

THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC HEALTH**THE DESIGNATION OF TOWN WALL AS A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE****EXEMPT INFORMATION**

No

PURPOSE

To request that Members approve the designation of Town Wall as a Local Nature Reserve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to approve the designation of Town Wall as a Local Nature Reserve, subject to receipt of a letter of endorsement from Natural England.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Town Wall is a 1.13 hectare site situated in Wilnecote, to the south east of Tamworth town centre, which is owned and managed by Tamworth Borough Council (outlined in red in Appendix 1), and is adjacent to the Tame Valley Business Centre.

The Town Wall Conservation Group was formed in 2007. The group were keen to improve access to the site and to reinstate some of the original features including a wildflower meadow and the 'Town Wall' a dry stone wall which historically was the boundary between Tamworth 'Town' and the 'countryside'.

In 2008 the group were awarded a £50,000 grant through the Heritage Lottery's Community Spaces Funding to restore Town Wall to its former glory and to increase its value to the wider community. Following completion of these major improvements, the group has continued to broaden its skills and to involve and engage with the local and wider community.

A management plan was written for Town Wall and following discussions with Natural England (Appendix 2), Town Wall was identified as a site to be put forward for LNR declaration. Consultation has taken place with local people (via leaflets, community meetings and through the Town Wall Conservation Group), Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Tamworth Borough Council (via "Wild about Tamworth" steering group meetings and minutes from these meetings). All relevant organisations including Natural England have given their support for the proposal to declare Town Wall as a Local Nature Reserve.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Local Nature Reserve declaration will have no additional financial implications for Tamworth Borough Council. A number of environmental enhancements are planned for Town Wall, these will be managed through the Wild About Tamworth project and funded through Higher Level Stewardship funding or other external sources.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Designation of Town Wall as a Local Nature Reserve acknowledges the ecological importance of the site and pledges to protect it, as is stated in the local authority's Local Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The site is an important part of Tamworth's heritage as a recorded site of common land, and anecdotal local information from local residents suggests that the name "Town Wall" emanates from a time when an actual Town Wall existed along parish borders. Its land use has changed through time and was used as a dump for local pottery works, evidence of which has been found and fragments of pottery used on site to create features such as a bird bath and demonstration wall.

A number of site surveys have been conducted by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and subsequent management have been informed by this data.

The management plan will continue to guide the joint work of Tamworth Borough Council and the Town Wall Conservation Group in maintaining and continuing to enhance this site to maximise its potential and biodiversity for wildlife and local people to enjoy. The Town Wall Conservation Group continue to meet monthly to undertake a range of habitat management tasks on site including tree thinning and wildflower meadow restoration as well as improving the appearance of the site by carrying out regular litter picks.

REPORT AUTHOR

Sarah McGrandle, Head of Environmental Management x349

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

- 1 Site plan of Town Wall Local Nature Reserve
- 2 Town Wall Local Nature Reserve Management Plan

This page is intentionally left blank