

## **Wildflower Verges Update**

**September - October 2021**

The preparation work on our pilot verges ready for seeding and planting with wild flowers began on 29th September. John Lawrence and his colleague cut and scarified the verges on Sandside Road and opposite the recycling bins, from where he also removed dead and dying ash saplings. He took away the cuttings and debris to lower the fertility of the soil, making it easier for wild flowers to grow and harder for the long grasses and other vigorous plants. The 'thatch' of dead grasses lying over the soil has also been removed so the sites are ready for seeding and planting with 'plug plants' - these are basically pot plants which can grow up more quickly because they are rooted.

The prepared sites will be seeded and planted before the first frosts of the autumn so they will have a good chance of establishing over the autumn and winter ready for growth in the spring of 2022. Dougie Walters from the AONB and I are meeting on Monday 4th October on-site to plan the seeding and planting process with the intention of doing this using the AONB volunteers on Tuesday 5th October.

John is planning to prepare the third and biggest site, on the same side as the recycling bins but on the village side of the railway crossing, during w/b 4th October.

John reports that the preparation work has not been easy and I suspect it would have been beyond the scope of volunteers - or would have taken a much longer time to do a less professional job. On behalf of the WVWG, therefore, may I thank Councillors for moving and approving the extra funding for the work. Thanks also again to Councillors Chaffey and McSweeney for their generous contributions.

The planning for the beech hedge to disguise the recycling bins is also going well, with a quote from the provider of good plants obtained and a time frame in place. The cost of this is being met entirely by Paul Barnes and the planting will be done by Paul and Steve Porter.

We are thinking about the management regime for the sites after planting and seeding and WVWG is looking for sources of funding for future maintenance.

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