

Gardening Team AGM 9/2/2021

Attendees:

Dal, Neil, Ged, Jas, Bob, Andy, Jag, Bhavin, Shantanu, Amarjit, Savi.

Meeting objectives: to agree plans for 2021.

Overview

A huge thank you to all the volunteers in 2020. We achieved more than we ever set out to do at the start of the year. Special thanks to Neil Pennie who has been the driving light of the project and Roger Sprules, chair of Richings Park Sports club for his assistance.

We are a sub group of the Richings Park Residents' Association and thank Graham Young and the committee for their ongoing support, and County Councillors Wendy Matthews, Jilly Jordan and Luisa Sullivan for all their help.

Our 21 brilliant volunteers have been a shining light in Richings Park. However, it remains a huge disappointment that we have 800+ homes, yet so few volunteers. With only 4 cuts per year from the local council, the only way we improve the area is doing it ourselves.

We have consistently cut most of the main open areas across Richings Park every week including mowing and weeding of the Residents' Garden and outside the shops at the station. The group have also made significant headway widening the perimeter paths, making them safer. Nearly all the main open spaces have been edged and seeded. We have planted trees at the entrance of Bathurst Walk, spring bulbs at the entrance to Bathurst Walk and the intersection of Wellesley Avenue and Somerset way, removed excess growth from tree bases to improve walking and driving blind spots. Cleaned the entry signs to the village.

We remain incredibly proud of the improvements we have made to the area, and believe that we have a sustainable group that can continue build on the first two years of this project.

Funding

All of the team are volunteers. Equipment/Seeds etc. have been purchased using funds raised from residents and grants from Bucks Council. We have should have enough funds to see the team through until the end of 2021 when we will need to decide how we will fund raise.

2021 Focus

The group agreed at the meeting that we would focus on:

Grass cutting every week.

Entrance Bathurst
Outside shops by the Residents' Garden
The Residents' Garden
Junction Somerset Way/Wellesley Avenue
Junction Somerset Way/Thorney Lane South
Thorney Lane South open space

Finish widening the perimeter pathways.

Volunteers

It was agreed that we would schedule work around a 6 to 8-week period and the team agreed that this was something they felt comfortable committing to with a maximum of 2 hour sessions.

There will be a slot for each volunteer. It was noted that it is only fair that everyone on the group helps equally to share the load. On weekends when we do special projects, an experienced lead will be allocated who will be responsible for organising.

It was noted that a few volunteers had not been active at all in 2020. They will be asked if they would like to continue to be on the group whatsapp. This will allow us to allocate slots based around active volunteers.

Raising the profile of the gardening group.

If you are not on social media then you might not be aware that there is a team of gardening volunteers.

It was raised and agreed that we would purchase high viz bibs with information on the back.

GW & ST to investigate

Verges

It was raised by Pav and Harry (before the meeting), along with Savi at the meeting that the state of some home owner's verges is unacceptable. One idea was reinstating the verges competition, another was signs.

We all agreed that this was a major issue and that we should set up a working group. This will be made up of Savi (Lead), Jag, Harry and Pav. More to follow.

Picket Fences

Kam (before the meeting) raised the questions about picket fencing. GW checked and this would need to go through the local council to action.

Naming the Shed

Kam raised the question should we name the gardening team shed? The group agreed it was a great idea! We are awaiting ideas from the volunteers.

Dog Fouling

It was raised that this has significantly increased. It will go on the agenda at the next RPRA meeting.

Courier Vans

Dal mentioned the issue with courier vans tearing up the verges, and swapping loads. He will look to get photographic evidence with a view to writing to the firms

Litter Picking

The litter issue has become worse over the winter period. This will be raised at the RPRA meeting and the Gardening team will organise a covid safe litter pick early spring.

Cutting Back Trees

If we decide to cut back of the epicormic growth on the trees, then this needs to be timetabled so that Wendy Matthews can arrange for the waste to be collected.

Recruiting New Volunteers

The success of the gardening team stands and falls by the work of the volunteers. We will continue to try and get more volunteers. One idea was adhoc days where we try and get more people out for one hit.