

Haslemere Rotary Club in Partnership with Weyhill in Bloom

Report for Amenities Committee of Haslemere Town Council

1.0 Background

1.1 Fosters Bridge and the land which is owned by the railway and bordered by railway sleepers, has been a drab area for many years. HTC took over maintenance of this land some years ago and the Railway Authority contributes to the cost of maintenance on an annual basis.

1.2 Historically it has been an area where litter collected and was overgrown. It is now clear of litter and the councils contractors prune the trees and apply weedkiller to the surface in sufficient quantities to keep the undergrowth from growing.

1.3 The result is a tidy area with stunted tree growth surrounded by bare soil. There is a move towards council owned land being allowed to return to unspoiled grass meadows with wildflowers. The dream is that this may be possible on this particular site. However, it is uncertain that it is possible to grow wild meadow flowers on this ground, particularly on a shadowed piece of land that has been regularly sprayed with weed killer.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Haslemere Rotary club in partnership with Weyhill in Bloom wish to experiment with a 2m by 2m of this land by trial planting an area with wild flower meadow seeds. This would be carried out in the autumn of 2021 and in the spring of 2020 when the result of the trial planting should be evident.

The trial planting will be undertaken at the cost of the Rotary club of Haslemere.

2.2 Request that HTC initially asks their contractors not to spray with weed killer the sample 2 m x 2 m experimental area whilst the seeds germinate and grow.

2.3 Clearly if the seeds do not take in this area then to pursue planting of the whole site would be inappropriate and HTC would then continue their current maintenance regime on an ongoing basis.

2.4 However if the seeds in the trial area are successful then the Rotary club in conjunction with Weyhill in bloom would consider planting the whole area in a similar manner. In the autumn of every year thereafter the area would be cut allowing the flower seeds and grasses to dry. Their seeds to return to the soil with the dry cuttings being removed leaving the site tidy.

2.5 Clearly the council would need to litter pick the site on a regular basis and prune the shrubs as they currently do.

2.6 The community would cut the area on an annual autumn basis and after drying dispose of the cuttings.

2.7 They would prefer to place the sample test site on the bare earth area close to Foster's bridge. If the Council agrees this as the general area then along with a Council Officer we could meet on site and agree a 2m by 2m area which could be identified by wooden markers. At this stage it would be unnecessary for us to be prescriptive as to the precise area, when together we can agree what would be best for us both.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 Initially only consent to trial plant a 2 m x 2 m area is required.

3.2 Should the trial proved to be successful then a further report is made to the amenities committee with a view to the community managing the wildflower and grass site.