

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Conservation Advisory Group.
Conservation, Sustainability and
Community Planning Portfolio Holder.

AUTHOR/S: Conservation Manager

8th June 2005

PARISH TREE INITIATIVE – PILOT SCHEME 2005/06

Purpose

1. To seek Members approval to launch the pilot Parish Tree Initiative 2005/06, to enable this Authority to support Parish Council initiatives to enhance selected sites with tree planting.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	To enhance the Trees and Landscape Service.
Village Life	To contribute to the visual enhancement of the village and surrounds, with particular reference to help delivery of Performance Indicator SP905.
Sustainability	Enabling tree planting with appropriate species, which will make a significant contribution to the Councils sustainability agenda.
Partnership	The Scheme will be in partnership with Parish Councils.

Background

3. In past years, Parish Councils benefited from the supply of trees as part of the Tree and Hedgerow Partnership, which was co-funded by this Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council.
4. The planting of numbers of trees of small stock, often on diversified sites, was difficult to maintain in logistic terms, with the success rate of plantings in many Parishes being low.
5. The planting of three semi mature trees adjacent to a play area in the village of Coton in 2003-2004 proved successful. The site was proposed by the Parish Council, and the trees have subsequently been watered and maintained by local residents.
6. A tree of similar stock has been planted in Great Abington (March 2005) to replace a storm damaged London Plane. In liason with the Parish Council, local residents are watering the tree.
7. At the meeting of 27th October 2004, the Conservation Advisory Group recommended that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Portfolio Holder authorise the adoption of the Parish Tree Initiative, and that a pilot scheme be implemented in 2005-2006.

Considerations

8. The criteria for assessment and selection of sites, will normally be as follows :
 - (a) The site being owned by a Parish Council, although consideration will be given to sites in different ownership, where local maintenance is assured.
 - (b) A high profile site, whereby enhancement with tree planting will make a significant visual contribution.
 - (c) Sites that are strategically placed in terms of their visual contribution.
 - (d) Sites that contribute to a designated Conservation Area.
 - (e) Commemorative sites.
 - (f) Emphasis will be given to sites that are open to public access.
 - (g) It is felt appropriate that in order to achieve the greatest visual and community impact, that planting semi mature trees should be the focus of the Scheme. Planting in groups of four to five trees per parish
 - (h) Watering and maintenance to be undertaken by Parish Councils, or local groups liaising with the Parish Council.
9. A concentration of fewer sites in selected parishes utilising larger stock, as opposed to the supply of numerous plants of smaller stock, will make the logistics of the scheme manageable, and will aid the aspect of maintenance and establishment.
10. The Trees and Landscape Officer is currently in contact with four Parish Councils with a view to agreeing sites for next planting season (November 2005 – March 2006). The following will absorb the initial budget, and will, therefore, be the focus of the pilot scheme :
 - (i) *Whittlesford* – The Lawn. Trees and Landscape Officer to meet on site with the Parish Council and the Whittlesford Lawn Trust.
 - (ii) *Great Abington* – After initial consideration by the Parish Council, the Trees and Landscape Officer will meet and discuss on site.
 - (iii) *Little Abington* – After initial consideration by the Parish Council, the Trees and Landscape Officer will meet and discuss on site.
 - (iv) *Coton* – Following the initial success at Coton, local residents with the support of the Parish Council, have requested additional planting in the locality. Trees and Landscape Officer to meet on site to finalise details.

Options

11. That the Conservation Advisory Group recommends that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder either :
 - (a) Agrees to support the ongoing principles of the Parish Tree Initiative.
 - (b) Disagree with the principles of the Parish Tree Initiative

Financial Implications

12. A budget of £3,700 is currently available to support the scheme in 2005/06
13. The cost of providing semi-mature stock and planting will be met by this Council, subject to a maintenance agreement with the Parish Council
14. A twelve month replacement guarantee (subject to drought and vandalism considerations), from the date of delivery, is offered by the nursery who specialise in supplying tree stock of this size.

Legal Implications

15. Non specific

Staffing Implications

16. The project is being managed by the Trees and Landscape Officer.

Risk Management Implications

17. Lack of maintenance, and potential for physical damage occurring to trees is a concern. This may be mitigated by the requirement that the Parish Councils or local groups will be required to undertake appropriate watering and maintenance.

Consultations

18. Parish Councils and local groups.

Conclusions/Summary

19. The proposed pilot scheme will enhance the character and visual quality of villages and their surrounds, with an emphasis on encouraging local tree planting initiatives of a nature that will provide an immediate visual impact and focus for community celebration.

Recommendations

20. That the Conservation Advisory Group recommends that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder agrees to formally launch the Parish Tree Initiative during 2005/06 on the basis of the criteria established in this report.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

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