

Question: CQ09.01

Cabinet – 22 June 2021

Re: Agenda item 9 - Blaise Plant Nursery

Question submitted by: Councillor Brenda Massey

I was pleased to see the item on Blaise Plant Nursery in the Cabinet papers. Gardening has been one of the most useful hobbies over the last 18 months or so. Being able to grow something from a packet of very small seeds, whether it is a flowering plant or something edible, has been a source of consolation to those in enforced isolation, or trying to recover from the loss of a family member. Gardening is indisputably a positive occupation, even if it is not always good for the back or knees!

Blaise Nursery produces some amazing plants, and the aim to increase the output is to be welcomed. However, given that the therapeutic value of gardening is mentioned in the report, together with the possibility of having a glasshouse to educate citizens in growing plants, **I would like to ask if any thought has been given to using this as an opportunity for work placements for young people with mental or physical issues?** They would not only benefit from training in growing plants, but also from the retail side of the business.

Answer

- **Yes, this very much included in our plans. Prior to the restrictions due to Coronavirus we were working to do this with The City of Bristol College and our colleagues in the Employment Skills and Learning Team. Now the restrictions are beginning to ease we are picking this back up and hope to offer placements for young people with mental and or physical issues in the near future.**
- **We also work with Leyhill Prison on a scheme which offers work placements for people who are due for release. Placements are offered, with Leyhill staff supervision, to people who have a keen interest in developing their skills in gardening/horticulture and want to pursue work in this area once released. This has been very successful, and we continue to work with the scheme and expand it wider across Parks & Green spaces.**