

Cllr Rowlands Update 13th March 2024

Environment Portfolio

Greetings to you all. Some people may look around and think this must be a very quiet time of the year for the department as we are between Christmas and the spring. No grass to cut, all the unwanted Christmas presents safely deposited away for another year, all the major storms out the way too, some theory that cool weather means we eat more – plus, people are still paying for Christmas so buying less, all in all meaning we have less to throw away. A nice calm time of the year for us all to swan off to the Swanage Railway for a jolly good outing pretending to be the Fat Controller... Well, as much as I'd certainly like to do that, I can't. What with Storm damage, Waldo Road, Tiny Forests, Grand days out, it's all been very full on. So sit back and read what busy bees we've all been in the past six weeks or so.

While I still have your attention dear reader, I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that I have requested that we help promote 'Coolings In Bloom' – known as 'Bromley in Bloom' locally. It will be advertised on the council website, launching on 1st April. We have so far done a press release relating to it and are also working with Clarion to help promote it in our more deprived areas. Obviously, due to some election that's apparently taking place, we are now in Purdah - so happy for people to contact me for more information instead.

Storm Damage

I won't name the storms as it'll be too long to do so. We are back to normal in terms of the clear up, with all highway's emergencies resolved, along with recreational works in parks and on footpaths. The remaining works are in woodland out of sight, with the trees being felled to make safe and then left to create new insect habitats and to naturally breakdown into the earth.

Treemendous

- Trees planted to date are 1286 with monthly targets for November, December, January and February met.
- Due to the remaining presence of some outstanding stump grinds completion will likely take until the end of March despite the low number of trees remaining to be planted.
- Gristwood & Toms are now delivering the remainder of tree planting using their in-house teams.

Month	Trees to plant per month	Actual number planted in the month
Nov-23	302	309

Dec-23	302	329
Jan-24	302	337
Feb-24	302	311
Week 1	75.5	17
Week 2	75.5	121
Week 3	75.5	82
Week 4	75.5	91
Mar-24	302	

Total Trees Planted	Total Trees Remaining
1286	224

- Tree planting season runs from November to March.
- The monthly planting target is 302.
- Tree planting has been split into 9 batches.
- Batch 8 is nearing completion.
- Batch 9 trees will be delivered next week.
- 568 tree planting requests received to date in 2023.
- A review of Tremendous trees planted since winter 21/22 will be undertaken in early spring 2024. Upon completion a report will be produced detailing mortality rates and as necessary outlining the strategy to ensure the target number of 5000 new trees is met by 2025.
- **QR codes and associated apps are now live on both IOS and Android.**
- Bromley 'please water me' tags have been produced and will be installed on the first round of watering in 2024.

Finance:

Year	Actuals to date	Year End forecasts
2021-22	£288,897.23	
2022-23	£587,463.75	
2023-24	£364,116.80	£464,564
2024-25		£450,625
2025-26		£124,450

TOTAL Spend	£1,160,924.98	£1,791,549.98
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Budget for project	£1,916,000	£1,916,000
Budget Remaining	£755,075.02	£0.00

So all in all, our tremendous programme is on target.

Kelsey Park Bridge

This is a project which has not gone at all to plan if I'm being completely honest, with the latest episode of the soap opera which is somehow surrounding the bridge at another stage. Before my appointment as Portfolio Holder, the council went to tender and no one wanted to do the entirety of the works, with the risks around the further design work being the stumbling block. Because of this, we are now going to go back to tender with a revised approach to make risk more manageable for the contractor. It is hoped that by reducing risk, the bridge construction will become more appealing to contractors and we will be able to break ground relatively soon.

Waldo Road Reuse and Recycling Centre (RRC) Closure

I would like to thank you for your understanding in relation to the recent unplanned closure of the site to the public for the first time since 2005 as urgent remedial works were required to fix drains on the site which could not be carried out without a temporary closure of the RRC. Due to the rapid rate of deterioration of the Waldo Road Waste Transfer Station, and the potential cost implications involved should we delay works any longer, we will now swap the proposed Capital Works over so Waldo Road Depot will be renovated in the Autumn of this year, and Churchfields Depot will be renovated afterwards.

I'm pleased to report that we didn't receive a single complaint from the public during the closure, as advance warning and communications were swiftly put into place to inform the public with no inconvenience caused to refuse collections either. Further works in relation to the drainage issues which caused the closure are still ongoing, although these are minimal and unlikely to impact on the area accessed by the public. At this stage, we don't expect there will be any impact on the service provided to the public either – but with some parts of the site being almost 150 years old, this could change.

Grand Days Out

I've managed to get out and about for a Grand Day Out, two Grand Morning Out, and two Grand Lunchtimes Out too.

SELCHPⁱ energy recovery facility, Southwark Materials Recovery Facility, and Westminster and Veolia Depot – I was fortunate enough to fight off a chest and lung infection to attend this event as Cllrs Grant and Bennett joined myself and officers for the Grand Day Out, seeing for ourselves what actually happens to our household waste once it leaves Bromley for recycling and energy recovery, and a demonstration of an electric refuse collection vehicle in operation in Westminster. It was an extremely interesting visit which I hope you can all do at some point, and I

would like to thank Veolia and officers for arranging. We also enjoyed some very nice sandwiches. Jim took the photographs hence why he isn't in any of them.

We even witnessed five cop cars and vans surrounding a van we assume was fly tipping on the way home!

I also had the pleasure of joining the Friends of Bromley Palace Park for a Grand Morning Out, surveying the beautiful park that the Civic is located in. I was highly impressed at the way in which they are able to look after the grounds for us all to benefit from in not only a busy park, but also a busy workplace. I thoroughly enjoyed my morning with them and look forward to another Grand Morning Out later this year to see the park and all their hard work in the different seasons – as well as how their Jubilee Project is coming along.

I also had an enjoyable Grand Morning Out with the Conservators of the Chislehurst Commons with Cllr Stammers and Hannah Jackson. It was a wholesome morning and I was only sorry I couldn't have stayed longer. The work they have done over the years I feel is at times underestimated and I hope to be able to work and support them as much as is possible in the foreseeable.

I joined Catherine Cooke and Veolia at Kemnal Tech last week for a Grand Lunchtime Out helping the schools gardening club plant an orchard of three apple trees and two pears. I found it very rewarding teaching some of the kids how to plant and look after the trees so that future generations can not only enjoy the blossoms, but also eventually the fruit they produce. Even getting locked in the school at the end didn't dampen the visit (although I think some of the lads may have also been taught by me how to jump the gate!)

Mr Mayor joined myself, officers, and Cllrs Bance and Jeal for a Grand Lunchtime Out planting the Cator Tiny Forest of 600 trees in an area the size of a tennis court. This was a very inspiring visit and something I would like to investigate doing in other areas of the borough over time. The lemon drizzle cake was superb and Mr Mayor had similar praise for the bread and butter pudding. I would also like to thank the wider community for their efforts to make this possible and bring about a positive action in the aftermath of the disgusting abuse the area was subjected to at the hands of utter selfishness.

And now for some pics.









ⁱ South East London Combined Heat & Power