



RISCA TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 18TH NOVEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: CUCKOO STATUTE UPDATE

REPORT BY:

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Officers have been asked to investigate the reasons why the area surrounding the cuckoo statue in Pontymister appears to be in such an unkempt condition.

2. LEGAL POSITION

- 2.1 Condition 17 of the Planning Approval states that a management plan needs to be submitted and adhered to. This is also mirrored in the terms of the Section 106 Agreement.
- 2.2 This condition has been discharged as a 'Management and Maintenance Plan' (drawn up by Aspect Landscape Planning) has been submitted to the Council. This plan stipulates:
- An **annual cut or trim** of orchid receptor sites set as wildflower grassland, shall be carried out between the months of October and February using a varied cutting regime. The application of fertiliser or herbicide on these areas should be avoided, and all cuttings be removed directly following a cut. [The reason for this is not to harm any slowworms]
 - Initially, woody species will be particularly targeted for removal by hand from within the orchid receptor sites set as wildflower grassland, combating the spread of woody imported species as part of the soil scrape.
 - Edge, banks and grass around obstructions to be strimmed.
 - Repair and reseed all open or poorly germinated areas using the same seed during Aril and September.
 - The maintenance contractor shall undertake the removal of all litter at quarterly intervals throughout the year.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 It is the view of the ecologist that although the cutting may have taken place the removal of the cuttings/arising has not. CCBC officers have been tasked with ensuring this aspect of the works is conducted.
- 3.2 It is also the view of the CCBC ecologist that the current refugia is not fit for purpose – the stones are too small to create the necessary sized gaps for slowworms to take refuge.

3.3 Therefore the CCBC ecologist sees no merit in retaining the refugia or the thistle growth at the base of the statue, which has overtaken any wild meadow flower seedmix from establishing.

4. WAY FORWARD

4.1 There is scope to remove the current refugia, tidy up the site, cut back the thistle growth and introduce a more attractive refugia with associated planting around the base of the artwork.

4.2 Community involvement would be welcome as would materials such as stone and logs to create the refugia. CCBC ecologists would be prepared to oversee the works but do not have a budget, neither do they have the workforce to implement these works.

4.3 In addition owners consent would first be needed to take this scheme forward.

4.4 Officers from the Council's Regeneration and Planning Department will pursue owners consent and also look to take forward a community driven project in association with members of the Risca Town Centre Management Group.

Author:

Consultees: