

17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear members of the Western Area Committee

The Sittingbourne In Bloom Committee would like to apply for a grant from the Swale Area Committee towards refurbishing the Sensory Garden at King George V Playing Fields.

The Park is very well used by local residents as well as being a destination for those from other areas of Sittingbourne. There has been a program of improvements in the last few years including the planting of a variety of specimen trees, extensive bulb planting and the development of a wild flower meadow in the far corner. The children's play area has been refurbished and an outdoor gym and picnic tables added. The football pitches and tennis courts are well used and maintained.

The café is very popular and the café owner is very proactive. The In Bloom volunteers have planted 2 of the beds in front of the pavilion with bulbs and wild flower seed to provide a riot of colour over a long period in the summer. The over mature beds at the Park entrance were renovated in 2019.

The Park has been entered into the South & South East In Bloom competition for the last 4 years and has progressed from a Silver to a Silver Gilt (High) during that time. We would very much like to achieve Gold this year to make it a hat trick with the Town and Milton Creek Country Park. We are also working towards entering it for a Green Flag. To achieve this, a start was made to setup a Friends Group and organise a number of events in the Park. Unfortunately, after a very promising initial event when we ran a Land Art festival and carried out a survey of people interested in joining a Friends Group - all further events were cancelled due to the pandemic. To maintain public engagement a Facebook page was setup last May which is regularly updated by Wes, who is the gate keeper and lives in the park house.

The Sensory Garden was established by SBC some years ago and consists of four raised beds in what had been an old, abandoned paddling pool. These raised beds have now deteriorated and need replacing and replanting. We have had a quote from Blenwood to purchase new sleepers at a cost of £4,991.41 including brackets, labour and disposal of rubbish for-all 4 beds. Further quotes are being sought in the hope of reducing that cost but additional funds will be needed for top soil, mulch and extra plants once the sleepers have been replaced. The S&SE In Bloom judges have commented on this area every year and it has been considered that this would be a good project to involve the community and develop the Friends Group. Sittingbourne in Bloom would like to request a grant of £7085 towards this project which would enable it to be completed in 2021. If full funding is not available it is something that could be done in stages, perhaps tackling two beds at a time.

This project will contribute towards the objectives of Swale Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2023: Priority 3: Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone: 3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural, leisure and development activities appropriate and accessible to each age group. Our plan is to encourage community involvement, increase their pride in the environment and get actively involved in a wide range of activities to increase enjoyment and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely



Lynda Marshall  
Sittingbourne In Bloom Committee Member