

Responses to Questions Requiring a Written Response

WQ1

WRITTEN QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND IT AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm what consultation has been carried out with the relatives of those buried at Wilford Hill Cemetery prior to allowing areas of cemetery to become overgrown to promote biodiversity; and does he feel that this shows sufficient respect to those relatives whose family members are buried at the cemetery?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and IT:

Thank you for your question regarding the above.

As a Council, we have for many years taken a national lead on environmental issues. Back in 2011, the Council adopted an updated Biodiversity Position Statement that set out a policy in response to the Biodiversity Statutory Duty (Defra 2007).

Our Biodiversity Statement sets out four key policy objectives:

1. Make consideration towards biodiversity within all functions of the Council

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 'Biodiversity Duty'. Guidance available in 'Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty' (Defra 2007).

2. Promote and encourage the incorporation of biodiversity enhancements into the overall design of new developments and open spaces

Planning Policy Statement 9: Geological and Biological Conservation has principles stating there should be no net loss of biodiversity through development and that opportunities for enhancement should be pursued.

3. Maximise opportunities for biodiversity gain through Council-wide initiatives

Consider all Council departments.

4. Ensure protection is given to key species and habitats

Safeguarding of sites and species covered under UK and European legislation. Natural England has produced standing advice on protected species.

Demonstrating the Council's ongoing commitment to the environment and biodiversity, the Council has also recently reinforced its commitment through the introduction of our new manifesto commitments:

- to become a Carbon Free City by 2028
- to develop bee friendly habitats in every ward

- Plant 10,000 trees across the City.
- The Council also has a statutory duty to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Taking these priorities into account over the last few years the Cemetery and Crematorium Service has continued to review methods of grounds maintenance with a view to relaxing mowing regimes where possible to help improve biodiversity help contribute to our carbon free priorities.

During spring 2019 we took the decision to extend a trial of relaxed mowing in an area known locally as The Dell at Wilford Hill. This area is predominantly made up of older burials with few regular visitors to this section. With these types of trials it is very difficult to consult with people prior to the trial as it can be many months between people actually visiting the area and also a lot of the grave owner records are outdated due to families moving house and not letting our service know. There is an estimated 3000 traditional grave plots in this section, with each grave plot being the responsibility of the individual grave owner and any surrounding grass areas being the responsibility of Nottingham City Council.

With the above in mind we commenced our trial and placed signage around the areas to inform visitors of the trial and to signpost enquiries to our office and generic email for further information. As the weeks progressed we did receive a number of questions and a total of four complaints. The majority of questions were answered by our team quickly and people were generally accepting of our approach. In some cases we were requested to cut a pathway to a specific grave which we gladly did within a few days of being asked. In addition to these scenarios, there were a couple of ongoing queries which the Cemetery Manager personally managed in order to provide reassurance and clarity on our approach to the maintenance.

As the summer progressed we also had a visit from one of our biodiversity officers to look at the flora and fauna present. The conclusion provided on this was as follows:-

“There is a mix of species here, mainly grasses. I can see some flowering plants however, ox eye daisy, self-heal, cow parsley, bird’s foot trefoil, poppy, clover and harebells. This will undoubtedly provide the site with habitat for a range of invertebrates, including grass specialist butterflies such as ringlet, meadow brown and gatekeeper, as well as other species that favour certain plants such as common blue. Bees and other pollinating insects will be attracted to the flowers, as well as day flying moths. Other inverts, such as beetles, spiders and flies etc. will benefit from the long grass to use as cover, areas to breed and forage. Habitat such as this is great for amphibians, grass snakes and small mammals.”

Once this survey had been completed we agreed to then commence the cutting back of this area in full during late August 2019. This work has now been completed and the area is now back down to normal growing height.

Taking all of the trial experience into account the plan at the moment is to reintroduce this approach at the Dell next season but on a smaller scale to enable the regular cutting to continue in areas where we were asked to cut pathways. It is

hoped that taking this approach will enable a way forward that accommodates the needs of all concerned including bereaved visitors and also helps our service to improve areas of biodiversity.

In conclusion I feel that we took a considered and planned approach to relaxing mowing in this area backed by the clear intention to then work with visitors as they contacted us to discuss/ clarify our work and to enable our service to adapt our approach in line with the thoughts and preferences of bereaved visitors. All of the families we have worked with over the last few months seem to be happy with our position on this and I do feel that the intended approach next year will meet the needs of families and other interested parties.

WQ2

WRITTEN QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND IT AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder provide a comparison of how many vacant allotment plots there are in the City, split out between self-managed and direct let, compared with the same period last year?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and IT:

Thank you for your question regarding the above. I can confirm that the allotments in the City are split between those managed directly by the Council, and sites which are managed by Associations who lease the land from us.

The split between these is as follows:

Association (self-managed) allotments

Association allotment plots in total	1,076
Association vacancies 2017	42
Association vacancies 2018	87
Association vacancies 2019	Data not yet received from Associations*

*As the council manages both the Direct-let and Association-led allotment sites, the Service carries out an annual consultation with the Associations in order for them to supply vacancy details. This year's consultation is currently in progress and therefore we do not currently have all the vacancy details for 2019. We will be able to update this information later in the year.

Direct let allotments (Nottingham City Council run)

Direct let allotment plots in total	968
Direct let plot vacancies September 2019	52

Direct let non-viable plots

275

Total Vacancies

327*

*Of these 275 vacant non-viable direct let plots, most have no water supply and many are classed as “change of use” as they are no longer deemed to be suitable land for allotment use due to poor or no access. Most of these sites have been vacant/ semi derelict for many years and some have now become heavily wooded sites. In some cases, some sites could be brought back into cultivation but this would require considerable capital investment.

Over the last 5 years, the Allotment Service has tried to bring a number of the non-viable sites back into productive use. In some cases, this has been successful. However, it is very unlikely that all the non-viable sites will be lettable even if fully cleared due to the poor access and lack of water etc. In these cases, the Allotment Service will consult with the local councillors and affected local residents in order to agree a suitable future use for the sites.

The table below provides a full breakdown of each direct site and vacancy rates.

Site	Total Plots	Total Vacancies	Reason for High Vacancy Rate
Aspley Estate	47	23	Non – Viable Land-locked plots – change of use needed.
Blenheim Lane	121	15	Vacancies available
Blenheim New Site	40	4	Vacancies available
Canal Allotments	155	39	Non – Viable Land-locked plots – long, narrow site.
Clifton Estate	23	17	Non – Viable Low interest as lots of Association plots nearby
Edge Way	24	0	No Vacancies
Glaisdale Drive	4	2	Vacancies available
Gordon Road	15	5	Vacancies available
Greens, Shilton & Windmill Lane	61	4	Vacancies available
Highbury Vale Estate	24	16	Non – Viable Change of use plots - not advertised for rent
Lenton Abbey Estate	61	43	Non – Viable Land-locked plots – change of use needed.
Mapperley Road	17	1	Vacancies available
Moorfield	106	6	Vacancies available
Nether Close, Bakersfield	1	0	No Vacancies
Other Allotments	8	5	Vacancies available
Port Arthur Road	12	3	Vacancies available
Sherwood Estate	99	70	Non – Viable Land-locked plots – change of use needed.

Sneinton Gardens	52	38	Non – Viable Plots not lettable (many now secondary woodland)
St Martins Road	4	1	Vacancies available
Stockhill Circus	12	5	Vacancies available
Tollerton	5	0	No Vacancies
Trowell Avenue	7	0	No Vacancies
Westleigh Road	24	23	Plots not lettable - overgrown
Wollaton Park	6	3	Vacancies available
Woodthorpe	35	1	Vacancies available
Wyrle Drive	5	3	Vacancies available
TOTAL	968	327	

Please note that all figures exclude St Ann's allotments where there are 681 plots - we do not receive returns from them due to the nature of their lease and so we do not know their vacancy rates or their waiting list length.

If the questioner has any further questions regarding the allotments please feel free to contact Head of Public Realm directly.

WQ3

WRITTEN QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ADULT CARE AND LOCAL TRANSPORT AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm how many residents of the City are in receipt of Direct Payments and how much this equates to?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Local Transport:

On 16 August 2019, there were 1,123 adults receiving Direct Payments.
The total spend on Direct Payments for 2018/19 was £18.431m.
The total forecast spend for 2019/20 is £17.529m.

WQ4

WRITTEN QUESTION TO BE ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm how many 3G deployable cameras there are currently deployed across the City and how many times these cameras moved locations over the last 12 months, broken down by ward?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities:

There are currently 31 cameras deployed across the City. A breakdown of their current location by ward and how many times they have been moved in the last 12 months is as follows:

Current Ward	CAMERA No.	3G cameras deployed by Ward	Moves in last 12 months	Current Location
Bilborough	2	1	3	Bracebridge Drive
Meadows	10	2	2	Kelsoe Gardens
	15		2	Walsron Close
Castle	8	2	1	Robin Hood Statue
	28		1	Church Walk/St. Peter's Gate
Bestwood	5	3	0	Belconnen Road
	18		0	Kyle View
	27		1	Lytham Gardens
Bulwell	HD 29	2	0	Commercial Road
	HD 30		2	Rufford Walk
Bulwell Forest	6	1	2	Swale Close
Clifton East	23	5	0	Colleymoor Leys Lane
	14		1	Rivergreen
	7		0	Midhurst Way
	20		1	Barbury Drive
	24		1	Nobel Road
Clifton West	22	1	0	Brookthorpe Way
Dales	9	2	1	Meadow Lane
	12		1	Lees Hill Street
Leen Valley	13	2	0	Ainsley Road
	21		0	Fleet Close & Northdown Road
St Ann's	25	3	0	Ransom Road
	11		0	Walton Ave facing Walton Terrace
	17		1	Booth Close
Radford	3	2	0	Clifford Street
	HD 34		0	Garfield Road
Berridge	HD35	1	1	Mount Street
Lenton & Wollaton East	19	2	0	Kennington Road
	1		0	Farndon Green
Hyson Green & Arboretum	4	2	1	St. Paul's Avenue
	32		0	Maples Street