

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder	Council	25 January 2024

Executive Report: Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio as set out below.

2. Parks and Open Spaces

- 2.1** Our winter tree planting commenced at the start of National tree week on 25 November with 1,300 trees planted up to Christmas at locations including King George V playing fields and The Mount Gardens in Fleetwood. The planting was undertaken by Wyre staff, countryside volunteers and members of the public.
- 2.2** We also assisted with the planting of 850 trees in collaboration with Wyre Rivers Trust. Further tree planting will continue including the planting of wet woodland tree species at King George's playing field in Thornton, as part of the wetland restoration project.
- 2.3** Funding has been secured through Round 5 of the Forestry Commission Urban Tree Challenge Fund, in partnership with Trees for Cities. This will support the cost of purchase, planting, maintaining, and establishing 60 large standard trees. 20 trees will be planted this season at The Mount Gardens, with a further 40 trees allocated for planting at King George V and Jameson Road the following year. The council funding award totals £38,187 and will be paid in instalments over the next few years.
- 2.4** Funding has also been secured to create a UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) 10 year woodland management plan to cover 16.06 ha of council owned woodland. Key focus points will include sustainable management, mitigating against the effects of climate change, water quality and slowing the flow, biodiversity and accessibility. This is a revenue grant of £1,500, enabling the council to access additional woodland support under higher tiers of Countryside Stewardship with an approved UKFS woodland management plan.

- 2.5** Thousands of wetland wildflower plugs have now been planted in the re-wilded Royles Brook by volunteers, staff and partners at King George's Playing Field and Church Road Playing Field, Thornton. Future plans include the planting of native trees around the park and the Wyre Rivers Trust have been growing the rare and special Black Poplar trees from seed for this purpose. The full impact of the plug plants and these carefully reared young trees should be evident around the edges of the newly renovated watercourse in the springtime. Additional works are planned for the boardwalk and pathway in the new year.
- 2.6** Council staff and volunteers from the Wyre Great Outdoors team led a variety of guided activities over the festive period, including a Thornton Short Walk, beach cleans at Rossall Point Tower, Fleetwood and Knott End, and the annual Visit to the Coast on New Year's Day. Visitors were invited to celebrate the New Year at Rossall Point Tower and enjoy the spectacular views over Morecambe Bay, the Wyre Estuary and the Forest of Bowland. Details of the forthcoming Wyre Great Outdoors programme for 2024 are now available on the Wyre Council website here: <https://www.wyre.gov.uk/greatoutdoors>.

3. Enforcement

- 3.1** The Government ban on the XL Bully Dog breed came into effect from 31 December 2023. This will make it illegal to breed, sell, gift or rehome XL Bully dogs or to have an XL Bully-type dog in a public place after this date unless suitably muzzled and on a lead.
- 3.2** Ownership will be illegal from 1 February 2024 unless the dog is exempted under the law and certificated accordingly. Owners will have until 31 January 2024 to apply for this exemption. Wyre Council are not responsible for licensing or maintaining a register of these dogs or for identifying, controlling or seizing any banned breed dogs.
- 3.3** The council does have a legal obligation to seize any stray dogs roaming in the community. Training has been arranged for the Environmental Enforcement Officers (together with officers from Fylde and Blackpool Councils), to cover safe handling techniques and recognise traits displayed by banned breeds, with emphasis on XL Bullies and Pitbulls, to ensure the safety of officers and members of the public encountering these dogs.

4. Changing Places

- 4.1** Works have been completed on the new Changing Places facility at Wyre Estuary Country Park. This modular unit has been positioned adjacent to the existing public conveniences on site. The registration process is underway with Muscular Dystrophy UK and an official opening event will take place once sign off has been agreed. The facility has been made possible through grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in partnership with Muscular Dystrophy UK, with capital funding in support of the provision from Wyre Council. Danfo will be supplying the new facility, with cleansing and maintenance provided as part of the existing contract. This new Changing Places facility will enable dignity, independence and safety for

residents and visitors with disabilities of a complex nature, and their carers.

5. Comments and questions

- 5.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.