completed in November at the GRC, Town Hall and Cemetery Lodge. Ops Manager to schedule annually, Lodge may need more frequent cleaning.
Tree work at all open spaces including specialist testing	Ops Manager to schedule O/S tree works Barn street rec – specialist tree testing – quotes received, double check procedure with Amenities Committee.
Town benches	Town centre benches need some attention/cleaning and clearance of surroundings in some cases – Ops Manager to discuss with Grounds Team.

Report subject	Urban Tree Challenge Fund
Committee name	Amenities
Meeting date	Monday 12 th February
Report author	G. Hughes, Deputy Town Clerk
Report contact details	deputyclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

1. Purpose

To consider a proposal to apply for an Urban Tree Challenge Fund to plant approximately 10 trees at Barn Street Recreation Area.

2. Background information

Councillors approved a plan of works for Barn Street in 2022, we now have the opportunity to apply for funding for the trees to fulfil part of this plan.

3. Detailed consideration

The grant will pay a fixed sum of £216.36 and the maintenance costs for the following three years. Over three years it would cover £151.20 per tree, per year. This is to cover the recommended watering schedule of 60 litres of water, with 14 visits per season, and to weed and check stake and ties, 7 visits per season.

There is a minimum requirement of 10 trees. They can be up to 1.8m tall and come in a large variety of species. Accepting 10 trees would require a slight amendment to the Barn Street plan, which currently identifies a need for 7. Attached is a report from Somerset Council's tree officer which proposed 24 trees.

4. Council Action Plan objectives supported

1.4.1 and 1.9.7

5. Financial implications

All costs should be covered by the grant and should therefore have no budget implications.

6. Recommendation

6.1. It is recommended that the Council **RESOLVES** that:

- a) Authority is delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk to apply for the grant, and all subsequent arrangements in consultation with the Operations Manager

UTCF Site visit notes

Crewkerne, Barn Street Recreation Ground

Crewkerne Town Council

25.1.24

Background

A 0.86ha. informal open greenspace owned and managed by Crewkerne Town Council, spanning urban and rural landscapes.

The site is fringed with hedgerows and mature trees which include beech, holm oak, holly, birch and sycamore.

Of particular interest are the mature and semi-mature beech trees that 'frame' Parsonage House, providing a historical landscape connection with the built heritage.



The recent planting with beech, hornbeam, field maple and the newly planted 'avenue' of five (unidentified) standards is a beneficial addition to the aesthetic and ecological value of the site, that will provide structural and biological diversity in the decades to come.

The view from looking east from the western field edge is also noteworthy, as it passes across the largely pastoral landscape of the Yeovil Scarplands, dotted with small woodlands and hedgerows. The enjoyment of this view that provides visitors with a link to the wider landscape ought to be retained, where any proposed planting be of species that would not impede this view as they grow to reach maturity.

Proposal

The introduction of additional tree planting with native species to enhance existing and create new features could serve the site well and be an aid to increase uptake in its use and enjoyment by the local community.

My proposal would be to consider additional planting to that contained within the existing design proposal.

There are multiple opportunities to increase tree numbers that would lead to enhancing age, structural and ecological diversity, increasing canopy cover and the sites resilience to the impacts of a changing climate as well as pests and diseases.

The planting of native tree species, or those that are currently common and thrive a few hundred miles to the south, would enhance the potential for these outcomes to be maximised.

Diverse and connected treescapes not only enhance the aesthetic of the wider landscape, they provide the most effective means of building long term resilience.

There are three proposed components

1. **Plant additional trees within existing east and west field boundaries.**

These boundaries currently support a number of mature and semi-mature trees, but they are very linear (narrow) and have large gaps.

The proposal would be to 'infill' on the **western boundary**, between the young beech trees, with approximately **six** trees that have the potential to grow to heights of 20m+. Species such as English oak, silver birch, walnut, field maple, whitebeam or hornbeam, to name a few, would all suit this location and add value in the decades to come to the site and the wider landscape.

Along the **eastern boundary** there are already a number of mature birch and beech trees which give this elevation a sense of being wooded.

The addition of two small '**collections**' of trees planted '**within the field**' would strengthen this woodland feel by providing more structural and aesthetic complexity to this linear feature.

Species such as spindle, hawthorn, rowan, hazel, holly and crab apple (again to name a few) would all suit this design style and add spring and autumn colour and interest.

2. Mini copse in the south-west corner

The current aesthetic and feel of this particular location is rather bare and uninviting. Regardless of how visitors may wish to use and enjoy this location now or in the future, it appears lacking in any particular interest or value.



By planting multiple trees within close proximity of each other and encompassing the existing semi-mature trees, this location would soon develop a more aesthetically interesting form and structure and provide a valuable and important boundary feature in the decades to come.

Close proximity planting is a common practice where there is a need or desire to 'force' the growth of trees faster than they typically would when planted singly. Within eight to ten years, this corner would provide a structurally complex habitat for wildlife as well as support the aesthetic enhancement of the site through providing a more interesting range of places and function.

Species such as those suggested along the eastern boundary would do well, as would whitebeam, goat willow, elder, hawthorn and bird cherry.

3. A shaded centre

Currently the centre of the field is a rather featureless and un-inspiring space, that gives the user no specific reason to make a passage there or indeed spend any time there. The picnic tables, bench and waste bin appear out of place and under-used.

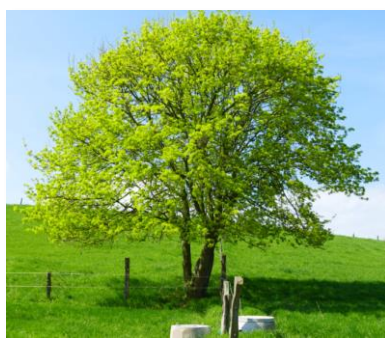


With the addition of **three standards of a species that would grow to be large trees** with a wide canopy, the area could be transformed into a shaded and welcoming place. Its well documented that our towns and neighbourhoods will need to adapt and change to be able to withstand some of the impacts of climate change and the shade that can be provided by trees will in some places be essential.

Species such as oak, walnut, sweet chestnut, sycamore, aspen, scots pine or wild service tree would all work well here and if planted with generous spacing, they should each mature into attractive specimens.



Aspen



Field maple



Walnut

Crewkerne. Barn Street Recreation Ground



Somerset
Council

Somerset
Council
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Taunton
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0300 123 2224

Scale:1:1000
Centre:343815, 109353
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Draft planting plan

White = recently planted. Green = proposed within existing landscaping plan.
Green/red border = proposed additional planting. Red = remove



Somerset
Council

UTCF application

The total number of additional trees within this proposal is 24.

There is opportunity within this UTCF application to include the three lime, three crab apple and one spindle tree that are proposed within the existing landscaping plan, bringing the total to 31.

**The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago.
The second best time is now.
(Chinese proverb).**

**Craig Daters
Woodland Creation Officer
Somerset Council
1st February 2024**

Report subject	Barn Street Beech Tree – specialist testing
Committee name	Amenities Committee
Meeting date	Monday 12 th February 2024
Report author	Katharine Sheehan, Town Clerk
Report contact details	townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To update the Amenities Committee on arrangements required for specialist testing for the Beech tree at Barn Street Recreation Area.

2. Background information

- 2.1. At the Amenities Committee meeting in September 2023, Councillors considered the report of the Council’s arborist, which recommended consideration be given to specialist testing for the three ‘specimen’ trees.
- 2.2. In the case of the Barn Street Beech, Councillors agreed that specialist testing should be undertaken, and delegated arrangements for the works to the Council’s Operations Manager.

3. Detailed consideration

- 3.1. Following the meeting, a site visit has been undertaken with the specialist testing company.
- 3.2. The cost of the testing will be £2,225, additionally the Council will need to hire a heavy piece of machinery for a day to act as a mobile anchor.
- 3.3. The testing will require the heavy machinery of at least five tons in weight, to manoeuvre across the Recreation Ground and may cause some damage to the grassed area.

4. Financial implications

See 3.2 above.

5. Equalities considerations

N/A.

6. Council Action Plan objectives supported

N/A.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1. It is recommended that the Committee considers whether to proceed with the testing in the light of the information outlined above.