

Liskeard Town Council

Liskeard In Bloom Planting Report

Scope

This report covers all aspects of the Planting and maintenance of the various flower beds in the Town centre, including the Plymouth Road roundabout and also the provision and maintenance of the Town Councils own, and participating traders, hanging baskets and planters etc. as currently undertaken.

Background

Flower Beds

There are 10 planters and one horse trough located on The Parade and Dean Street, which make up 15 flowerbeds in addition to the three circular beds in the centre of the Plymouth Road roundabout.

At present two seasonal plantings are carried out, spring and autumn, using a selection of semi-permanent perennial plants such as Lavender and a mixture of herbs etc., which is then complemented by annual plants like Begonia, Lobelia, Marigold, Cosmos and geraniums together with a wide selection of other bedding plants.

The aim is to provide a visually attractive and colourful display throughout the season, which also attracts pollinating insects and adds height, scent and interest to the flowerbeds, at the same time needing minimum maintenance and watering.

In the summer season of 2016 some 1500+ plants were used across the beds and roundabout at a cost of £929 (plants only) and for Winter 2016/17 a selection of Polyanthus, Wallflowers and Cyclamen have been ordered at a cost of £699

In addition to the plants themselves there is also the cost of collecting the plants from the nursery, preparing the beds from season to season, enriching the soil, planting the schemes, weeding and generally tending the beds throughout the season (plus an amount of grass cutting on the Plymouth Road roundabout – separate charge)

This is currently carried out by a contractor at a cost of £+/- 2500 per annum.

See page 4 for more detail.

Hanging baskets

The Town Council currently provides hanging baskets, troughs and planted grow bags for its own locations on the Public Hall (5), The Guildhall (6), Foresters Hall (2) and Dean St. Public Toilet (1) and also offers this service to the Town centre businesses.

The service offered also includes an optional watering service. The baskets etc. are provided by a commercial nursery and the installation, removal and watering is carried out by a contractor.

In the summer of 2016 26 hanging baskets were placed across 12 locations around the town. 14 were Town Council on 4 locations and 12 were businesses on 8 locations.

In addition 4 businesses were supplied with a total of 7 planted grow bags.

The cost of the baskets and grow bags was £581, Installation and removal £720 and watering £1800.

£314 was recovered from charges to the businesses making a net cost to the Town Council of +/- £2500

See page 5 for more detail

Contractors

The Town Council currently engages two contractors for the supply and implementation of its floral schemes.

Brown's Nurseries of Trewidland

Supplies all plants for Flowerbeds and roundabout together with ready filled hanging baskets, troughs and grow bags. Baskets etc. are returned to Brown's each season for re-use.

Teign Valley – Roy Scott

Prepares, plants and tends all flowerbeds and roundabout with a summer and winter planting scheme. Collecting plants from nursery, supplying compost and fertiliser. Grass cutting on roundabout.

Collects, installs, tends, waters and removes all hanging baskets and grow bags etc.

Planting calendar

May

- First / Second week

Remove winter planting from flowerbeds and roundabout, check perennial plants and tend as required. Improve soil by digging over and incorporating chicken pellet manure, topping up with fresh peat free compost as required.

AGREE WINTER PLANTING SCHEME AND ORDER WINTER BEDDING PLANTS
Distribute Hanging basket order forms and collate order and place with supplier

- Third / Fourth week

Plant summer bedding to Town Council design and specification and commence weeding, dead heading and tending throughout the season as required.

June

- First week

Collect and install hanging baskets, troughs and planted grow bags and commence regular watering throughout the season.

Plant food to be added to watering system.

October

- First / Second week

Remove hanging baskets, troughs and planted grow bags and return to supplier for reuse next season.

- Second / Third week

Remove summer planting from flowerbeds and roundabout, check perennial plants and tend as required. Improve soil by digging over and incorporating chicken pellet manure, topping up with fresh peat free compost as required.

- Fourth / 1st week November

Plant winter bedding to Town Council design and specification and commence weeding, dead heading and tending throughout the season as required.

December

- **AGREE SUMMER PLANTING SCHEME AND ORDER SUMMER BEDDING PLANTS**

NOTE: Timings are weather / growth dependent
Regular grass cutting required at Plymouth Rd. roundabout.

Breakdown of Costs

Flower Beds and Roundabout

- Cost of plants Summer 2016 £930
- Cost of plants Winter 2016 £699

- Contractor charge for preparing, planting and tending throughout the year
£2500

- **Total annual cost** **+/- £4200**

Note: Initial watering in of the new plants until established and occasional seasonal watering is part additional cost part covered by hanging basket watering.

Hanging Baskets, Troughs and Grow bags

• Cost of Planted Baskets etc.	£581
• Cost of installation, tending, removal and disposal	£585
• Cost of watering (approx. 60 times per season)	£1800
• Total cost	<u>£2996</u>
• Recovered from traders – baskets etc.	£314
• Recovered from traders – watering	£251
• Total recovered from traders	<u>£565</u>
• <u>Net annual cost to Town Council</u>	<u>£2401</u>
• Effective cost to LTC per basket = £2536 / 26 baskets =	<u>£92.35 per basket</u>

NOTE: Costs will vary due to quantity of baskets, plant choice, weather effecting frequency of watering and length of growing season.

Hanginɡ Basket Watering options

The current regime requires approximately 60 watering's per season at £30 each totalling £1800 per season.

Plumbed in automatic watering systems have been investigated but are logistically difficult to install over the wide variety of premises, are prone to vandalism, potential building flooding if installed indoors and could be cost prohibitive, although they would fully negate the need for manual watering.

Amberol Self Watering Baskets

<http://www.amberol.co.uk/planters/hanging-baskets>

These hanging baskets and planters are currently in use by Looe Town Council. They are made from recycled polyethylene with heavy duty galvanized chains giving them a +/- 15-year life span.

Being double walled with a built in wick system they hold 7 litres of water and normally only need refilling once per week, at least halving our current watering cost.

When filled and planted they weigh around 15 kg, so need a substantial wall bracket. (The current brackets on Town Council buildings will be suitable)

The suggested model is the 410 mm / 16" Cup & Saucer design

In a standard colour, say green, they cost £26 each

The heavy duty brackets cost £14 each

To replace our current 26 baskets would cost £844 plus installation of new brackets (possibly carried out by our own staff?)

The saving on watering costs would be approximately half the current, so a saving of £900. Therefore they would pay for themselves in year one



Challenges

The retirement of Roy Scott has necessitated a complete review of how the Town Council manages the provision of amenity planting which has also highlighted the various logistical issues in providing this service.

The following points have been considered in making recommendations to the Council

Flowerbeds and roundabout

- The current supplier of plants etc. is deemed competitive and will be reviewed on an agreed 3-5 year period.
- A new maintenance contractor will be sought to provide a similar service to the current one provided by Roy Scott.
- Alternative contracts may be considered such as supply and maintain.
- Alternative methods of providing the service such as the formation of a 'Liskeard in Bloom' group.
- It is unclear if the Town Council have the correct permission's to plant the Plymouth Road roundabout.
- Persons or contractors engaged in planting on the roundabout will need to have the correct training, certification, equipment, signage etc. to legally and safely work on the highway.
- The above also applies, to a slightly lesser degree, to working on the Parade flowerbeds.
- Initial planting will need watering in – see below re water bowser.
- Ad-hock maintenance (weeding, dead heading etc.) is required throughout the growing season.
- There is a requirement for winter maintenance until alternative provider can be sought.

Hanging baskets etc.

- The current supplier of hanging baskets etc. is deemed competitive and will be reviewed on an agreed 3-5 year period.
- The maintenance contract may be difficult to fulfil, in particular the watering element.
- Alternative, 'self watering' baskets could be considered.
- The Town Council currently subsidises the hanging baskets provided for businesses to the sum of +/- £92 per basket.
- Up take of hanging baskets has declined considerably over recent years although there is renewed interest from the traders association.
- The water bowser is in need of maintenance, repairs and renewals (estimated £150-200) but may not be fit for purpose as it is plated at 1000 kg and is potentially overloaded if water tank is over filled.
- In addition the bowser is difficult to manoeuvre and park safely and would potentially need warning lights and signs. There is also a potential issue with trip hazard from extended lengths of hose across roads and pavements.
- There is a potential liability issue with hanging basket brackets from a) a contractor safely mounting and dismounting the baskets in a public place and b) the quality and security of brackets provided by the business customers.

Appendix

Liskeard in bloom booking form 2016

Liskeard in bloom 2016 order details for baskets and troughs etc.