

Area Board Project

1. What is the project?

To improve the outside area around Springfield Community Campus and provide a sustainable community led approach to maintaining it.

2. Where is the project taking place?

Springfield Community Campus.
It will initially cover the side and back areas of the campus but may in time be extended to include other green spaces

3. When will the project take place?

During 2017 – Most of the work completed by late spring 2017

4. Background Information

When Springfield Campus was designed, it included a communal outside space and wildflower area. However the required maintenance and development of this area, either provided by the community or the grounds maintenance contract has not been sufficient.

The result is an area that is increasingly becoming untidy and in need of vital work. In addition the current maintenance contract will end during 2017 and there is no money identified to renew it let alone improve it.

5. What are the key issues that need to be addressed?

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed including:

- I. The wildflower area is cut twice a year but not necessarily at the best times or in the right way. There is no maintenance of it such as the removal of unwanted plants
- II. The wildflower area is too large and includes small difficult to manage patches of ground which would be better left as grass
- III. There is no border to the wildflower area resulting in it overflowing onto the path
- IV. There is no distinction between the wildflower area and the planted area
- V. There is little weeding that has taken place
- VI. There are no interpretation boards to help people understand the wild flower area and its habitat. Many people think it is just unkempt weeds

- VII. There is no provision to walk through or sit in the wildflower area
- VIII. The square planted areas along the pathway are undefined and just weed beds
- IX. The pathway is full of weeds
- X. The areas of planted trees have not been maintained. The tree ties need to be loosened and mulch put in on a regular basis
- XI. The large gravel area is not being utilised

6. Who has been involved?

The Community Engagement Manager acting on behalf of the Area Board has developed this project alongside Transcoco

Advice including a site visit has been received from WWT

7. What is being proposed

A full presentation on the proposals is to be given at the Area Board meeting on the 19th July. In brief they include

- Keeping the two large wildflower areas but reverting the smaller patches in the middle to grass
- Maintaining a mowed grass border around the Wildflower areas where there are no plants or hedges
- Forming a pathway through wildflower area nearest tennis court including a bench
- Disseminating the wildflower areas from the planted areas using sleepers
- Creating a space in the middle area using hedge or dry stone wall for small wildlife area
- Creating raised beds where the squares are in the paved area for herbs or plants
- Installing two interpretation boards (one at each path) to inform people of what the area is and what to look for
- Mulch areas where the trees are planted
- Make available boule for use on the gravelled area

The intention is to run one or two community work days in early spring and from that form a Springfield Community Garden Group.

If funding is agreed, approaches will be made to individuals and groups to see if they wish to get involved and perhaps take on a bit of work or adopt a patch. For example a raised bed could be taken on by a school, business or user group to maintain and this recognised by a sign or equivalent

We will also be approaching groups and businesses to help donate or make items and this will help reduce the funding required. For example the Brunel Shed has shown interest in helping build the benches.

8. What are the community benefits and evidence of need

The evidence of need is obvious due to the worsening state of the area. Complaints are increasing and funding is being reduced.

Additionally in the December 2016 'Our Community Matters' event, protecting the countryside and wildlife came out as the top priority for the environment. A project suggested by the group is a 'field of dreams'. This is where a wildflower meadow is cultivated by volunteers and open to the public.

The project which will look to involve schools, clubs and other organisations will be an inclusive, educational and positive activity benefitting the whole community

9. Who will manage/be responsible for this project?

Initially the Community Engagement Manager will manage the project in close consultation with the Elected Members and appropriate Wiltshire Council officers

He will be supported by members of the community and the aim is that a community group will be established and takeover the project

10. Costs?

The costings below are estimates assuming that all items will need to be purchased and that all labour is given voluntarily at no cost. Hence the project may not cost the full amount and the request is for expenditure up to £5k.

Once the work has been completed, ongoing expenses should be minimal. If required, applications can be made to other funders such as Tesco's Bags of Help.

The treatment of the paths for weeds will continue to be undertaken by Wiltshire Council

ITEM	COST
8 x Raised beds (2 or 3 sleepers high)	£1k
Bench (installed on hard surface)	£400
2 x aluminium Interpretation boards with panel and installed	£1k
Sleepers for separation and matting underneath (Both ends)	£500
Mulch	£200
Small Hedge / stone wall for wildlife area	£200
Path through wildflower garden,	£250
soil and compost	£250
Additional Plants to fill gaps	£200
Basic tools	£300
Small Shed and lock (within existing wooden bike shelter)	£400
Mower	£300
TOTAL	£5,000

11. What would happen if this project was not funded?

There are four options:

1. Do nothing – This will result in the area getting worse, more complaints and eventually the need to take action anyway
2. Concrete, gravel or slab the area – This will cost substantially more than £5k and is likely to be unpopular. It will spoil the look of the area
3. Put all areas to grass – Although not costed, this is unlikely to cost less than £5k. It will also necessitate the removal of the wildflower area which the community have said that they want. It would also be the loss of an opportunity for a community garden. Cutting of the grass would still be required
4. Adapt the current area to make it more attractive and sustainable, involving the community to get involved and look after it. – Preferred option

If the project does not happen, the area will simply get worse resulting in significant investment being required by Wiltshire Council to address the problem