

Allotments & Land Report 24th June 2025

ITEM 10: NORMAN ROAD AND NASH GARDENS ALLOTMENTS

We have one vacant plot at Norman Road, St Peter's which became available week commencing 16th June. The first person on the waiting list has been notified.

Our Gardeners have removed the ivy and overgrowth along the flint wall of The Pathway which backs on to the allotments in Nash Gardens following a complaint from a resident who lives opposite. This was a huge undertaking and on removal, a lot of the roots were not from the allotment side, however, just our area has been removed and allotment holders have been asked if they could ensure that any growth that appears to be going up the wall is removed should it grow up from the allotments side.

ITEM 11: CULMER'S AMENITY LAND

The Civic & Support Officer's (CSO) wild flower project has commenced at Culmers. Unfortunately, the first round of seeding was not successful. The CSO has made arrangements with our Contractor for this area to be reseeded and has also arranged for use of water from the Culmer's Allotment Association. This is fully reported on under the Environment Committee.

NGL Boxgreen continue with the Grounds Maintenance of this land.

ITEM 12: MOCKETT'S WOOD

Neil Hibbert started with us on 1st April as the Woodland Officer. He has made great strides already and is working closely with the Friends of Mockett's of Wood implementing the Management Plan.

The Woodland Officer has produced an update 'newsletter' which will be posted on social media and our website. He will continue to produce these updates on an ad hoc basis and they will be sent out to Councillors for information. We will also be updating Thanet Council with improvements and to show Mockett's Wood as a 'place to visit'.

A group of volunteers from Saga came to the woods on 12th June for the day and have helped with the dead hedging areas.

The Woodland Officer intends to make contact with the local schools regarding help within the woodland and education of the woodland in the hope that this will lead to alleviating some of the vandalism. He has also had a meeting with the local beat police on the subject of vandalism.

A group of staff have emptied, tidied and made framework for the container used for the Mockett's Wood equipment and also taken an inventory of tools.

Work has started on the blocking of the smaller pathways and thoughts are now on the creation of the circular path.

Please see the options presented for the path surfacing – attachment 4.

Decision required from the Committee on a path option

ITEM 13: PIERREMONT PARK GROUNDS

NGL Boxgreen continued with the grounds maintenance of this area. The planters and urns have been replanted for the summer.

ITEM 14: LAND UNDER LICENCE

Our third Gardener, Graham Back, commenced on 31st March and fits in very well with the Team.

Balmoral is looking great, with new shrubs now in situ and a tidy up and general upkeep of the area in place. Our Operations Officer has repainted all the railings around Balmoral Gardens and we have also taken into our care the two large terracotta pots which were left unkempt. These have been cleared and replanted.

The circular bed in Pierremont Park has been cleared and planted and is a huge improvement. The round rose bed has not required any additional maintenance but is in full bloom.

The war memorial has been cleared of the winter planting, and summer bedding is now in place.

To add a 'pop' of colour and impact to Victoria Gardens, a couple of the smaller beds near Morellis have also had bedding plants added.

A request has been sent to TDC for the hedge in the circular area by the shelter at Victoria Gardens to be reduced by at least 12 inches. The hedge has not been reduced in a while and is now at a height where it is difficult for the internal bedding areas to be seen. It has been requested that this is incorporated into TDC's winter maintenance programme.

The Gardeners have requested that we look into removal of the 'palm trees' within Victoria Gardens. These are in fact cordylines and are part of the bedding. Daniel Gooch at Thanet Council does not have any issue with their removal, however he mentioned that this may be a contentious issue with the general public due to their prominence.

The cordylines do take a lot of the water out of the ground which makes it difficult for other plants to establish around this area.

Decision required from Committee regarding the Cordylines.

We have been approached by TDC regarding the possibility of taking on Nuckell's Gardens and aiding the volunteers from Dickens House Museum. The TDC Tourism Manager will look into having the area incorporated into our cultivation licence. This is likely to commence in the new financial year. Consideration would need to be given to increasing staff hours for this additional area. Updates will be given as they are received.

ITEM 15: TREE WORK

Following the last meeting regarding the removal of the 2 dead elm trees at the footpath at Bairds Hill (this is not BSPTC land), Cllr Pressland came forward with an alternative for the two trees to be cut down to 20m and leaving logwood in the undergrowth. At the time, the majority of the Committee did not respond to approve the works. It should be noted that these trees are not Town Council, and currently, should anything happen to these trees, the owners of this land would be liable.

The Tree Surgeon was contacted, and he provided the following:

I think that standing deadwood is vital habitat and there is definitely not enough of it left-we always encourage leaving trees untouched, or habitat poles being left where possible.

Despite the fact that dead Elm stands quite well generally, there is no exact science behind it, and it would be irresponsible to leave large dead stems within falling distance of the footpath-as they will fall over at some point.

If they were to be left at 20ft, they would create good habitat for a few years, but would then need removing, along with all of the wildlife that are enjoying them, however if the stems are left lying in the undergrowth, any ecological benefits can be long term.

If we do work to them, and they were to topple over, we would be liable. Therefore, the Tree Surgeon would not recommend leaving any part of the tree in tack, or to carry the work out and so has not provided a quote for such.

**For the removal of the 2 x dead Elm trees, chipping all of the waste into the undergrowth here and leaving the logwood in large sections in the undergrowth.
£1000 plus VAT**

Decision required from Committee if the Town Council should arrange and pay for the removal of the dead elm trees at Bairds Hill footpath.

Recent activity in the woods...

Mockett's Wood 23-05-25:



An exciting start to this week with the local RSPB team joining the Saturday volunteer session to start surveying Blue Tit nesting boxes in the woods. More on this when the survey is complete & data available...

We also found an emerging nest of white tailed Bumble bees [*Bombus lucorum*] with 20+ young

worker bees coming out of the nest accompanied by the queen. An amazing sight & sound + another entry to add to the growing species list for the woodland.



The session also focussed on watering the 12 new wild clematis & honeysuckle plants installed near some of the existing dead hedging, along

with the usual litter picking, bin emptying & controlling the ever present Alexander plants [*Smyrniolum olusatrum*].



Dead hedging repairs & upgrades have continued & a new section of path was opened up + dead hedging installed to protect the bumblebee nest we discovered.



New dead hedging to block off some of

the surplus paths has also started & re-wilding of the compacted paths will start soon.

There is also a section near the centre of the woods earmarked for recovery under 2 large trees. Around 14m of dead hedge might be needed to partition this off. A temporary jute cord barrier has been installed as a trial...

June 2025



Lots of activity in the last 3 weeks, particularly in terms of new & renovated dead & live hedging.

We also received a big load of green poplar for hedge building from our tree surgeon Joe. Very useful!

The paths being blocked off are being re-wilded with native Woodland seed.

New species spotted included bracket fungus & Harlequin ladybird larvae.