

Wildflower Verges Update

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1 Background

As a result of a Community Board bid, the Parish Council were awarded £ towards the Wildflower Verges project. The bid and subsequent project was worked on with Blue Sky Developments and (Unitary) Councillor Luisa Sullivan. This was a great and successful opportunity for collaboration between Parish Council, Community Board and a local contractor /social enterprise project.

35 sites across the Parish were selected across to plant the wildflowers. These were recommended by officers and councillors and agreed in conjunction with Blue Sky Development.

2 Success Update & Current Status

A recent physical review of the sites was undertaken to measure the success of the blooming. The overwhelming conclusion is that at the vast majority of sites, the yield of bloom has been immense with good coverage. A number of sites have been successful but a bit patchy with 2 sites being very poor.

These sites were outside the Churchyard entrance in Iver Lane and at the junction of Love Lane and Langley Park Road. Both these areas only produced the most sparse bloom. Blue Sky Development have suggested a cause and recommend we return those areas to grass.

The feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. We have received positive e-mails, contact forms and Facebook posts. Visitors to the office have been positive as has comments made to the entire parish council team when out and about in the Parish. We have received very few comments on the more negative side and indeed one negative comment was pre-empted by a very positive start!

With a slightly later expected implementation of the hanging baskets (with acceptable reasons from our contractor), the blooming of the wildflowers just after the Jubilee weekend worked well followed closely by the arrival of the baskets. This has generally helped a really good level of positive feedback. Many residents and no doubt visitors have been sitting or lying on the ground to capture images of the blooms and bees enjoying the flowers using simple mobile devices to quite high-end camera equipment.

3 Next Steps

Following a review meeting with Blue Sky Development, the following actions will take place:

From now on the Wildflowers will slowly begin to diminish in bloom and start to die back. At the end of September, once the seeds have dropped and started to re-seed the areas can be cut back. At this point, if we wish, we can add some additional seed using the balance of the Community Board Bid. It is recommended to use a basic mix which will compliment the re-seeded Patriotic mix used this year. Doing this will create a bloom next year that will be an early bloom, March, April and into May as opposed to the late bloom we created this year June, July into August. The cutting back is a job the Grounds Team can undertake although the Deputy Clerk will liaise with our LAT at Transport for Bucks to require any permission required for our team to work on the highway and will give a verbal update. It maybe that we need to contract this out to a contractor i.e. Blue Sky who prepped the patches at the start of the project.

4 Future Opportunities

For next summer's bloom we can rely on natural re-seeding and a further scattering of seed and sand mix. For 2024 (Financial year 2023/24) we will need to consider setting budget aside to carry out some professional maintenance through Blue Sky Development if the Council wish to continue with the success of this project.

Widening the project to a spring offering, the Parish Council could consider a daffodil / spring bulb offering across the Parish. The Deputy Clerk believes from councillor feedback that members of the community would be willing to part of a planting 'working party' which could, and would benefit from Councillor participation.

A neighbouring Parish implemented the planting of 10,000 daffodil bulbs across 5 distinct areas towards the end of the year producing swaths of colour in the early new year. Members of the local community were involved. The project was managed by the then Deputy Clerk for Services.

It is recommended that the Committee consider this for this year and action the Deputy Clerk to look into the potential of any Community Board funding (or other) and produce a project plan to include the identification of potential sites.

Jeremy Day
Deputy Clerk
July 2022