

## MILL POND UPDATE

Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 16 March 2021

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, Finance & Trading

**Status:** For Information

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report updates the Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee about work plan updates for Mill Pond, Sevenoaks for 2021.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Making Sevenoaks District to be a place where people can enjoy clean and high quality urban and rural environments.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officer:** Adrian Rowbotham, Ext. 7153

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**Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee:** To note the update report.

**Reason for recommendation:** This is an information and update report and requires no further actions

### Introduction

- 1 Mill Pond, Seal Road, Sevenoaks is owned by the District Council. The land comprises of a pond, which is fed by adjacent springs and storm water drains, which assists the road drainage in the area.
- 2 The pond is relatively small only 0.25 acres in size. It has sloping banks, which provide good habitat for wildlife. The two islands are covered in bramble and willow trees, again providing some wildlife value but is not very aesthetically pleasing for visitors. It has a boardwalk at the ponds edge and has several benches to allow visitors to sit and watch the ponds wildlife.
- 3 In 2011 the Greatness Resident Association was successful in acquiring a Cory funded grant to transform this pond into a nature reserve. This include installing the silt traps, which are emptied by Kent County Council, desilting and re-profiling the pond, planting reeds and flag iris and installing the boardwalk and benches.

- 4 After completion of these works the Town Council showed interest in acquiring the pond from the District Council, however this transfer did not proceed.
- 5 The pond is currently very overgrown and heavily silted. This is believed to have been initiated by previous, nearby building works accidentally leaching materials into the pond increasing the levels of silt. This in turn allowed more reeds and vegetation to be able to grow. As the larger amounts of vegetation dies, this creates more silt and an accelerating cycle of increased silt and increased reeds has led to the Mill ponds current condition. This has had a negative knock on effect on the wildfowl that use the pond and is a concern for many local residents that visit or live close to the pond.

### **Work Plan Update**

- 6 Over the last 12 months the following repairs and maintenance works programme has been carried out at the Mill Pond Location:
  - Completed all of the scheduled maintenance of grass cutting;
  - Repaired the damaged boards on the boardwalk;
  - Spraying of the footpaths of weeds;
  - Removal of litter and objects from the pond;
  - Removal of vegetation growing through the boardwalk;
  - Undertook a contract quotation exercise for the desilting of the pond;
  - Applied for and gained an exemption licence from the Environment Agency (EA) to undertake the desilting works programme.

### **Desilting Works Programme**

- 7 The Mill Pond is designated a main river, which requires permission from the Environment Agency (EA) to carry out any works required on this waterway/asset. The exemption licence received states that as this pond falls into the classification of a 'salmonid' river/pond (fish, which are gravel spawners, depositing their eggs in nest cut by spawning fish in the gravel bed), requiring works to only be carried out after 14th March and before 1st October.
- 8 From March we have to be aware of birds nesting, meaning works are more likely be undertaken from June - August 2021, which will also hopefully be when the water levels are at their lowest and cause less mess.
- 9 The appointed contractor has proposed to remove (and then replace) 3m of boardwalk to gain access to the pond. Bog Matts will be used to prevent damage to the ground and path and all silt removed from the pond.

- 10 Our Countryside & Open Spaces Team will liaise with Kent County Council to allow large vehicles to be parked on the highway and for machinery to cross their land to get onto Sevenoaks District Council land.
- 11 A few months before the works take place there will be consultation and a letter drop with public notices onsite informing people/residents of the work, potential disruption and that for a short time during and after the works the pond might produce a unpleasant smell.
- 12 The above works programme and on-going maintenance for Mill Pond will cost in the region of £10,000.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

Any service delivery projects that contain financial implications have been detailed within this report.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

No legal implications. Sevenoaks District Council is the land owner with a statutory duty for the upkeep of Mill Pond.

### Equality Assessment

No decisions are being made within this report, so there is low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **Conclusions**

Direct Services has delivered on-going repairs and maintenance of Mill Pond over the last 12 months, despite the challenges of national lockdowns and the Covid-19 pandemic. This report details a future improvement and maintenance programme.

<b>Appendices</b>
None
<b>Background Papers</b>
None

**Adrian Rowbotham**  
**Deputy Chief Executive**

**& Chief Officer, Finance and Trading**