

Press Release

Issued: July 17, 2008

Partnership working keeps gardens at Garth Park blooming

Thames Valley Probation and Bicester Town Council continue to work in partnership to maintain and nurture the gardens and animal cemetery at Garth Park, Bicester. The work started in February 2007 and since then more than 2,000 hours of 'free' labour have been 'paid back' to the community by supervised offenders sentenced to Unpaid Work (Community Service) by the courts.

The offenders' work included stripping out flowerbeds and preparing them for re-planting, working in the greenhouse where new plants are grown and nurtured, together with general gardening tasks across the entire park. In addition the offenders planted 2,000 bulbs in support of Bicester in Bloom last year.

The gardens are owned by Bicester Town Council, a great supporter of Thames Valley Probation and the Unpaid Work that offenders undertake.

'We are very pleased to be able to provide this work which benefits the community by leaving lasting results which can be admired for many months to come' said Mrs Pauline Liddington, Mayor of Bicester

'Thames Valley Probation greatly values this partnership with Bicester Town Council. We are pleased that under the Community Payback scheme, local offenders are giving something back to their own community' said Sue Pittuck, Placement Manager, Thames Valley Probation.

Notes for Editors

Please contact us if you would like to arrange a date and time for any additional photographs.

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Unpaid Work in Thames Valley explained

Around 2,000 of the 6,000 offenders supervised by Thames Valley Probation in an average year are carrying out Unpaid Work in the community and complete almost 300,000 hours annually. That's about £1.5m of free labour.

The work benefits local schools, faith groups, charities, community organisations and partnerships. The range of work can include: Graffiti removal, ground clearance, building maintenance and landscaping, improvement to parks and community facilities, general gardening projects, painting and decorating in community centres and meeting places.

Unpaid Work is the name of one of the 12 Requirements that comes under the generic community sentence called a Community Order. Offenders on an Unpaid Work Requirement can be ordered by the courts to do between 40 and 300 unpaid work hours.

Thames Valley Probation works with adult offenders, supervising them through their Community Orders and assisting with rehabilitation. We also supervise offenders released from prison on licence and work with victims of serious crime. The main aim of the service is to increase public protection and reduce the re-offending rate. Community Payback is the name and logo used for the Unpaid Work that offenders carry out. It has been designed to highlight the work of offenders to put something back into communities in which they've offended.

See our website: www.thamesvalleyprobation.gov.uk for further details.

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