



Planters in Water Orton

Summary

Water Orton in Bloom (WOIB) have requested approximately £160 from the Parish Council to plant various containers in the village belonging to the PC and some containers which may belong to other organisations.

A representative of WOIB has also requested that the Parish Council provide some assistance during the summer months with watering their planters. Last year this work was carried out by the village caretakers whilst carrying out the watering of the planters which belong to the Parish Council.

Recommendations / Considerations

1. To consider whether the Parish Council wish for Water Orton in Bloom to carry out planting within the Parish Council containers and submit bills for payment to the Council

As the village caretakers are expecting to prepare and plant the Parish Council planters and a budget had been set by the Parish Council for the purchase of these plants, the Clerk would recommend allowing the Village Caretakers to continue to do this. Compost is due to be purchased imminently and the caretaker and clerk have liaised regarding ordering plants via a local garden centre.

The planters within the train station are not usually maintained by the Parish Council, the authority responsible for the maintenance of these planters should be established. Should the Parish Council wish to assume responsibility for planting these permission should be sought and an agreement drawn up.

2. To consider whether the village caretakers continue to assist with watering the sponsored planters on behalf of Water Orton in Bloom

Although the village caretakers water the Parish Council planters, the additional 10 planters to water in the summer has an impact on their workload at this busy time of year and I would recommend working together with Water Orton in Bloom to recruit additional volunteers to take over the watering of the sponsored planters (ideally residents / shop owners close to each planter) to reduce the cost to the Parish Council / free up staffing resources for other maintenance work.

3. To consider whether to have a nominated Parish Council representative for Water Orton in Bloom to improve communication.

Background

The responsibility for the maintenance of the various public planters and planting areas within Water Orton is split between various organisations.

Planters owned & maintained by WOPC:



4 x Troughs on Railings (Railway Bridge - Marsh Lane)
4 x half-moon baskets (Brick Bus Shelters - Birmingham Road)
1 x Barrel container (Minworth Road)
Large Containers:
2 x Birmingham Road
2 x Watton Lane
2 x Marsh Lane
3 x Hanging Baskets (Playing Field Pavilion)

Sponsored Planters managed by Water Orton in Bloom:

Planter 1 – Watton Lane
Planter 2 – Watton Lane
Planter 3 – Coleshill Road (corner)
Planter 4 - Conker Island
Planter 5 – Outside Chip Shop
Planter 6 – Outside Chinese Restaurant
Planter 7 – Zebra crossing
Planter 8 – Birmingham Road
Planter 9 – Corner of Plank Lane
Planter 10 – Corner of Mytton Road

Other Planters / Planting Areas:

War Memorial flower bed (Village Caretakers have been maintaining this area as it had become unkempt, believed to be the responsibility of the War Memorial Group)
Conker Island (plants within the island – village caretakers maintain, land belongs to Warwickshire County Council)
Railway Station Planters (Parish Council do not look after these, presumably these belong to Network Rail – Water Orton Community Action Group may have responsibility for these)

Previously the village caretakers have been asked to prepare the WOIB planters for spring planting (including removing previous plants and topping up with compost) which took a significant amount of staff time. In addition to this the watering of the additional planters last summer (during particularly dry conditions) took up much of their time throughout the summer which has meant some other maintenance in the village such as the painting of equipment was not completed.

In order to ensure the Parish Council have adequate staffing resources there was a need to establish the support and assistance Water Orton in Bloom may wish to obtain 2023/24.

The Clerk contacted Water Orton in Bloom via email on 13/03/2023 and 19/04/2023 to ascertain what plans are in place regarding planting and watering this year and if there is any assistance, they wish to request from the Parish Council for 2023/24.

On 19th April a representative from WOIB requested they may require help from the PC with watering their planters throughout the summer months, this has previously been done by the village caretakers whilst watering the planters owned by the Parish Council.

On 22nd April an email was received from the Chair of WOIB advising that they normally plant the planters on the railings and on the bus shelters on behalf of the Parish Council and requesting to do some additional planting within the 6 x large containers belonging to the PC (£40 each), at the War



Memorial site (£40) and planters at the railway station (£70 for the three containers) by WOIB that the costs of this are submitted to the Parish Council. A copy of this email has been forwarded to all Councillors.

The Village Caretakers have advised that they usually plant the Parish Council planters listed above and are happy to continue doing this.

The Village caretakers look after a planted area on Conker Island and have suggested they continue watering the Water Orton in Bloom planter at this location as this does not take up much additional time as they are already at the location. The Parish Council will need to consider whether they have the staffing resource to allow the caretakers to continue to water the remaining planters belonging to WOIB as part of their duties or whether the Parish Council are able to assist Water Orton in Bloom with helping to recruit additional volunteers.

As WOIB have not requested for their planters to be prepared for the spring planting in 2023/24, it is expected that the village caretakers will only prepare the Parish Council planters this year.

Finance and Value for money

Staffing costs for the Parish Council will continue to rise with inflation, the Parish Council have a lean budget for 2023/24 and as the age of the various parish council assets increases so do the maintenance demands.

Additional watering will potentially lead to increase staffing costs (as overtime may then be needed to complete other necessary maintenance work) or increased contractor costs if this maintenance work is completed by a third party.

The Parish Council provide many planters which add to the aesthetic of the village and which many members of the community value.

Additional planters have been placed in the village via Water Orton in Bloom adding to the above benefits.

Risk Management Issues

The Parish Council need to consider the value of their relationship with Water Orton in Bloom against the impact on staffing resources and the best interests of the Community.

The efforts of the existing volunteers are much appreciated, and it is recognised that this voluntary group allows member of the community to participate in maintaining the planters which can help to tackle loneliness and isolation as well as improve health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, as the group do not currently have many volunteers and so Parish Council staff had been asked to help support the group and help with watering the planters.

There is a risk of a negative public perception if the Parish Council reduce staffing support to WOIB and the Parish Council should consider ways to mitigate the impact if they do this. Such as providing support to WOIB to recruit volunteers and / or nominating a parish council representative to join WOIB to help with communication between the community group and the parish council.

This report was prepared by the Clerk.