

## **COUNCIL – POLICY, RESOURCES & PERSONEL**

### **TREE PLANTING SCHEME**

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#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In February this year, the Council agreed to a scheme to fund the planting of trees every month for all our Direct Debit customers, with the aim to help promote our gym memberships and help offset some of the Council's carbon emissions. These trees were planted around the world through a third-party organisation - Tree Nation. Unfortunately, we have had to suspend this scheme in recent months due to Tree Nation only being able to accept payment in EUR and the variation in price that the exchange rate can cause.

Since this scheme was started in February, the Centre has gone from 115 Direct Debit members to 195 as of the start of August. Whilst there are obviously other contributing factors to this increase, I think it is vital that we replace this scheme with a suitable alternative to keep our membership numbers up, and hopefully increase them further.

#### **2.0 PROPOSED CHANGES**

To resolve this issue, I would like to change the scheme to help support a more local cause that our members will benefit from directly. I have identified the Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) as being a suitable organisation to help support.

Whilst HIWWT would not be able to plant a tree for every member each month, they do have a corporate membership that the Council can join, as well as a new project where we can fund the planting of seed pods for the Solent Sea Grass Restoration Project.

(<https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/seagrass-restoration>)

The current cost of planting trees, through Tree Nation, for each Direct Debit member would be approximately £50 a month, this amount is based on having 200 members and a cost of 25p per tree (Increase of 8p since February). My proposal going forward would be to instead contribute 1% of our Direct Debit membership fees each month to HIWWT, again based on 200 members, this would also be approximately £50 so there is no significant increase in cost to the Council. This scheme would continue to be funded from the Centre's advertising budget and will form a large part of our new marketing plan that will be presented to Estates & Facilities in October.

These funds would first be put towards the cost of the annual corporate membership fee (£250) and then towards the planting of seed pods in the Solent (£20 per pod). The corporate membership would also provide the Council with the following benefits, which would all be used to help advertise our gym memberships and the Council in general.

- Certificate and photo presentation
- Corporate members logo
- Invite to Corporate Members Day
- Company name listed on their website

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the current Direct Debit Tree Planting Scheme is replaced with a Direct Debit HIWWT Contribution Scheme which will see 1% of our final Direct Debit Membership income put towards the HIWWT Corporate Membership package and any projects they are running at the time (Currently Solent Sea Grass Restoration). Estimated cost over 12 months is £600 to be met from budget 4140/10.

For more information contact:

Joshua Bond,  
Centre & Sports Development Manager  
02380893603  
joshua.bond@fawley-pc.gov.uk