WRITTEN SUBMISSION

GREEN CARE AT NORTON

NHDC GRANT APPLICATION JUNE 2020

In the previous round of grant applications I discussed with elected members the possibility of making the Green Care plot much more accessible to participants with mobility issues. Members asked me to research the possibilities and come back in this round with a further proposal.

Due to the COVID -19 lockdown it has been quite difficult and frustrating researching and costing such a proposal. Often firms were either not working or were not prepared to do site visits.

However, in respect of making accessible pathways and a patio style seating area I looked in detail at a number of different options, namely:

- Wooden Decking
- Artificial Grass
- Self Binding Gravel (Hoggin)
- Slab Paving

The first 3 options all had their drawbacks such as on going maintenance, safety, high cost or long term durability.

The best and safest option is 'council standard' paving 900mm wide laid on a deep aggregate foundation. Having consulted an experienced groundworks company I have managed to make this more affordable by sourcing a large quantity of reclaimed paving which they will lay supplemented by brand new paving if necessary. A very rough ball park figure for this work is £4,000.

The other aspect of the bid which is to make the actual gardening accessible through provision of wooden raised beds which can be accessed from the proposed paved pathways is much more straightforward.

Suitable accessible wooden rustic raised beds can be purchased for example through firms such as Screwfix for around £90.00 each and constructed by the participants. Also timber (preferably reclaimed) can be purchased at a low cost to construct raised beds in the new polytunnel. An estimated cost of the beds and timber would be in the region of £500.

Unfortunately it's not feasible to make the plot completely wheelchair friendly but what we can do is make it much more accessible for those with physical disabilities, irrespective of the weather and ground conditions, and offer an opportunity not only to participate in gardening but also to simply enjoy the beauty of the location its plants and wildlife.