



# Nailsworth Town Council

## Open Spaces Policy

### 1. Commitments

Nailsworth Town Council is committed to providing good quality public open spaces for the benefit of its residents.

This Policy supports the following Visions in the Town Action Plan:

Vision 1: An attractive Cotswold market town

Vision 2: A safe place to live and welcoming to visitors

Vision 3: A town with opportunities to work and play

Vision 5: Accessible

Vision 6: A town which protects and values the environment

Vision 7: A town with a range of health and social care

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>1</sup>, NTC will provide opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other; provide safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; safe and accessible, high quality public open spaces which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

This Open Spaces Policy is informed by NTC's Climate Emergency declaration (Minute 2019/057) and Environment Policy<sup>2</sup> and the commitment to manage environmental impact. The Environment committee and the Recreation and Amenities committee have responsibility for the implementation of the Policy and will agree open space priorities and targets for recommendation to Full Council. This Policy will be reviewed and updated according to strategic, environmental and recreational priorities annually.

### 2. Objectives

- To maintain and improve attractive, safe public open spaces for residents and visitors
- To manage NTC owned land appropriately, according to the landscape conditions, biodiversity, heritage, recreational resources and local distinctiveness of each piece of land.
- To provide opportunities for recreation and play for all ages
- To ensure play equipment, street furniture, signage and bins are regularly inspected and maintained
- To increase accessibility in a way that is appropriate to each piece of land
- To protect and improve biodiversity and the natural environment
- To recognise the importance of working with our community and to encourage participation in the care of public open spaces
- To protect public open spaces from damage and encroachment

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<sup>1</sup> *National Planning Policy Framework 2012, ss8,9 and 11*

<sup>2</sup> *Climate Change Act 2008 (take steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change)*



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#### 3. Areas of public open space

Responsibility for NTC's public open spaces is divided between two Council committees as shown in the table below:

Environment committee	Recreation & Amenities committee
Norton Wood	King George V Playing Field
Bunting Hill	King George V Extension Field
Shortwood Green	Miles Marling Field
Shortwood and Rockness manorial waste	Mortimer Garden
All Saints closed churchyard, Shortwood	Market Street Garden
Star Hill/Jubilee Road greens	Leves Corner
The Green, Nympsfield Road	Clock tower garden
Land at Wood Lane	War Memorial (Fountain Street)

#### 4. Grounds maintenance

Where open spaces are managed on NTC's behalf by contractors, this is done according to an agreed specification. Grounds maintenance specifications ensure appropriate management of each open space. The following public open spaces are maintained in this way by contractors;

- Town Gardens (Mortimer Garden, Market Street Garden, Leves Corner, Clock tower Garden and Mortimer Room flowerbed) – *contract currently unlet and maintenance shared between Nailsworth In Bloom and NTC Groundsman*
- All Saints closed churchyard, Shortwood<sup>3</sup>
- Miles Marling Field (grass cutting only)
- King George V Playing Field and Extension Field (grass cutting only)
- Shortwood Green (grass cutting only)
- Shortwood and Rockness manorial waste (grass cutting only)
- Star Hill/Jubilee Road greens (grass cutting only)

The control of harmful weeds and invasive species on NTC open spaces is carried out in accordance with legal duties<sup>4</sup>. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010. Use of pesticides and herbicides is according to COSHH requirements and by qualified staff or contractors. NTC does not use pesticides and limits the use of herbicides. The Council will always seek to use non-chemical means of control where feasible. Where no other method is possible, glyphosate is used to control weeds.

#### 5. Legal agreements, leases and licences, Common land

Site name	Legal agreement	Agreement with
King George V playing field	Deed of Dedication	Fields in Trust
King George V Extension Field	NTC lease this land from	Mr Alan Smith
Miles Marling Field (north section)	NTC lease this land from	Stroud District Council

<sup>3</sup> Local Government Act 1972, s.215 (power to maintain a closed churchyard)

<sup>4</sup> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010



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<b>Shortwood manorial waste</b>		
Land at Box Cottage	Not currently licenced for use	
Land at Cherry Tree Cottage	Licence for resident to use land	Cherry Tree Cottage
Land at Yew Tree Cottage	Licence for resident to use land	Yew Tree Cottage
Land at The Old Cottage	Licence for access across land	The Old Cottage
<b>Common land</b>		n/a
The Green, Nympsfield Road	Commons Act 2006	n/a
Shortwood Green	Commons Act 2006	n/a
Star Hill/Jubilee Road greens	Commons Act 2006	n/a

#### 6. Hire and use of Open Spaces

The privacy of hirers is protected under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Businesses such as sports and fitness coaches, community groups and schools wishing to use NTC open space must ask permission of NTC beforehand by contacting the NTC office, and complete a Hire Agreement.

The hire of open spaces is covered by NTC's Hire Agreement and by the usage table below;

Site name	Football / formal ball sports	Tennis	Exercise classes/ Fitness	Barbecues	Camping	Fetes and community events	Fairgrounds	Sports days	Fires	Public performances	Markets/café tables	Forest School activities	Parking	Children' s parties
King George V playing field	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
King George V Extension Field			X							X		X		X
Miles Marling Field	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X
Mortimer Garden			X			X				X	X			
Market Street Garden						X				X	X			
Leves Corner										X	X			
Clock tower garden						X					X			
War Memorial (Fountain Street)														
Norton Wood			X			X						X		
Bunting Hill												X		
Shortwood Green			X	X		X				X	X	X		X
Shortwood and Rockness manorial waste												X		
Star Hill/Jubilee Road Greens			X			X						X		
Nympsfield Road common land														
Land at Wood Lane												X		



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#### 7. Prohibited activities

It is not permitted to camp, scatter or bury ashes, shoot or hold car boot sales on any NTC public open spaces. It is not permitted to dig up NTC public open spaces nor to plant or remove plants without prior approval of the Council. It is not permitted to restrict access to an entire public open space for a private event or to charge a fee for access to an entire public open space in NTC ownership. Free public access for recreational use must be kept to a significant part of the open space.

NTC strongly object to badger culling on public open space in NTC's ownership and will act within its powers to prevent it.

#### 8. Management Procedure

Public open spaces are managed by the Environment committee and the Recreation and Amenities committee, with day-to-day management delegated to the Clerk.

General rights and powers for all areas of public open space covered under this Policy;

8.1 The overall management and maintenance of all public open spaces owned or leased by this Council and all related facilities including the trees on Council land, footpaths, street furniture, play equipment and any other item which may properly be considered to come within the remit of this Committee, by virtue of being on or within an open space<sup>5</sup>

8.2 To repair or replace any such item within the agreed budget, to include making such provision for their upkeep and improvement as is deemed necessary by the Environment and Recreation and Amenities committees. This function will be devolved to the Clerk

8.3 To remove any such items deemed unsafe

8.4 To determine and define any policies appertaining to the open spaces, their care, use and maintenance within known Council guidelines

8.5 To make adequate budget provision for all open spaces and facilities within the care of the Committee. Such budgets will be recommended to Full Council for approval

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<sup>5</sup> *Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9-10 and s.15 (power to provide and maintain open space or burial ground)*

*Public Health Act 1875, s.164 (power to provide and maintain recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces)*

*Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19 (power to provide and contribute to a wide range of recreational facilities)*



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8.6 To deal with complaints or requests related to the open spaces and associated facilities within known Council policies

8.7 To supervise any leases, rentals, licences, hire agreements for property owned by the Council and managed by the Environment committee and Recreation and Amenities committee; full power being granted to administer these in line with any existing Council policies

8.8 To take action to protect the Council's land from encroachment and illegal camping

8.9 To consider and make recommendations related to health and safety issues where they are relevant to the work of these Committees, and to ensure as far as possible that all legal requirements are met

8.10 To delegate power to the Clerk and NTC officers to deal with urgent items that arise. For the Clerk to report actions to the Chair of the relevant committee and the Mayor as soon as possible and, where relevant, to the whole committee

8.11 To delegate power to the Clerk to spend up to the maximum on any previously agreed and allocated budget item without further reference to the committee or Full Council, in accordance with NTC's Financial Regulations. Any spending that has not been previously agreed in the annual budget will be approved at the next appropriate Full Council meeting

8.12 To agree annual maintenance contracts for areas within each committee's remit

8.13 To appoint contractors in accordance with NTC's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

8.14 The Council have adopted the Woodland's Trust Tree Charter and manage trees according to the Charter. Trees are regularly inspected by qualified contractors and tree removal on Council land is only permitted by NTC's approved contractors. Trees are maintained to improve their health and prolong their lifespan. Healthy trees are not removed unless there is a clear health and safety reason.

8.15 To ensure that regular play equipment inspections are undertaken by a suitably qualified person and that appropriate and timely action is taken to ensure the safety of residents and children using the facility

8.16 To ensure that regular headstone inspections are undertaken in the closed cemetery at All Saints, Shortwood by a suitably qualified person and that appropriate and timely action is taken to ensure the safety of residents visiting the churchyard

8.17 To consider and make recommendations to Full Council for a budget for capital expenditure and to purchase and install any equipment within a realistic replacement programme

8.18 To ensure litter and dog bins on NTC public open space are maintained and emptied regularly by the appointed contractor or the Groundsman<sup>6</sup>

8.19 To manage commemorative furniture, sculpture, structures, trees and other plants in accordance with NTC's Commemorative Policy

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<sup>6</sup> *Litter Act 1983, ss.5-6 (power to provide and maintain litter bins)*



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#### 9. Trees

##### Vision

A parish where trees are valued for the significant contribution they make to wellbeing and quality of life within the area. Trees are managed to promote biodiversity, climate mitigation, and visual amenity whilst being managed and maintained in a way which promotes their safety and health.

##### Objectives

To ensure that Nailsworth Town Council's tree stock is regularly inspected, in line with current best practice, and managed to ensure public safety and to minimise the risk to property.

- To ensure that the Council's tree stock is maintained in a cost-effective manner, maximising visual amenity and associated environmental benefits whilst minimising risks to public safety and property.
- To ensure that the work undertaken on Council trees is done to a high standard, is appropriate and in line with best arboricultural practice.
- To provide appropriate levels of information and advice to the public on the Council's tree stock.
- To identify and ensure appropriate management of trees which are important for biodiversity, as wildlife corridors or as landscape features.
- To promote the positive contribution made by trees to open spaces, including the value which they have for wildlife.
- To identify opportunities for appropriate tree planting schemes including community orchards.

##### Policies

9.1 Nailsworth Town Council will continue to carry out its rolling programme of tree inspections, together with an associated remedial programme of work. The results of these inspections and any associated works will be recoded in line with current best practice.

9.2 The Council will respond positively to tree matters involving safety (including highway safety) and will remove dead trees (except where biodiversity issues prevail) and dangerous and unsafe trees and branches. Trees which are in decline will be monitored in order to ensure that they pose no risk to people or property.

9.3 Where it can be demonstrated that a tree is the primary cause of direct damage to property the Council will act to rectify the problem. In cases of damage to property it must be clearly demonstrated that the tree is the principal cause of damage. (The effects of tree litter such as leaves, twigs, fruit etc will not be considered as direct damage and no action will be taken by the Council).

9.4 Except in exceptional circumstances the Council will not prune its tree stock to alleviate the obstruction of light or telecommunication signals or where branches overhang neighbouring properties.



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- 9.5 Works will only be carried out on trees which are restricting the efficiency of solar panels where the solar panel pre-dates the presence of the tree.
- 9.6 The Council may carry out work on trees in response to its development priorities. Development priorities may include site or neighbourhood redesign, the redevelopment of parks, gardens and other green spaces, or woodland management schemes.
- 9.7 When carrying out tree works the Council will comply with all relevant legislation in respect of the protection of nesting birds and other wildlife. Only essential tree works will be carried out during the bird nesting season. Work will not be carried out on trees to address the issues of bird droppings. Prior to works being carried out on a mature tree the potential for bat roosts will be assessed. If it is found that there are features within the tree that are likely to be suitable for bat roosts, a survey will be carried. If bat roosts are found to be present appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented before any work takes place.
- 9.8 The Council will consider accepting third party sponsorship for tree work only where this has been identified as good arboricultural practice.
- 9.9 The Council will work with partners and community groups to identify opportunities to increase its tree stock through appropriate tree planting.
- 9.10 There will be a presumption against removal of existing trees and where this is necessary replacement in the same location, or if this is not possible in another more suitable location, will be considered.
- 9.11 The Council will consider planting new, species rich, native woodlands in appropriate locations to meet a variety of objectives, including habitat creation, the screening of unsightly development, the provision of shelter and the enhancement of the landscape.
- 9.12 Veteran trees will be managed in a way that preserves their unique characteristics. When managing trees and woodlands, consideration will be given to biodiversity issues in line with the Biodiversity Duty for Public Authorities enshrined in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.
- 9.13 In planting or adopting trees or tree belts, the Council will be sensitive to the potential for damage or inconvenience, or the impeding of access, as the trees mature. In addition, the Council will recognise and take positive action to prevent the potential conflict of interest where developments are proposed in close proximity to existing trees, tree belts and wooded areas.
- 9.14 Adequate resources will be made available in order to ensure that the Council complies with its duty of care in respect of tree safety.



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- 9.15 All tree works carried out on behalf of the Council will comply with appropriate Standards and Legislation in respect of tree protection, and will be undertaken by competent and qualified contractors
- 9.16 This policy will be reviewed every 3-5 years or when there are major changes to legislation or best practice in respect of tree management.

#### Appendix A

##### Rationale for provisions within the Tree Policy

###### Tree Inspections

Nailsworth Town Council carries out a rolling programme of tree inspections to ensure that its tree stock is kept safe and in a healthy condition. The survey records information on all Council owned trees and identify any tree which may pose a risk to health and safety. In the case of unsafe trees remedial actions is taken within a time scale recommended by inspectors. Other works are organised in line with the priorities identified by the inspectors. Appropriate re-inspection dates are set for all trees dependent on their age, condition, location, and species. If however a resident has concerns regarding the condition of a particular tree, the Council will carry out a responsive inspection.

###### Dead, Dying and Dangerous Trees

The Council has a duty of care to ensure that the trees that it has responsibility for are in a safe condition, and therefore would seek to remove any dangerous trees, and to monitor trees which are in decline, to ensure they do not become dangerous. In the case of dead trees, it may be possible to retain these where they have high wildlife value and they do not represent a danger. In some instances, a dead tree could be reduced to a standing trunk to provide habitat for wildlife.

###### Dangerous Branches

A dangerous branch is one which is dead, shows signs of decay or damage, or weak attachment to the tree and which could cause harm or damage if it fell. Where a dangerous branch is identified the Council has an obligation to make it safe.

###### Damage to Property

Where it can be demonstrated that a tree is the primary cause of direct or indirect damage to property the Council has an obligation to rectify the problem. Direct damage may include tree roots lifting paving stones, or trunks or branches damaging garden walls or fences. Indirect damage may include subsidence due to soil shrinkage resulting from water extraction by tree roots. In cases of damage to property it should be clearly demonstrated, by the property owner, that the tree is the principal cause of the damage.





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#### **Falling Leaves or Debris and Aphid Problems**

The Council is not legally responsible for fallen leaves or other tree debris such as cones, seeds, berries, fruit, blossom etc. Pruning of trees is not a solution to this occurrence and felling a tree to address issues of leaf litter etc. would be difficult to justify. The same criterion applies to trees which host aphids with associated honeydew. There is little that can be done about the aphids which cause this problem and pruning the tree will only offer temporary relief and any re-growth is more likely to be colonised by aphids. Where honeydew affects cars it can be removed using warm soapy water, particularly if the car is washed as soon as possible.

#### **Obstruction of Light to Houses or Gardens**

It is usually very difficult to prune a tree in order to give a lasting improvement in light levels to a property. Often the extent of pruning required to alleviate light obstruction can be damaging to the tree or destroy its amenity value, and thick re-growth following pruning can make shading problems worse. There is no obligation on the Council to carry out work on trees to address shading issues. However, in exceptional circumstances, for example where light levels in a room that is occupied for a large part of the day are severely restricted by the presence of a tree, the Council may wish to act to alleviate the problem.

#### **Branches Affecting Telephone and Power Lines**

Effective use of telephone lines and power supplies is the responsibility of the service provider. If residents are experiencing problems with telephone reception or suspect a tree is interfering with a power line, they are advised to contact their service provider for advice.

#### **Television Reception**

The Council would not normally carry out works to trees or remove trees in order to improve television reception. Aerials and satellite dishes should be carefully sited at the time of installation, with consideration being given to how neighbouring trees may grow in the future.

#### **Overhanging Branches**

The Council has a similar responsibility to a private landowner or neighbour in respect of overhanging branches and is only obliged to cut them back in circumstances where damage is being caused to adjacent structures or the tree is dangerous.

Under common law a property owner has a legal right to cut back overhanging branches to their boundary. This work should be done to a good standard (British Standard 3998:1989 'Recommendations for Tree work') by a competent person.

#### **Branches Obscuring Signs or Street Lighting Columns**

Where trees are blocking streetlights, road signs etc. and jeopardise public safety the Council is obliged to alleviate the problem, in most cases this can be done whilst retaining the tree. In



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extreme cases removal of the tree and replacement with a more suitable species may be necessary.

#### **Solar Panels**

It would be reasonable for the Council to consider requests to carry out work on trees which are restricting the efficiency of solar panels where the trees have been planted, or have self-seeded, subsequent to the panels being installed.

Where solar panels have been sited in locations where the presence of existing trees restricts the light they receive, or have been sited in locations where pre-existing, immature, trees will grow up to restrict light levels, it would be unreasonable to expect the Council to remove or reduce these trees.

#### **Development Priorities**

From time to time it may be necessary for the Council to carry out work on trees in response to its development priorities. Development priorities may include site or neighbourhood redesign, maintenance and improvement or the redevelopment of parks, gardens and other green spaces. Where trees are removed the Council would normally seek to replace them with species appropriate to the location and site conditions.

Trees in woodlands and other heavily wooded areas may also need to be thinned out periodically to encourage the growth of the most appropriate specimens and species.

Where appropriate the Council will normally consider retaining dead standing trees for the benefit of wildlife and managing tree belts and woodland areas in order to maximise their wildlife value. Veteran trees (trees which, because of their great age, size or condition, are of exceptional cultural, landscape or nature conservation value) are managed and maintained in order to preserve their unique characteristics.

#### **Wildlife**

It would be unreasonable to expect the Council to carry out work on trees in order to address the issue of bird droppings. Nesting birds are protected by the Countryside and Wildlife act (and other related wildlife law) and only health and safety works would normally be considered during the nesting season in order to avoid causing unintended disturbance to nesting birds. It may be necessary to obtain a license from DEFRA to carry out essential Health and Safety works to a tree in which birds are nesting, or on sites where badgers and other protected species are present. When carrying out tree works, the Council is obliged to comply with all legislation relating to the protection of wildlife.

#### **Sponsorship of Tree Works**

The Council often receives offers from residents to sponsor tree works in order to address issues that the resident is concerned about. It would not be reasonable for the Council to accept offers of sponsorship from a third party to carry out tree works which would not be in the



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interest of the tree or in line with the Tree Policy. Sponsorship would only be considered where the works would normally form part of the Council's scheduled work programme. No tree works would be considered which did not comply with BS 3998 2010 (see below). In cases where the Council would consider accepting sponsorship the work to be undertaken would be carried out by Council contractors working under the supervision of a Council Officer. Except in the case of overhanging branches (see above) any unauthorised works to Council owned trees carried out by any person would constitute criminal damage.

#### Standards

All works to Council trees is carried out in line with British Standard 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for Tree work'. In addition, any contractor carrying out work on behalf of the Council should be Arboricultural Association approved, or able to demonstrate that they have achieved a similar standard of competency. All personnel undertaking tree works must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Clothing and be adequately trained.

#### Funding

Where land is to be adopted by the Council an appropriate commuted sum will be required in order to maintain and manage any tree or hedgerow on that land and, where appropriate, to plant additional trees or hedgerows.

The Council will ensure that adequate resources are made available in order to meet its legal liabilities in respect of tree safety. Extra resources may be required if prolonged periods of extreme weather prevail.

## 10. Commemorative Gifts, Green Gifts and Donations

### Introduction

People often feel a strong connection to their local spaces and turn to them to find both comfort at sad times in their lives and to celebrate happy occasions. Traditionally the Town Council has offered to dedicate trees and benches as memorials, and has also welcomed other potential features, and reasons for commemoration.

Commemoration of a major life event such as a birth, marriage, death, special birthday or reunion can be interpreted in various ways according to the nature and needs of a specific public open space. People may choose to donate to their local open spaces to offset their carbon footprint; a 'green gift'. Options include benches, tree planting, wildflowers, bulbs, gates, painted murals, ceramic mosaics and sculpture. Some sites may lend themselves to more unusual options such as community art projects, and restoration of mill ponds, such as those located along the Stroud Valleys Pedestrian Cycle Trail.

So that NTC can manage our public open spaces in an appropriate and sustainable way, commemorative features need to be planned to reflect the needs and capacity of each site. This policy provides a framework for the delivery of commemorative features with consistency and contributes to the long-term management of our public open spaces.



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#### **Procedure for future management of Commemorative and Green gifts.**

- 10.1 Nailsworth Town Council will identify the most appropriate locations for benches, planting and other commemorative features. This will include the maximum capacity of commemorative features to ensure a public open space does not become overfilled. Up to 30% of one site's benches may have plaques
- 10.2 Commemorative features are leased for 20 years. If a donor wishes to renew the lease, they must contact Nailsworth Town Council three months before the lease period expires, subject to renewal agreement
- 10.3 Nailsworth Town Council may specify the style of bench, type of planting, tree or feature appropriate for the chosen setting and location. Ideally this should be included in a site's management plan. All site furniture, structures and planting provided under this scheme remain the property of Nailsworth Town Council
- 10.4 The Council will maintain commemorative planting but cannot accept liability for replacement due to natural weathering, wear and tear or vandalism
- 10.5 To ensure consistency the Council will not install benches, trees or structures provided by the enquirer
- 10.6 Nailsworth Town Council reserves the right to remove any damaged, diseased or unsafe structure without consultation
- 10.7 Trees will not be planted with a plaque or have plaques added to them
- 10.8 Shrine objects at or near the commemorative site, such as plastic flowers, toys, cards and wreaths, are not permitted. Any objects will be removed
- 10.9 It is not permitted to scatter ashes on Council public open spaces
- 10.10 Charges will be reviewed each year and will reflect the costs of all materials and labour required to install and maintain the commemorative object
- 10.11 General donations and carbon offset 'Green Gifts' will be accepted for any public open space site of choice. This money will be used for the maintenance and improvement of the site. Where there is a volunteer or 'Friends' group for the site, residents may wish to make a direct donation to them. The Council can help put residents in touch with the appropriate Friends group.
- 10.12 Full payment is needed before any feature or work is ordered
- 10.13 The Council will keep a record of the name, address and other contact details of the donor along with the location, type and if possible a photograph of the commemorative feature

#### **Publicising Commemorative Features and Green Gifts**

The Council currently does not advertise commemorative features, Green Gifts or donations to public open spaces. Following the approval of this report, a strategy is recommended to publicise the change of emphasis to management and commemorative rather than solely memorial features, and to show how this can improve public open spaces.

Publicity options include the Council website, posters on site notice boards, libraries, Town Information Centre, press release and via other groups. The Council will endeavour to provide a 'Green Gift' list on the Council website.



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#### Record keeping of our assets

Accurate records need to be kept of commemorative features, and the donor, including their email address and phone number. It is the responsibility of the donor to inform Council of any change to contact details. In the first instance the NTC office should be notified of any new commemorative feature so that it can be recorded on the council mapping system.

The list of existing assets and locations outlined below will also be mapped.

#### Suggested features

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>Suggested contribution</b>	<b>Location</b>
Adopt an existing tree	£35	Existing woodland and green spaces
Adopt a new tree	£200	Existing woodland and green spaces
Adopt a woodland share (can be more than one share)	£10	Norton Wood, Bunting Hill
Adopt a pollinator area (conservation cut grass, perennial planting, roadside nature reserve)	£10	Town Council owned land
Bulb planting and floral displays	Any amount	Town Council owned land and town centre
Sponsor a hedgehog house	£35	Woodland
New bench	£1,200	various
Plaque on existing bench	£120	various
Picnic bench	£500	various
Cycle rack	£100	Morrison's car park (subject to landowner's approval). Town Hall car park; KGV Field. Existing racks are adjacent to 'watersmeet', Bridge Street and the Library.
New kissing gate	£600	Various, for access



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Bee Hives and/or solitary bee homes	£1.00 - £10.00	Town Council owned land and property (exact locations to be confirmed)
Shared electric bike scheme	£400 each	Town Council owned land, or negotiate with property owner
Solar power unit for bikes	£3,000	Town Council owned land
Cover and stand for bikes	£1,000	Town Council owned land

#### 11. Street Furniture Strategy

**The Street Furniture Strategy follows NTC's Open Spaces Policy objectives:**

- To maintain and improve attractive, safe public open spaces for residents and visitors
- To manage NTC owned land appropriately, according to the landscape conditions, biodiversity, heritage, recreational resources and local distinctiveness of each piece of land.
- To ensure play equipment, street furniture, signage and bins are regularly inspected and maintained
- To increase accessibility in a way that is appropriate to each piece of land

Each new or replacement piece of street furniture should be justified by;

How it is used

Who will use it and whether they have special requirements

#### Seating

Seating is an important feature of public open spaces which goes beyond the practicality of offering a place to sit. They can be places for people to gather, make friends, have time away from work, away from other people, and time to recover both mentally and physically.

Attractive, well-placed seating can lift an entire area and bring a sense of cohesion to a park or public garden. Mismatched, poorly positioned and ugly seating can actively make a public open space worse: a seat in the wrong place can encourage anti-social behaviour and even crime. A poorly maintained or broken seat gives the impression of neglect and can encourage the sense that anti-social behaviour is acceptable because "no one cares" what happens in that area.

#### Location

When new seating is considered, thought should be given to the quantity needed. Regular resting places – seats, or even large logs – should be considered at intervals of 150 metres for a path or open space to be more accessible for people with mobility and health problems. Adding more resting places to an informal grass or woodchip path can encourage people to use it more. Too many benches can be as much of an issue as too few benches and consideration should be given to what purpose a bench serves for the wider community. The choice of seating should consider the context. For example, a formal, metal bench will be out of context if installed in Norton Wood.

#### Anti-social behaviour and vandalism



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No piece of street furniture can be completely vandal proof, and sometimes the toughest of materials can be the least attractive. Consideration should be given to the location of the bench; how visible it is, whether it's visited often, and whether it might be prone to graffiti or arson due to its position or use.

NTC commit to remove graffiti on benches and other furniture promptly and, where possible, within 24 hours if the graffiti is obscene, names an individual or spreads hatred. NTC will remove broken street furniture promptly to prevent injury to a member of the public and to keep our open spaces well maintained. Where the position of a bench is contributing to anti-social behaviour, it will be considered for temporary or permanent removal. Efforts should be made to address the root cause of the issue before removal of a bench is considered.

#### Accessibility

Seating areas should offer a mix of options for people with different disabilities and health problems. Some people find seats with arms and backs easier to use. Others require somewhere to rest and informal seats are enough. Spaces for wheelchairs and walking aids alongside seats should be considered where practical.

#### Style and materials

Where there are existing benches and features, the same or similar style, colour and materials should be followed as much as possible to create a cohesive look for the open space. New and replacement benches should enhance the local distinctiveness of the place and are opportunities to improve the location. Street furniture bought from a reputable supplier should be robust enough to withstand public use. Furniture intended for garden use will not be strong enough and should not be considered. Wood, metal and recycled plastic seats from street furniture suppliers can all be considered. While wood may not last as long as metal street furniture, sometimes it is a better option, offering a softer appearance, more comfort, and being more in keeping with some surroundings. Even metal street furniture can be damaged and look tired; the life expectancy of street furniture is similar to a play area; 10-15 years. After this time maintenance or replacement should be planned.

#### Sites

##### 11.1 Mortimer Garden

#### Use

Mortimer Garden is a popular formal garden and event space in the town centre, with a variety of users. Visitors, residents, shoppers and people working in the town centre use it as a place to meet, have lunch, socialise and spend time alone. It's the venue for the monthly market and community events, such as Nailsworth Festival. Most of Mortimer Garden is accessible; one side of the stream edge is not accessible by a wheelchair or for people who cannot use steps (there are steps to the bus station side). The far side of the stream can be accessed via a ramp.

Mortimer Garden was refurbished in 2005-6 and the benches probably date from this time. All bench locations are well used with only one empty bench plinth at the side of the event circle. Mortimer Garden is highly visible during the day and, while it can be a gathering place in the evenings, damage is low. Anti-social behaviour tends to be noise and litter rather than damage to street furniture.

#### Style and materials



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Around the event circle and garden there are four black plastic-coated metal, formal park benches (possibly supplied by David Ogilvie Engineering). These are well-spaced, in a fair condition, with backs and no arms. There are four wooden benches (two either side of the stream) by the stream side. These are in good locations, in poor or very bad condition, with backs and no arms.

#### Recommendations

It's recommended that replacement benches follow the same guidelines as the original design, with two different bench styles, reflecting the two locations:

Event circle and garden: black plastic-coated metal, formal park benches similar to the original David Ogilvie-style benches. Replacement benches should include arms.

Streamside: wooden benches in a contemporary style to reflect the relaxed location and soften the effect of the location being surrounded by stone walls and tarmac surfaces. Oak is recommended, with a lifespan of 20 years and easy to care for. Benches are designed with slightly angled seats for water run-off.

#### 11.2 King George V Playing Field

##### Use

King George V playing field is a well-used park and playing field with play area, boules piste, picnic benches, football pitch, skate park, outdoor gym, small woodland and informal field (the Extension Field). It has multiple users, often at the same time. Families and children use the fenced play area, outdoor gym and skate park. Dog walkers use the field, Extension Field and woodland. Young people use the skate park, football pitch, woodland and outdoor gym. Football teams use the pitch, fitness coaches use the gym equipment and field, and the local school use the field as a sports pitch. People of all ages and abilities visit and the park benefits from a dedicated car park.

There is very little vandalism to the equipment. There are occasional problems with young people gathering mainly in the woodland, on a bench at the side of the changing rooms and at the skate park. Litter, broken glass and noise nuisance are the main problems. There is a higher risk of arson in areas close to the woodland where unofficial campfires are often made.

The benches and picnic tables on KGV Playing Field are concentrated around the play area and outdoor gym equipment. Over time seats and informal resting places (logs) have been added to create attractive walking routes around KGV woodland, and the Extension Field increasing its use by people with health problems. There is one wide woodchip path through the woodland and around the Extension Field but otherwise access is across grass, suitable for some wheelchairs.

##### Style and materials

There is a mismatch of bench and picnic table styles in KGV playing field with a mix of all metal, metal and wood, recycled plastic, and logs. The seats are functional but not attractive. By dividing KGV playing field into different zones a more attractive and cohesive appearance can be achieved using a mix of styles and materials suited to each location.

#### Recommendations

It's recommended that the following zones are given their own character:





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- Children's play area: there's an opportunity to gradually replace the existing benches and picnic table with more playful furniture that can include elements of play. They could be colourful, have relief patterns or designs and made from metal, recycled plastic or wood.
- Outdoor gym and skate park: metal or recycled plastic is recommended as hard-wearing materials. Efforts should be made to replace the existing furniture with attractive pieces.
- Woodland edge: recycled plastic is a softer appearance but is more resistant to arson than wood, reflecting the higher arson risk in this location.
- Extension Field: informal log seating spread around the woodchip path offers regular resting points while not overtly encouraging gathering.
- The bench near the changing rooms has been a focus for anti-social behaviour and is not well placed, being next to the bin store. It's recommended this is removed if problems continue.

#### 11.3 Miles Marling Field

##### Use

Miles Marling Field was designed and built in 2019 as a 'community park for all ages' where people with and without children can mix. It has an accessible footpath forming a circuit around the top half of the field. There is a zip wire, swings and outdoor gym equipment. There is a stone amphitheatre forming two tiers of seating. Miles Marling Field has a cohesive style and a natural feel which takes advantage of the views and natural surroundings. Thought was put into the location of the benches – spaced around the path – and special features for people with visual impairments. Anti-social behaviour is low, although there has been damage to trees and picnic benches.

##### Style and materials

The benches and picnic tables are bespoke and made from oak with relief carvings of flowers and leaves. The benches compliment an elaborately carved wooden arch at the entrance of the park. The park has a cohesive look and is a pleasant place to spend time.

##### Recommendations

Replacement benches to be wood (preferably oak) and blend with the organic style of the existing furniture.

Existing benches and picnic tables to be regularly treated with Danish oil to extend their life.

#### 11.4 Leves Corner

##### Use

Leves Corner is a small garden between Market Street and the Co-op car park. It's used by people waiting or taking a break from work. This small garden is dedicated to Nailsworth's Town Twin, Leves in France. The seating is accessible via a ramp and pavement and is set into paving.

##### Style and materials

The existing bench is serviceable but will need replacing within about five years. The bench is wood and of the same style as other town centre benches installed around 2005. The bench does not match the smart black metal railings and formal style of Leves Corner.

##### Recommendations



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It's recommended that a replacement bench is a black metal formal style with arms, in keeping with the style of this small garden.

#### 11.5 Clocktower Garden

##### Use

Clocktower Garden is one of the first features people see when they come into Nailsworth by car, bike or walking. The garden has evolved into a small tea garden, place to rest after cycling, walking or shopping, and a place to meet. The Clocktower itself is a war memorial and is used during Remembrance. It's also dressed at Christmas and is where the town Christmas tree is sited. The two banner posts in front of the Clocktower are important places for community events to be advertised. There are bicycle racks at the side of the garden. The garden itself is accessible, although crossing the roads to get to the garden can be difficult for some people with disabilities. The Clocktower Garden is well overlooked and anti-social behaviour is very rare.

##### Style and materials

The design of the garden is symmetrical and two wooden benches sit either side of the Clocktower. These benches are the same style as other town centre benches installed around 2005 and may need replacing within about five years.

##### Recommendations

It's recommended that both benches are replaced at the same time to keep the symmetry of the garden. There is an opportunity to replace the benches with wood or metal benches which emphasize the character of Nailsworth and the location. Benches with backs and arms are recommended with space for wheelchairs or walking aids at the side.

#### 11.6 Shortwood Green

##### Use

Shortwood Green is an area of Common land surrounded by residential houses with views across the Newmarket valley. It's on the edge of rural land and there are wildflowers growing in the Common. There are a few pieces of unfenced children's play equipment. There are two wooden benches which are coming to the end of their lives. Shortwood Green is used by local children and young people to play near their houses and dog walkers. The Green is open and it's accessible to people who can walk or use a wheelchair on grass. Anti-social behaviour is very low.

##### Style and materials

The character of Shortwood Green is very natural and informal. The wooden and metal framed benches are serviceable.

##### Recommendations

Natural materials should be used for replacement benches. There is an opportunity to replace the benches with matching wooden benches which emphasize the natural character of the location.



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