

Floral Planting – Summer Bedding

For Summer 2024, the Parish Council bought 360 French marigolds for all planters. These were lost in the 3-tier planter which needs larger, trailing plants. Cllr John Hewer asked staff to consider an alternative which would better show the new 3-tier planter to full advantage, as well as trailing plants for the 16 planters up the High Street and the 4 by the Moat Pond.

NB: all images in this are general images from the internet, not from the suppliers.

Wroughton Country Market has quoted £50 to buy, grow and provide 12-13 apricot shades trailing begonias which would be sufficient for one 3 tier planter; or £100 for 24-26 plants which would be sufficient for the 3-tier planter and some of the high street planters. Members could then opt to purchase French marigolds from Toomers for all remaining planters. Last year the French marigolds cost £1.80 each (totalling £200). The total should therefore be no more than £300 and would depend on how many French Marigolds would be required for the remaining planters. We would ask the Grounds Team Manager to help calculate.



Toomers have quoted £450 for 250 garden ready, mixed trailing begonia plants at £1.80 each including VAT and also inclusive of a 10% discount. They advise that this should be sufficient for ALL the planters as trailing begonias are larger and therefore fill more space, so we would need less of them.



Whichever supplier is used, costs would be taken from 450 4685 Floral Planting budget for 2025/26 of £800.

The Grounds Team Manager has advised that each year they need to supplement the existing compost in the planters with top soil. However, if the soil is spent and becomes too compacted with old roots, he will need to replace it completely. He will not be able to confirm whether this is required until he removes the winter bedding towards the middle/ end of May. He will also need to purchase plant food.

The Clerk has confirmed that if the 2025/26 budget of £800 is not sufficient for all of the above and the winter bedding, any additional costs could be taken from General Reserves; Members will then need to consider increasing the floral planting budget for 2026/27.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Members may find the same or similar plants cheaper elsewhere. However, we have been advised that suppliers often send plants out in the order in which orders were placed, and we are comparatively late in placing our order for this number of garden ready plants which need to be planted out during the first week of June. We therefore ask members to agree to one of the 2 options suggested so staff can place the order with the relevant supplier(s).
2. Both Toomers and the Country Market have advised that trailing begonias are attractive to thieves. However, the Grounds Team Manager has advised that some of the French Marigolds were stolen last summer.

The Grounds Team Manager has proposed that he looks into purchasing a greenhouse at St Andrews Depot where the Grounds Team could buy corms/ seeds and raise their own plants, which should be a cheaper long term option, especially if he can source a good quality, second hand greenhouse.

Recommendations:

1. **Members consider whether to:**
 - **purchase from Toomers 250 garden ready, mixed trailing begonias at £1.80 each including VAT and inclusive of a 10% discount, which should be sufficient for all the planters, a total cost of £450**
 - OR**
 - **purchase 24-26 apricot shades garden ready begonias from Wroughton Country Market at a total cost of £100 together with as many French Marigolds at £1.80 each as are required to fill the remaining planters, up to a total of £300.**
2. **Members agree that the Grounds Team Manager can look into purchasing a greenhouse at St Andrews Depot where the Grounds Team could buy corms/ seeds and raise their own plants, which should be a cheaper long-term option, especially if he can source a good quality, second hand greenhouse.**