BridgwaterTownCouncil

Portfolio:	Climate Emergency
Portfolio Holder Name	Cllr. Kathy Pearce
Full Council Meeting Date:	March 2023
Agenda Item:	TC2023.29

1. **Seed The Day – Saturday 25th February**: A big thank you to all members of staff and councillors who gave up their Saturday to steward and help the day go successfully. The day generally went well, with a wide range of stalls and good quality produce. Many stallholders reported a good day despite numbers of stalls and visitors being down on the previous event in September 2021. The lower turnout was put down to the post-Christmas lull and very cold weather. Therefore, we are looking forward to the next one returning to its usual time slot of second Saturday in September (Saturday 9th September). Save the date!

2. **Allotments:** On 1st March, Bridgwater Town Council took full responsibility for the allotment sites. Town Council Staff have been trained on the necessary software and a structure is in place to manage the sites and respond to allotment holders enquiries, as we begin to work together. I thank the members of the Bridgwater and Tenants Allotment Association for their co-operation and all the time they have given over the years. Of the sites taken on, Taunton Road and Bristol Road are the only two which do not have Statutory status. Applying for Statutory status for these two sites will therefore be an item for decision at the Full Council meeting. This will be an essential means of safeguarding the sites into the future.

3. **Parks**: On 1st April, Bridgwater Town Council looks forward to taking responsibility of most of the town's parks. They will be maintained via a Service Level Agreement with Somerset Council staff and we look forward to developing the spaces to become as interesting, green and bio-diverse as possible. Our Pesticide Free Policy can now be extended to these open spaces, thus enabling us to effectively create wildlife corridors through the town.

4. **Energy Advice:** Following the last meeting, I have made contact with the Eco Centre (at Seed The Day), who are contracted by the Centre for Sustainable Energy to work with residents to give energy advice and help them to reduce their carbon emissions and energy bills. We are exploring how we can work together.

5. **Plastic Free Communities**: Following my last report, I will be meeting with the Town Team over the next few months (to coincide with a presentation about seaweed packaging) with the aim of inspiring local businesses to become plastic free. In the meantime, to get the ball rolling, Councillor Morgan is organising a beach clean. Please watch this space and take part, if you can!

6. **Tree Fund**: The Tree Fund, in its current form, will cease to exist at the end of the month. Instead, in future, the tree budget will be spent in our own parks and open spaces. The reason for this is, over the past few years, we have experienced land ownership issues which have hindered us from fulfilling the objective of making Bridgwater greener and responsive to extremes of climate. I believe we can therefore have a greater impact with increased planting on our own land.

7. **Climate Action Plan**: The Climate 'Triad' has met as often as possible through the year to progress the activities above. Our next task is to develop a Climate Action Plan and engage with local residents to develop ideas and projects.

Recommendations: There are none