

Meeting Date: 3 March 2015

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Environment & Transport Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Elsie Martlew**

GREEN SPACES

Working in the Winter Woodlands - Winter is the season for woodland maintenance and the programmed approach to the work has improved productivity. Diseased, damaged or dangerous trees are always addressed as a priority but, the rule of 'prevention being better than cure' certainly applies to tree management. Since Christmas a number of pre-emptive tree management projects have been delivered aimed at reducing risk and making our sites safer:

- At Harraby Grove a number of over-mature poplars and willows which had begun to threaten nearby properties have been taken down.
- At Eastern Way the line of mainly willow trees that had begun to hang over the carriageway were selectively felled and pruned.
- At Tribune Drive, Houghton, a plantation of broadleaved trees that had been causing problems with nearby properties were thinned. This involved a high degree of consultation with residents and careful specification of the work.

Keenan Park - The Green Spaces team has been looking at options for preventing future incidents of unauthorised encampments at Keenan Park.

They have decided to construct a low bank of earth that will be grassed over across the narrow neck of land between Eastern Way and Pennine Gardens which will be high enough to prevent vehicles from crossing over it. Bollards will be used to create controllable access for our own maintenance vehicles so we can continue to cut the grass.

This work has been planned for March-April so the ground is dryer and the construction creates less mess. This is a low-cost option that has been shown to work effectively elsewhere in the city.

I trust this helps to reassure Members that the Council is determined to improve our resilience against unauthorised occupation of land, with all the problems and disruption this causes for residents.

Talkin Tarn – Work has commenced on the Woodland Improvement Grant totalling 28.5K worth of improvements for Talkin Tarn. The work is to address tree safety and thinning of various areas of the woodland, removing trees that are dead, dying, or dangerous. Some trees will have the deadwood removed, some trees, where it is possible to do so, will be left as standing deadwood for the benefit of wildlife, and some trees will need be felled completely. The grant is spread over 5 years with the bulk of the tree work taking place in year one , and the following years will concentrate on improving access into the woodland with the installation of new steps and replacing fences.

Submissions have been received for the development of the camp site tender and for Boat Hire and water sports provision. The successful operators are Herding Hill Farm based in Haltwhistle who will be bringing a combination of Camping Pods and 'glamping' Tipi tents to the tarn as well as traditional camping. It is hoped the first visitors to the new Talkin Tarn camp site will be in late May or early June 2015. The water sports contract has been awarded to 'You can Experience'. These experienced outdoor pursuit operators will be bringing significant investment to Talkin Tarn in terms of new watercraft available for hire as well as other associated outdoor pursuit activities improving the visitor experience and retaining visitors on the site.

Work will commence at the beginning of March on the resurfacing of the tarn side path. This work is to maintain the high standard of infrastructure at Talkin Tarn ensuring a good quality surface fully accessible for all abilities. This work is being paid for from income received from land management grants such as Higher Level Scheme and stewardship grants. Cumbria County Council rights of way team are also contributing to the overall cost of the project.

Bereavement Services - The crematorium has been operating at full capacity throughout the month. The benefits of the investment in machinery means that we have been able to cope much better than in the past and bereaved families have not had the additional stress of delays in funeral arrangements.

Rickerby Park - Rickerby Park has been nominated as one of the first 'Centenary Fields', a project organised by Fields in Trust to commemorate the outbreak of WW1. The designation as a Centenary Field will ensure the original purpose of Rickerby Park is remembered and celebrated. It will have no impact on the Higher Level Scheme payments received by the City Council for Rickerby Park.

Healthy City - 'Park Run' is a scheme operating nationally (and internationally) where runners meet every Saturday morning for short running sessions as a means of getting (or keeping) fit. Chances Park (Morton) has hosted a Park Run for about a year and it has gone from strength to strength with about 125 people regularly taking part. The impact on the park is minimal while the health benefits are significant – a real example of parks as the 'natural health service'!

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Food waste digesters – Discounted food waste digesters will soon be available to Carlisle residents at no cost to Carlisle City Council. Cumbria County Council has successfully applied for a Waste Infrastructure Capital Grant, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government, to provide up to 786 units to Carlisle residents to support our waste minimisation campaigns.

City Centre gritting – Street Cleaning Teams successfully assisted Cumbria County Council during the recent inclement weather and gritted paths and paved areas of the City Centre and areas outside local shops, ensuring the safety of residents and visitors.

Collection calendars – Refuse and recycling collection calendars were posted out in February to all residents who receive these services, along with a newsletter.

Litter bins - A rolling programme is in place to exchange 200 old style plastic and damaged bins. Phase 1 ends in March. Monitoring of the litter bins has also resulted in fewer incidents of household waste being placed into litter bins.

Depot - A programme of works is about to start to secure essential improvements in site security and employee welfare facilities. Key improvements include;

- a new safe and secure entrance for the public to the MOT garage
- Improved employee on site safety and better staff welfare facilities by moving the bothy from the back of the yard into the existing main building.
- Demolition of the old stores at the rear of the site and relocation of the bin store.
- Essential tarmac repairs
- Improved site security with a fenced main entrance and replacement of the existing entrance with an electronic gate
- Upgraded staff toilet facilities

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Illegal Tattooist – On the 10th February the City Council successfully prosecuted an unregistered tattooist. The prosecution was taken by the Environmental Health Service under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 due to the unacceptable risks posed to

members of the public from unsafe tattooing. Unregistered tattooists operating in unsuitable premises without adequate training, knowledge and equipment can put their customers at risk of life changing blood borne viruses including Hepatitis B, C and HIV. Scarring and localised infections are additional likely complications.

Local Healthy Options Award - The City Council launched its Local Healthy Options Award at a successful ceremony on the 16th January 2015. Thirteen food businesses - ranging from sandwiches shops, restaurants, staff canteens and even a fish and chip shop – who had a good food hygiene rating and also provided healthy food choices were issued with their awards. The Environmental Health Services knowledge of, and its relationship with Carlisle's food businesses, made this award possible. The Awards assist the public in making healthier choices whilst at the same time helps businesses by promoting their good work.

Cockroaches - Environmental Health Officers with assistance from our pest control team have investigated a significant cockroach infestation which had spread through a number of flats. The Officers have used the education and enforcement approach to ensure that the landlord of the flats carries out a comprehensive treatment programme. Indications are that involvement of the Officers has lead to improvements for the tenants. The Environmental Health Service will keep the matter under observation to ensure work is undertaken correctly and the infestation is eradicated.

CITY CENTRE/CAR PARKING /CITY ENGINEERS

City Centre - The usual range of events were held this year but with the addition of the skating rink to try and broaden the appeal of City Centre. Officers are already discussing next years Christmas events and seeking to ensure that there are good quality attractions from mid November to the New Year.

Car Parking Service - A smooth transfer of the On Street parking service, which the County Council have, requested to take back in-house, took place on the 1st February 2015. A new team structure has been agreed which combines the City Centre and Car Parking service under one manager, the majority of staff are already in place but some vacancies are still to be filled. The initial feeling within the new team is very positive.