**FULL COUNCIL – 16 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**TREE & BEE PROJECT SITE PROPOSALS**

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Council:

(a) Notes the Councils involvement in the project;

(b) Agrees the inclusion of the proposed Parish owned sites as set out in paragraph 4.2;

(c) Delegates the Clerk and Community Development Officer authority to operate to deliver the project in partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council and Bishopstoke Parish Council.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Tree and Bee Project is a Bishopstoke, Fair Oak & Horton Heath Local Area Committee initiative which aims to create areas of community and ecological value on existing open spaces that currently have none.

2.2 The purpose is to plant trees and understorey plants in areas (across both parishes) of short grassland for ecological, visual and communal benefit, creating wildlife corridors linking existing woodlands for the benefit of wildlife and pollinators.

2.3 The project also aims to create areas of edible or fruiting plants and trees to provide a local resource for residents, giving them an outdoor interactive learning and wellbeing opportunity. And sharing knowledge of healthy lifestyles and interconnectedness with nature.

## 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In 2023 Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) delivered a pilot Tree and Bee project over 15 sites within Bishopstoke Parish Council boundary. Following completion of the project, a SWOT analysis was carried out and concluded that overall, the pilot project was well received by Bishopstoke residents. However, it magnified the importance of better communication not only internally between EBC departments, specifically regarding mowing and watering regimes. But also externally, with more robust mechanisms to promote the project and its opportunities with residents. In terms of the planting, the pilot highlighted the many benefits of employing a professional contractor, such as ensuring that planting was carried out efficiently and to specification.

3.2 In 2022/23 Fair Oak Parish Council delivered its own tree and bee sites, Meadowsweet Way, the Community Library, Oak Walk, Summerlands Road and planters in Sandy Lane and the village centre. These have been well received by the local community and have greatly enhanced the amenity value and biodiversity of the various sized sites located throughout the parish.

## 4. THE PROPOSED SITES

4.1 When Eastleigh Borough Council first approached the parishes to create a LAC wide project, the Clerk and CDO initially put forward 15 sites (of various Parish, Borough, and County owned sites). However, upon reflection, reducing the number of sites and creating two large flagship schemes, appeared to provide more opportunities/benefits to

the local community and maintenance arrangements as well as a greater impact on biodiversity.

4.2 The proposed sites within Fair Oak & Horton Heath Parish are:

- Site 1: Upper Barn Copse, flagship site, parish ownership
- Site 2: Dean Road, as flagship site, parish ownership
- Site 3: Eastleigh Road/Fair Oak Road verge, Eastleigh ownership; and
- Site 4: Burnetts Lane, Eastleigh ownership. NB: should this site not prove suitable via EBC then Aintree Close (EBC ownership) will be put forward as an alternative suggestion.

4.3 These sites were selected due to their proximity to existing Fair Oak Parish Tree and Bee sites to ensure that there is sufficient connectivity to the wildlife islands for the various pollinators found in our area. As well as sites that currently have low amenity value and would benefit from environmental enhancement.

## 5. PARISH INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

5.1 The Parish Council's involvement in the project will largely be focused on the following: -

### 5.1.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The success of scheme is largely dependent on the community assisting with planting, maintenance, and creation of friends of groups or tree wardens for future stewardship in the long-term maintenance of the sites. The community will be invited to help with the landscape design of these sites and to partake in a species survey to raise awareness about the current biodiversity and to monitor the enhanced spaces annually. This will create community ownership and buy-in of the project and be a useful tool to report back on the survey findings yearly.

The CDO and EBC's appointed Project Manager (Helen Brown) have already engaged with Fair Oak infants and Juniors Schools and Wyvern College to encourage their engagement in the project. All schools have indicated that they will involve the tree and bee corridor into classroom activities such as learning about growing food, biodiversity and greening the schools. Each school will contribute in a variety of ways, for example; Wyvern are keen to involve the media students and have a gardening club to grow plants, Fair Oak Juniors will take part in a poster competition and Fair Oak infants will design a mascot for the project.

### 5.1.2 COMMUNICATIONS AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

As highlighted in the Bishopstoke pilot, it is essential that the correct level of communication method is applied to raises awareness for the ethos and main aims and objectives of the project but to also obtain a sufficient level of community engagement from the start to ensure the success of the project.

### 5.1.2 PUBLIC ART

Installation of public art with a community co-design project, potentially with local schools, will ensure that the project has its own identity and branding. As well as raising awareness, being purposeful and having dual sustainable function such as habitat creation. Eastleigh Borough Council Public Art Officer will lead on this element with some input from the Parish and residents.

## 6 MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Funding has been allocated for maintenance costs on all sites for a 2-year period, following the completed planting. On-going maintenance will be needed after this time; however, it is anticipated that this will be minimal as the planting will have established and it's hoped that residents will have formed friends of groups to help maintain the areas as well. It has yet to be determined who will take overall responsibility of the maintenance i.e. Parish, EBC or an external contractor. And this will be negotiated with EBC via the Clerk.

## 7 PROJECT TIMINGS

7.1 Full details of the project including project timings are set out in **Appendix 1.**

## 8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The project is fully funded by Eastleigh Borough Council but will include support from the Clerk and Community Development Officer.

## 9 CLIMATE/ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Through planting up underused green spaces with carefully chosen plants, which currently have limited biodiversity value, will greatly enhance the area for people and nature. It will create vital corridors to support and provide essential food and shelter for wildlife, aiding their movement between habitats to create a thriving, connected environment.

## 10 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None directly arising from this report

## 11 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 All sections of the community will be invited to take part in this project.

## 12 CONCLUSION

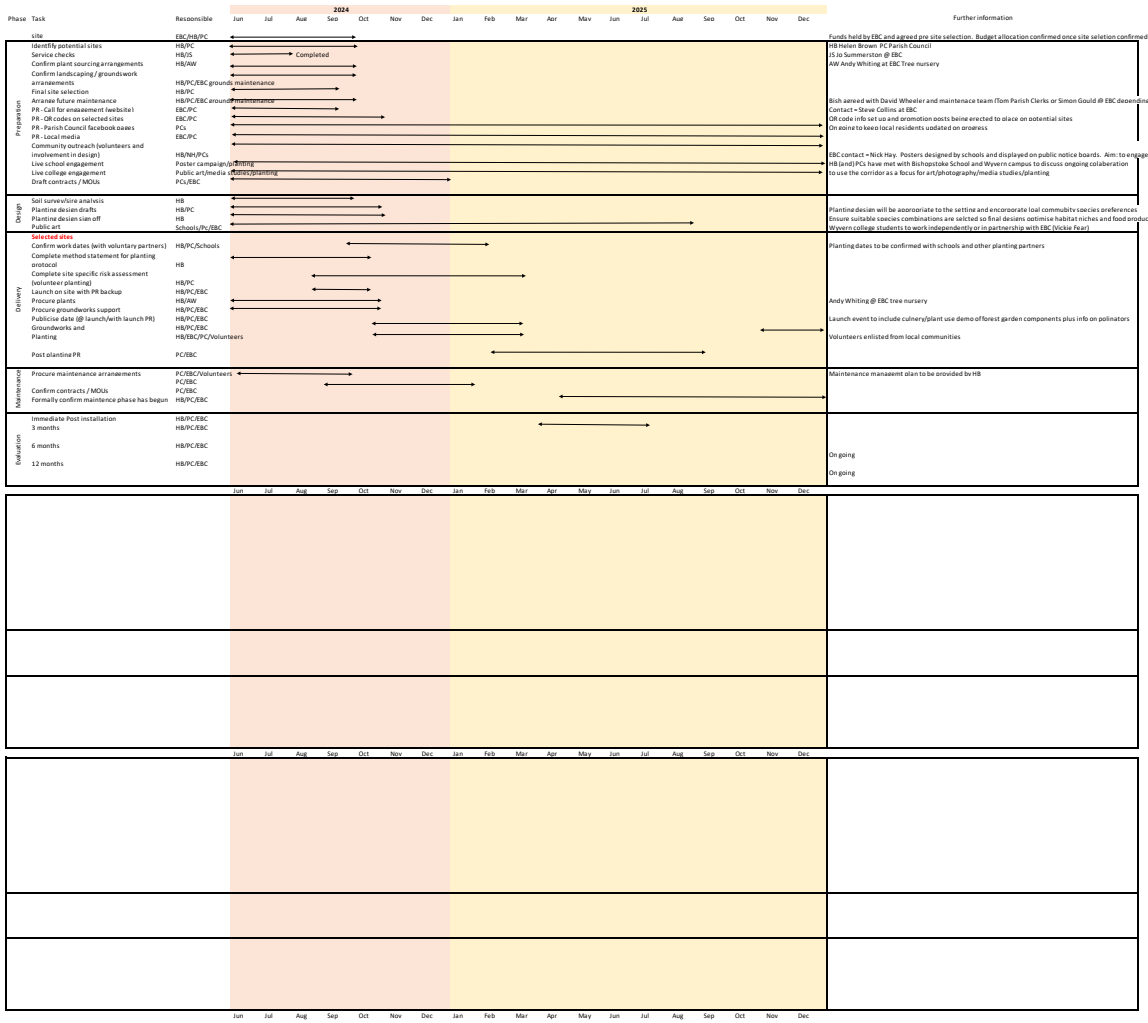
12.1 The Parish, having delivered its own Tree and Bee sites as part of the Planet Corporate Plan priority and Climate Change action plan is fully supportive of delivering this project with its key partners for the benefit of the wider community and local wildlife.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Siobhan Strand, Community Development Officer

Email: siobhan.strand@fairoak-pc.gov.uk

# Appendix 1


2024
2025
Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Phase Task Resoonsible Further information
site EBC/HB/PC Funds held by EBC and agreed pre site selection. Budget allocation confirmed once site seletion confirmed
Identfify potential sites HB/PC HB Helen Brown PC Parish Council
Service checks HB/JS Completed JS Jo Summerston @ EBC
Confirm plant sourcing arrangements HB/AW AW Andy Whiting at EBC Tree nursery
Confirm landscaping / groundswork arranaements HB/PC/EBC grounds maintenance
Final site selection HB/PC
Arranae future maintenance HB/PC/EBC arounds maintenance Bish aareed with David Wheeler and maintenace team (Tom Parish Clerks or Simon Gould @ EBC depending on ownership
PR - Call for enaaaement (website) EBC/PC Contact = Steve Collins at EBC
PR - QR codes on selected sites EBC/PC QR code info set up and promotion posts beine erected to place on potential sites
PR - Parish Council facebook paaes PCs On aoine to keep local residents updated on proaress
PR - Local media EBC/PC
Community outreach (volunteers and involvement in design) HB/NH/PCs EBC contact = Nick Hay. Posters designed by schools and displayed on public notice boards. Aim: to engage local community members and generate interest in design and future management. Raise awareness abut the notonof the corridor - blending the planting site by greening either side of planting area eg wilding grass verges etc.
Live school engagement Poster campaign/planting HB (and) PCs have met with Bishopstoke School and Wyvern campus to discuss ongoing colaberation
Live college engagement Public art/media studies/planting to use the corridor as a focus for art/photography/media studies/planting
Draft contracts / MOUs PCs/EBC
Soil survey/site analysis HB
Plantine desian drafts HB/PC Plantine desian will be appropriate to the settine and encorporate loal commubity soecies preferences
Plantine desian sian off HB Ensure suitable soecies combinations are selcted so final desians optimise habitat niches and food production in the case of forest aardens. Native plantine should be appropriate to the settine
Public art Schools/Pc/EBC Wyvern college students to work independently or in partnership with EBC (Vickie Fear)
Selected sites
Confirm work dates (with voluntary partners) HB/PC/Schools Planting dates to be confirmed with schools and other planting partners
Complete method statement for planting protocol HB
Complete site specific risk assessment (volunteer planting) HB/PC
Launch on site with PR backup HB/PC/EBC
Procure plants HB/AW Andy Whiting @ EBC tree nursery
Procure groundworks support HB/PC/EBC
Publicise date (@ launch/with launch PR) HB/PC/EBC Launch event to include culnery/plant use demo of forest garden components plus info on polinators
Groundworks and HB/PC/EBC
Planting HB/EBC/PC/Volunteers Volunteers enlisted from local communities
Post plantina PR PC/EBC
Procure maintenance arranaements PC/EBC/Volunteers Maintenance manaaemt olan to be provided by HB
Confirm contracts / MOUs PC/EBC
Formally confirm maintence phase has begun HB/PC/EBC
Immediate Post installation HB/PC/EBC
3 months HB/PC/EBC
6 months HB/PC/EBC On going
12 months HB/PC/EBC On going
Preparation
Design
Delivery
Maintenance
Evaluation