

Hello, and welcome to our first Green Sefton newsletter of 2020. We hope you had a great festive break and are looking forward to a happy and healthy New Year out and about with us in Green Sefton.

We hope you enjoy reading about this month's focussed service area, our **Community & Resources Team**, and would be happy to get comments for future editions...

Mark Shaw
Service Manager – Green Sefton



**Bulb planting at Botanic Gardens –
Churchtown Primary School**

Green Sefton Community & Resources Team.....

Community Engagement Team – engagement with our communities and visitors, led by Suzanne McCumiskey;

Facilities and Resources Team – managing and maintaining our recreational and built facilities, led by Dave Thompson;

Tree and Woodland Team – managing and maintaining Council trees across the Borough, led by Judith Burgess;

Information & Technical Team – data, technical and communications support for the whole of Green Sefton, led by Louise Wilson

The Community Engagement Team aim to encourage, support, develop and celebrate community involvement in all areas of Green Sefton's work:

Volunteering and Green Sefton

We record the number of volunteer hours contributed by groups and individuals and this is a good indicator of the community activity in our green spaces.

We really appreciate any information and feedback from volunteers and groups as this helps inform and prioritise operational activities and support / engagement.

Last year over 44,000 hours were contributed by our wonderful groups (not including sports leagues and clubs), individually and working with the Community Rangers and Natural Alternatives on a vast range of events and projects, from beach cleans to bedding out, counting livestock to supporting food growing.

Corporate supporters this autumn, including Santander and Sefton Council's own volunteers, have helped clear invasive scrub from our precious dune habitat, tidy ponds and winter gardening tasks in our parks.

Green Sefton 'Friends' Forum'

There are currently 23 'Friends of' groups associated with Green Sefton's open spaces (parks, coast, countryside etc). Held twice a year, the Friends' Forum is an opportunity to bring these groups together to discuss common themes and share information.

October's event covered discussions on 'Borough of Culture', an update on 'Parks Funding' applications, presentations for Friends of Crosby and Hightown Beaches and workshop facilitated by Sefton CVS on the issues and challenges facing groups with regard to accessing funding, growing members, developing skills, promoting groups, sites and activities.

Supporting Funding Applications

Using the Team's knowledge and experience, we are supporting a number of groups applying for external funding:

- **SpaceHive** – Friends of Ainsdale Beach – artwork for the coast (Borough of Culture)
- **Pocket Parks** – Friends of Merrilocks Park (railings) and Gateway Collective (raised planters)
- **Parks Funding** – 14 Friends of Groups awarded funding up to £2000 – we'll report on each project as it is completed / implemented

That's over £30,000 brought in to our open spaces by Friends of Groups in 2019/20. Wow!

Celebrating Success

This year's Volunteer Celebration Event took place at St Luke's Church in Crosby. Attended by representatives from 28 'Friends of', 'In Bloom' and other community groups, the awards were presented by Mayor of Sefton, Cllr June Brown. Congratulations everyone!

The variety of projects and ideas from the community is truly impressive. Many of these contribute to national / international Awards and benchmarking schemes notably ['Northwest In Bloom'](#) and ['Green Flag'](#).

Green Sefton officers attend regular steering group meetings, provide gardening support, advice, administration and guidance to new groups, organise week-long judging in July.

This year's full list of winners can be found via the links above but here's a summary:

31 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Entries, 13 of which were classed as 'outstanding'

4 NWIB Town Entries

- Ainsdale in Bloom - Gold Medal
- Bootle in Bloom - Bronze Medal (fantastic result for their first year)
- Crosby and Waterloo in Bloom- Silver Gilt Medal
- Southport in Bloom- Gold Medal

6 Discretionary Awards

- Chairman's Award for 'Lifetime Achievement' went to Brenda Porter
- St Luke's Church,
- Boyer Court Garden Club, Maghull - Outstanding Neighbourhood Award
- Friends of Rotten Row, Southport - *National Certificate of Distinction Best Small Neighbourhood Award *Community Champion Award
- Botanic Gardens Community Association, Southport - *City of Liverpool Silver Trophy for The Best Large Neighbourhood Entry *The Helena Homes Best Overall Neighbourhood Entry Award Silver Trophy, *RHS Parks Award
- Waterloo Forest Garden - Gardening in a Changing Climate Award



Borough of Culture 2020

We are proud to be doing our bit across Greens Sefton to promote Sefton as the LCR [Borough of Culture](#) in 2020. The year kicked off with the Constellations event in November at Crosby Coastal Park.

Sefton Council staff spent a chilly but fruitful few hours clearing invasive Sea Buckthorn from the dunes at Ainsdale, a positive contribution to conserving our coastal culture. Baked potatoes were a well deserved reward.

The Community Rangers have also been busy planting bulbs with school children across the Borough as part of our 'Spring Bulb for Every Child' legacy project. 17 schools and 3 community groups have taken part over 19 sites. We look forward to seeing the colourful results of their hard work this and future spring months.



St Edmund & St Thomas
Primary pupils planting bulbs at
Victoria Park

Other Green Sefton BoC events to look out for:

- **Ainsdale Coast Mosaic Art Project with Friends of Ainsdale Beach**
- **Allotment Food Festival**
- **Bootle Heritage Trail**
- **Derby Park 125th Anniversary Celebration with Friends of Derby Park**
- **Green Blitz**
- **Heritage walks and talks**

A Fitting End to the Year of the Environment

During the Year of the Environment, over 125 partners contributed, organising over 500 events and engaging more than 28,500 people from communities across the Liverpool City Region in a range of activities and events. These involved countless volunteers and professional colleagues – healthy walks and cycling, clean-ups of parks, green spaces and beaches, wildlife observation and conservation, conferences, listening events, workshops, meetings, debates, competitions and academic publications.

One of the high points in Sefton was the Green Sefton YOE day at Southport Eco Centre, which saw over 800 people pass through to take in a variety of stands and attractions. <http://yoe2019lcr.org.uk/>

Keep up with us on Social Media

Green Sefton have over 3000 followers reaching 16,000 people on Facebook and 632 followers and over 60,000 impressions on Twitter.

Still want more? You can catch John Dempsey's weekly column in 'The Visitor' and Chris Tynan on Radio Merseyside as well as through the Council's media outlets

Natural Alternatives Going from Strength to Strength

Green Sefton's long running inclusion programme, for adults and young people with additional needs, offers a safe, secure and challenging environment for participants.

The Natural Alternatives Team undertake conservation, access, horticulture and small maintenance works across Green Sefton on a project basis.

Since September, they have contributed 5,852 hours helping 'Friends of', 'In Bloom' groups and the wider team tidying leaf litter, edging paths, clearing and burning scrub, making and installing planters and other furniture.

Pictured here, the team receiving an award at the recent volunteer celebration event from Mayor of Sefton, Cllr June Burns.

The Team also raised over £200 for the Mayor's Charity selling homemade natural Christmas Decorations – you may have spotted them out and about.



Natural Alternatives receiving their Award

The Facilities Management & Development Team engage with the community to manage and maintain Green Sefton's recreational facilities and ensure best use of all our assets from golf courses and allotments to buildings, football and other sports pitches, play areas and more.

Managing Land & Premises

Green Sefton is responsible for over 90 buildings and associated land and infrastructure. Many of these are leased or under licenced agreements with community groups and other organisations.

We now have many self management arrangements in place, helping to meet the not inconsiderable upkeep of these premises to ensure they are compliant with all statutory testing, utilities costs and non-routine repair and maintenance.

Green Flags Keep Flying

Sefton's parks and greenspaces will be flying the flag again following success in the GFA and Community Green Flag Awards.

Green Flag Award :

King's Garden - Sefton Council

Green Flag Community Award :

Bridge Inn Community Farm Bridge

Edda Community Arts & Library

Seaforth Green - Emmaus Merseyside

Ainsdale Village Park - Friends of AVP

Rotten Row - Friends of Rotten Row

South Park Community Garden - Friends of South Park

St Luke's Church Grounds - St Luke's Crosby

North Park Community Garden - The Gateway Collective

Allotment Strategy in Preparation

Green Sefton directly manage [Allotments](#) with some under self-management arrangements by Allotment Societies.

The Facilities Team have recently met with Councillors and Cabinet Members to begin formulating a new Allotment Strategy to tackle the various issues facing our allotments; from day to day maintenance to the impacts of climate change as part of our 2030 Vision. One of the biggest challenges this autumn has been the level of rain, leading to localised flooding on a number of sites. This has highlighted potential projects with our FCERM and Land Management teams.

Engagement with tenants is key, to ensure allotments are safe, secure and contribute to improving the health and well-being of our residents and communities.

Focus on Play & Repairs Team

Green Sefton's four strong Play and Repairs Team undertake a range of jobs from unblocking toilets to repairing gates to refurbishing playground equipment, to installing seats.



The talented team are responsible for undertaking routine safety checks on all 106 play facilities across the Borough (and are able to inspect playgrounds for other organisations at a cost).



The team are also closely involved in the design, procurement and installation of new items of equipment.

Seen here, keeping play surfaces hazard free.

Using appropriate software to record the inspections, they are able to make decisions on whether items can be repaired and undertake the works as required. In some instances, items have to be removed as they only have a limited lifespan. Working with the Development Team to draw down capital funding, seven playgrounds have been fully or partially upgraded in 2019/20.

An annual independent survey is underway which will provide information on the condition and projected lifespan allowing us to more accurately plan and cost for the future.

Playing Golf

Green Sefton manages the two [Municipal Golf Courses](#) at Southport and Bootle

Day to day management of the course is carried out by the Land Management Team, whilst the Facilities Team is responsible for managing the Golf Shops and developing the golf offer for customers.

Plans for improvements at Bootle Golf, being led by the Development Team, will be informed by the results of the recent consultation exercise.

The Tree & Woodland Team monitor and manage the Council's 90,000 highway, park and coast trees.

Green Sefton's three tree officers undertake a rolling programme of [Council Trees](#) inspections and oversee the Council's arboricultural contract with Id Verde.

Priority is given to health and safety works on highway trees, as these pose the highest risk to people and property. By ensuring all trees are routinely inspected every 3 to 5 years, the risk from dead and decaying trees is reduced greatly.

Winter Planting Programme

The Tree Team are working towards planting around 300 trees this winter across the Borough's highways. This planting more than replaces those lost over time with locations being agreed with highways officers and ward members. In the last three years, around 700 trees have sadly needed to be removed, but over 900 have been replanted

Funding comes from a variety of sources including Area Committee and Parish Councils. Sefton council has also been successful in securing funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTC), developed in response to the government's commitment to provide £10 million for planting both large and small trees in and around towns and cities in England, Delivered by the Forestry Commission as part of their work to expand woodlands and tree cover across England, they plan to plant one million urban trees by 2022.

We have been successful in securing £17,565 (out of the £48,572 we applied for) The funding will see a minimum of
16 trees planted in Victoria Ward Area
12 trees planted in St Oswald's Ward Area
12 trees planted in Kew Ward area

Information Sharing

There has been increased interest in the Team's work following the announcement of a climate emergency by Sefton Council. The Tree and Woodland team will be briefing Councillors with regards to current practices in January. We hope this will lead to developing a jointly agreed approach for the management of our tree stock in the future.

Trees for Learning

The 'Trees for Learning' scheme is part of a DEFRA backed programme to support state primary schools to plant 1 million trees by 2020 within their school grounds and local green spaces.

Green Sefton is helping to deliver a part of the Trees for Learning scheme, being coordinated by [The Mersey Forest](#) (TMF). The TFL scheme will continue to run January - March 2020 at a number of schools and greenspaces in Sefton. Concentrating more on woodland (whip) planting, this will add further to the total number and cover of trees planted in the Borough this winter.

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