

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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meeting date: 28 MAY 2024  
title: GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE  
submitted by: ADAM ALLEN DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
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### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update regarding grounds maintenance and offer members the opportunity to ask questions.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
  - Community Objectives – Provide efficient services based on identified customer needs.
  - Corporate Objective - Making the Ribble Valley a place we want to be by creating a safer, stronger, greener, and cleaner Borough.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council manages and maintains a range of open space areas, from the Castle grounds and Edisford Riverbank in Clitheroe to Whalley Woodland and Proctors Field in Whalley, to Mardale and John Smiths in Longridge. Plus, the maintenance of 18 play areas.
- 2.2 The Council employs 9 people to carry out this range of work, they work from Longridge to Tosside, as they not only work on Council owned land, but also complete work for some parish councils as well as LCC.
- 2.3 The era of grand planting schemes is for most Councils a distant memory due to the reduction in budgets they have endured over the past 2 decades. Therefore, planting now is limited to areas such as the Castle and our car parks.

### 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The nature of the work undertaken is cyclical, with summer largely revolving around grass cutting, strimming and weed control, along with the limited planting of bedding plants. Winter work picks up the general maintenance of the open spaces which cannot be undertaken during the summer months due to the other priorities at that time. In addition, they prepare and dig graves as well as litter pick and empty waste bins in the parks and public open space areas, such as Edisford riverbank throughout the year.
- 3.2 To maximise the summer conditions, staff work 30 minutes longer in the summer months and this is then banked for taking during the winter period. This enables the team to have more time to complete the summer workload.
- 3.3 In the Castle several volunteers assist with keeping the flower bed at the Castle gate in good order as well as several of the old cast iron bins which have been repurposed for flowers. However, trying to get younger people involved has proved problematic, to help the current volunteers.
- 3.4 It is proposed that with the potential for additional investment in the Castle grounds, the Council will be seeking to submit a Green Flag application for that area in the future to reflect the work carried out by the council and community groups.

3.5 A key issue this current year has been the excessively wet weather. This has prevented the cutting of grass in certain areas and a need to cut many areas in a series of smaller lengths. Grass cutting is now back on schedule. A further consequence of the wet weather is the usability of football pitches due to waterlogging which has been particularly bad this past season.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The small team provide an excellent level of work across a wide area, but the service is continually looking at how it can improve. Continually looking at how we can enhance the environment, be more sustainable and better engage the public in activities. This includes planting wildflowers and leaving areas to grow naturally rather than mowing everywhere to a uniform height and engaging school groups in planting which will take place again this year. The capital programme for the coming year includes many improvements to our parks and open spaces, in particular the castle grounds which will lay the foundations for a Green Flag submission. A further report on this will be presented to a future committee.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge, extension 4479.