

# Shawside Wildflower Meadow Petition Report

**Report of Royton District Executive petition  
meeting**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

# 1 Petition

A petition was received from Constitutional Services on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 regarding the wildflower meadow on land situated by Shawside Nursing Home. 11 people have signed the petition saying that they would like the wildflower meadow put back to how it used to be, which was just grass.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Rationale for original decision

After consultation in 2015, the decision was made to go ahead with a wild flower meadow in this location to reduce maintenance costs in light of reducing revenue budgets, but also for the residents to have something nice to look upon. Wildflower meadows also promote bio-diversity and provide a natural habitat and food source for insects, including bees, which as we know are in decline. This area also has a mole population and the wildflower planting covers mole hills nicely.

### 2.2 Annual Cycle of a wildflower meadow

Wildflower meadow is usually grass through late October – March with wildflowers presenting around April – September. Late September to October the area can look a little untidy whilst the flowers seed themselves, so the area cannot be cut until this has happened or flowers will not appear in the next year.

This area has only one cut per year after flowering and when the seeds have been dropped. If the wildflowers are to be contained and the grass be allowed to grow back more dominantly, the area would require 3 weekly grass cutting, approximately 12 cuts per year.

### 2.3 Financial Position

Unfortunately there is no longer capacity with Environmental Services to undertake 3 weekly grass cutting on the site and Councillors would be required fund the further 11 cuts per annum, if these were to be reinstated.

## 3. Petition meeting

A petition panel made up from Crompton Ward Councillors, Shaw Ward Councillors and representative of Carol Brown, the Director responsible for Environmental Services (Glenn Dale met on 12th November 2019 and following discussions made the following options:

3.1 Community project Oldham has many pockets of wildflower planting around the borough. Glenn Dale (Head of Environmental Services) suggested that local community members might be interested in maintaining the area, which would only require a little weeding at appropriate times through the year. Councillor Hazel Gloster has contacted with a resident who is very keen on greenspaces and is looking to take over maintenance of a small area and get involved. Councillor Gloster will make contact and discuss this site as a possible area to consider.

3.2 To leave as is

3.3 For Cllrs to fund the additional 11 cuts on an ongoing basis

This was not considered a realistic or viable option due to reducing district budgets and revenue nature of required funding – which is not allowed under the Constitution.

## 4. Recommendations

Councillors asked for a letter to be drafted explaining the budget restrictions to re-introducing the three weekly cuts, which would allow grass to become the dominant planting on the site.

The letter will also explain to residents how the wildflower meadow masks the visual impact of mole hills.

The letter would also propose that local residents could, if they wished to take on maintenance of the area.

## 5. Update

5.1 Councillor Gloster approached the resident interested in greenspaces, but unfortunately this area was not suitable for her work.

5.2 The agreed letter was sent to the lead petitioner on the 7<sup>th</sup> January.