

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder	Council	12 September 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 The Hawthorne Park Trust have been successful in a funding bid for £40,000 from the Lancashire Environment Fund (LEF) and have also secured £10,000 from the Community Lottery. The Trust has been supported by the Parks Development Team through the application process and will receive £20,000 additional council funding to deliver a playground refurbishment project at Hawthorne Park as part of the council's Parks Improvement Plan. The project will focus on younger children and will incorporate multi activity and sand play units with modern, innovative, and inclusive design to ensure diverse play opportunities for the wider community.
- 2.2 The Friends of Memorial Park have been successful in raising funds for the installation of additional play equipment on the park. £7,879 has been added to the 2024/25 Capital Programme to deliver playground improvements with the installation of a double seated rocking seesaw. This new play item is designed to stimulate physical, cognitive and social emotion; it accommodates both sitting and lying positions for users with disabilities and provides a shared space for carers to support service users and network with other carers.
- 2.3 Members of the public were invited to attend the final events of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Activity Plan at The Mount during spring and early summer. These included a bird survey, a half-term creepy crawly hunt to investigate and identify the variety of insect species and a community gardening session to replace the winter bedding in the rear flower beds to summer bedding. The final valuation report for the HLF Activity Plan has been completed.

- 2.4** Routine repairs and maintenance have been undertaken at several key sites in recent months to ensure safe provision and improvements to the facilities on offer. A springy rocker has been replaced at Pilling Park, offering children an opportunity to explore a mixture of play. A new replacement swing set has been installed at North Drive Park in Thornton Cleveleys. The historic gates have been restored and repainted at Jean Stansfield Park in Poulton. The repainting of some historic key features has been carried out at The Mount, including the benches, lampposts and railings. Damaged railings have also been restored and repainted at Memorial Park.
- 2.5** The UKSPF Cottam Hall Masterplan project has reached the final stage. The aspirational concept masterplan designed by consultants to demonstrate potential benefits across the whole site has been shared with key stakeholders over the summer months. The masterplan considers priorities from residents and site users, the diverse sporting requirements for pitches and facilities and reflects the demographics, ecology, habitats and existing infrastructure of the site. This concept design will form the basis for future projects where there is an opportunity to draw on funding and work with stakeholders to deliver improvements on site. Works on phase 2 of the project have recently commenced with plans and final designs agreed for a complete refurbishment of the sports pavilion at Cottam Hall.
- 2.6** This year, Vicarage Park, Hawthorne Park, Wyre Estuary Country Park, Memorial Park, and The Mount have all retained the prestigious Green Flag accreditation. A celebration event was held on 16 July attended by the Mayor and other councillors to recognise the achievement and give thanks for the hard work and dedication of all the teams and incredible volunteers working to make Wyre's parks and open spaces such welcoming places for people to enjoy the outdoors.
- 2.7** The Rural UKSPF funded Gateway to the Wyre Estuary project commenced during the spring with the installation of 'eco-link evo-counters' on the estuary path from Skippool to Stanah. These "visitor counters" will enable the project team to analyse customer footfall along the path before, during and after the project, using GIS technology and live monitoring of activity in a non-intrusive way. The Gateway project team is a partnership between Lancashire County Council Public Rights of Way team, Wyre Rivers Trust, Wyre Council and the Our Future Coast team, operating from the base at Wyre Estuary Country Park. An Estuary Restoration Officer (employed by Wyre Rivers Trust and funded by Our Future Coast) has been appointed to project manage the Gateway project and has submitted applications to Natural England for necessary permissions to work within the protected area of the Estuary. New fingerposts have been installed at each end of the Gateway Path by Rangers and volunteers, to provide customers with high quality directional information and guidance on the route between the two picnic areas which is also part of the Wyre Way long distance recreational route. Fingerposts have also been installed throughout the Country Park at Stanah to signpost customers to walking routes and key features such as the play areas and café within the park.

- 2.8** In April, Wyre Council co-hosted a special event to celebrate 30 years of the work of the volunteers of the National Coastwatch Institute (NCI). HRH Princess Anne was invited to Rossall Point Tower to see the volunteers in action keeping the coast safe from their lookout on the second floor of Wyre Council's Rossall Point Observation Tower. The council had the special honour of working with the Fleetwood National Coastwatch Institute, Lancashire Lieutenancy and Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary and the Royal Household to help coordinate the visit. HRH travelled from the Towers along the promenade and was presented to the High Sheriff, Mayor of Wyre and the Chief Executive of Wyre before attending a special awards ceremony at Marine Hall. Despite the stormy weather prior to the Royal visit, Wyre Council teams worked for many hours to clear debris and sand from along the promenade and surrounding areas to enable the Princess to appreciate Wyre's beautiful coastline.
- 2.9** The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Garstang Walking Festival involved 367 individual walkers taking part across the 9-day festival, with 690 attendees across all walks, representing an 8% increase in participation from the previous year. The programme included family activities, accessible walks, full day and half day sessions, the Wyre Way long distance trail and short walks across the borough. The Friends of Garstang Walking Festival, Wyre Coast and Countryside volunteer walk leaders and Wyre Great Outdoors team were supported by partners including Winmarleigh Church, Pilling Village Hall, Bleasdale Parish Hall, Forest of Bowland National Landscape team, Garstang Town Council, Garstang in Bloom, Wyre Rivers Trust, The Bay – blueprint for recovery and Fleetwood Wellbeing Way team. Customer feedback has been very positive, and enquiries have already been received about next year's festival.
- 2.10** The Wyre Estuary Bioblitz took place in June during Great Big Green Week. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time the 3-yearly Bioblitz has been delivered around the Wyre Estuary, co-ordinated by 3 main partners: Wyre Council, Wyre Rivers Trust and the Royal Society of Biology; other partners included LCC's LERN and Biological Heritage Site teams, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Blackpool Marine Life Centre, Marine Conservation Society and Fylde Bird Club. The Bioblitz started with a week-long survey event throughout the Wyre Estuary area, culminating in a 2-day event based at Wyre Estuary Country Park. This included a big citizen science marquee with exhibits and displays, nature walks, family activities, an ecology laboratory in the Riverside Room and outdoor classroom where experts and new volunteers could meet, share knowledge and learn new skills. The aim of the Bioblitz was to identify the diverse species living in the Wyre estuary and coastal areas and where they can be found. This information will assist in the long-term care of the natural environment, improve access to and celebrate nature, and mitigate against climate change. The Bioblitz enabled over 150 school children to take part in scientific study, ecological activities and nature walks around the Wyre Estuary Country Park at Stanah. Hundreds of volunteers, partners, pupils and the public participated over the week at many sites including Skippool Picnic Area, Larkholme Grasslands, Cottam Hall, Knott End and Fleetwood beaches. Over 3,550 digital observations were entered into the Wyre estuary bioblitz

database. The data has subsequently been verified and recorded on a digital map with over 870 species identified during the project period. A summary report of the findings will be made available to inform future land management in the area.

- 2.11 In June, the Wyre Ranger team and partners supported educational visits from local and visiting schools to Rossall Point Tower looking at the sea defence works on the coast and undertaking river and salt marsh studies at Wyre Estuary Country Park as a part of their geography curriculum.
- 2.12 The grounds maintenance team have had a busy summer period supporting colleagues, volunteers and friends groups in preparation for awards season (In Bloom, Green Flag and cemetery awards). Repairs and maintenance have been undertaken to improve the standard of our sports pitches during the off season, employing external contactors for specialist works. Annual biodiversity work was prioritised in August to enhance the diversity of fauna and flora across our parks and open spaces and mitigate the carbon impact of service delivery.

### 3. Waste and Enforcement

- 3.1 The WYSE external enforcement team issued 212 Fixed Penalty Notices in Q1 2024/25 as part of reactive patrols in response to information relating to known ‘hotspots’ and community intelligence about litter and dog fouling concerns, and proactive patrolling in areas with PSPO restrictions in place, as follows:

Offence Type	Offence Numbers
Littering	209
PSPO-Dogs Exclusion Zones	3
Dog Fouling*	Nil
<b>Total:</b>	<b>212</b>

Area	Patrol Hours (January to March 2024)	Number of FPN's
<b>Cleveleys</b> (Victoria & Norcross, Jubilee and Cleveleys Park)	206	73
<b>Fleetwood</b> (Park, Mount, Rossall, Pharos and Warren)	182	134
<b>Thornton</b> (Pheasants Wood, Marsh Mill, Stanah and Bourne)	15	1
<b>Poulton-le-Fylde</b> (Hardhorn with Highcross, Carleton, Breck and Tithebarn)	57	4

<b>Rural East</b> (Brock with Catterall, Garstang, Calder and Wyresdale)	2	0
<b>Rural West</b> (Hambleton & Stalmine, Great Eccleston, Preesall and Pilling)	2	0

### 3.2

During the same period (April – June) officers engaged with 190 dog walkers to confirm they were carrying dog waste bags and 335 dog walkers were observed picking up and disposing of dog waste responsibly.

### 3.3

The council's inhouse environmental enforcement team have been focusing on key priorities to address litter, fly-tipping and illegally deposited waste. Casefiles have been submitted for legal prosecutions relating to fly-tipping investigations in Fleetwood (Mount ward and Warren ward) and work is ongoing for an additional offence (Pharos ward). Fly-tipping investigations related to Out Rawcliffe (Bodkin Lane, Hags Lane, Winn Lane, Turkey Street and Church Lane) resulted in a £400 fine issued in one instance and several separate waste carriers are being investigated for fly-tipping offences in the area. Partnership working between the council, the police and Veolia led to a fine being issued to a motorist littering from a moving vehicle.

### 3.4

Joint working between the council's environmental enforcement, pollution and street cleansing teams led to the removal of large-scale fly-tipping from North Church Street and Wyre Street in Fleetwood. This was supported with proactive education to target local residents and influence positive behavioural changes, with enforcement using Community Protection Notices where compliance has not been achieved.

### 3.5

Several reports of suspected abandoned vehicles have been received and investigated but only one with foundation within Thornton (Bourne ward); a vehicle can only be classed as abandoned and subsequently removed by the Council where there is no evidence of a legal owner, even when it has been parked in an area for an extended period of time. Investigations have also highlighted concerns around rogue car selling from the roadside which is being treated as Anti-Social Behaviour under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

### 3.6

The council has been successful in a funding application to the Fly-Tipping Intervention Grant scheme for £48,000 to cover the capital costs associated with the installation of CCTV equipment along Jameson Road. Based on the criteria in the grant application, Jameson Road was identified as a suitable project location, the area is poorly lit with reducing visibility and minimal vehicle presence after dark; fly-tipping has been occurring for many years and has been the subject of historic complaints and attempted interventions. The project aims to influence behaviour and deter fly-tippers through the use of visible CCTV cameras, signage and associated communications providing a clear

message that fly-tipping is not acceptable. Images captured will also assist with the successful prosecution of perpetrators where anti-social behaviour persists.

### **3.7**

A number of environmental awareness sessions have been delivered in local schools over the past few months, highlighting the environmental impact of littering and dog fouling on the local area and demonstrating how students can make positive contributions for the benefit of their society. Sessions have been delivered at Baines Endowed, Charles Saer, Larkholme Primary, Thornton Primary, St Aidans Church of England High School, Carters Charity School, Hambleton Primary Academy and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary. This program complements the work of the Waste Recycling and Environmental Enforcement Team in promoting responsible dog management, recycling and litter control.

### **3.8**

In my April report to Full Council, I reported on a new Lancashire County Council initiative to highlight the dangers of disposing of batteries in wheeled bins, with supporting campaign artwork being displayed across our 16-refuse collection vehicles. Unfortunately, within days of this campaign going live, we suffered a battery related thermal incident in one of the recycling vehicles. The vehicle was carrying approximately one tonne of co-mingled waste when smoke was observed from the vehicle, and the quick-thinking driver had no option but to eject the load onto the carriageway. This prompt action saved the vehicle (and potentially surrounding properties) from what could have been a catastrophic accident before Emergency Services attended and extinguished the load. The rubbish was then reloaded onto a spare vehicle for disposal and a sweeper dispatched to sweep the carriageway of debris. Significant delays were caused to the collection round and to waiting motorists during the intervening road closure, but fortunately no-one was hurt in the incident. This near miss has provided a first-hand example of the dangers of incorrect battery disposal and further communications have been issued to encourage residents to recycle them safely.

### **3.9**

The street cleansing team have supported over 25 community events and galas over the summer, including Tram Sunday and Wanderland. Additional staff have assisted with waste removal and litter picking before and after events and support was provided to In Bloom groups to ensure judging areas and routes were cleansed ahead of judging.

## **4. Comments and Questions**

**4.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of the 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.