

Committee: Open Spaces

Date: 6 February 2024

Title: Contract for plants

Purpose of Report

For Members to consider future planting arrangements and a new contract to supply plants.

Recommendation:

1. Members resolve to delegate to officers to make enquiries with regards to taking over the triangle planter on the corner of West Street and the planted area at the top of North Street as part of the devolution of assets from Somerset Council.
2. Members resolve to delegate to officers to spend up to a maximum of £2,500 for a year's contract to supply plants.

Background:

1. The Town Council usually plants troughs at the bottom of Orchard Vale, and Strawberry Bank, planters at the entrances to the town, the hanging baskets in the Market House, the flowerbed and planters in The Minster.
2. At the Open Spaces meeting held on 5 December 2023, Members were informed that the current contractor at that time had given notice to stop supplying plants at the end of the first year of a three year contract. Therefore Members resolved:

23-0060-OS Plant contract

Members discussed the annual plant contract. Discussions included the environmental impact changing the planters twice a year and the watering, would triple planters be more efficient and easier to maintain, and would residents help out with the watering.

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously to delegate to officers to obtain quotes for a new 3 year contract for plants for the troughs and hanging baskets.

Proposer Cllr Hamilton **Seconded** Cllr Jenner-Hurford

3. The council currently spends around £2,000 a year on plants being delivered once in the summer and once in the winter. There is a budget of £2,500 that was agreed at the Town Council meeting held on 19 December 2023.

Report:

4. The Open Spaces Manager has reviewed the health and safety aspects of maintaining the troughs and planters, as well as the environmental impact this has.

AGENDA ITEM 12

5. In the summer, it takes around 2.5 hours and 700 litres of water 3 times a week. This is a huge environmental cost in water alone as the water bowser is filled from the tap during dry spells.
6. The 15 planters on Strawberry Bank is the main issue as it is so labour-intensive and there is a health and safety issue with the workers having to be in the path of traffic to complete the job. Currently, the ATV and water bowser are parked wherever a space can be found on the roadside and quite often there are no spaces, and it has to be parked on the zig-zags by the traffic lights. Then, using a watering can, the grounds worker fills the can from the water bowser and walks up and down Strawberry Bank to water the 15 planters.
7. One suggestion was to have a water bowser with a water pressured hose and water the planters from the road. The main issue is having to park in the road to reach over parked vehicles to be able to water the planters. This would involve two grounds workers to carry out the task and is a risk of damaging vehicles.
8. To remove these health and safety implications, and to save money and water, the 15 planters along Strawberry Bank could be removed permanently.
9. An alternative arrangement for removing the planters on Strawberry Bank would be to improve the current shrub beds at the top end of North Street and the triangle at the junction of West Street and High Street. They could be planted with perennials and shrubs which would need less watering and would be in a safer location to be maintained. However, both of these areas are currently assets of Somerset Council.



10. Members may wish to delegate to officers to make enquiries with regards to taking over the triangle planter on the corner of West Street and the planted area at the top of North Street as part of the devolution of assets from Somerset Council.

AGENDA ITEM 12

11. With regards to a new plant contract, the Open Spaces Manager has requested quotes from three suppliers, Lufton Nurseries, Plants Galore and Cottage Flowers but has not received any communication from two of those suppliers. The third supplier has some costings, but not a completed quote to cover the summer and winter plants at this moment. With further dialogue with the supplier, officers are confident that a year's contract could be agreed within budget.
12. Enquiries were made with a local shop which found that they too used Mousehole Nurseries and are currently seeking a new supplier.
13. Members resolve to delegate to officers to make enquiries with regards to taking over the triangle planter on the corner of West Street and the planted area at the top of North Street as part of the devolution of assets from Somerset Council.
14. Members resolve to delegate to officers to spend up to a maximum of £2,500 for a year's contract to supply plants.

Jason Fontana
Open Spaces Manager
January 2024