

Arnside Parish Council
Item 12 - Wildflower Verges Working Group
Update December 2021

The work on the wildflower verges project has now finished for 2021. The final activity, completed on Monday 13th December, was to plant a mixed hedge at the recycling site in Black Dyke Road. The intention is to disguise if not completely hide the row of recycling bins at one of the main entrances to the village. It will also improve amenity as well as providing a hedgerow habitat for nesting birds and other animals and some additional blossom for pollinators.

The hedge consists of green and copper beech, which will give all-year-round leaf cover, with dog rose and hawthorn interspersed to give spring and early summer blossom and autumn berries.

The site looks a little untidy just now because the turf that was lifted before planting has been replaced - but upside down! There is method in this apparent madness: if the turf was put back grass side up, the grasses would shoot away before the hedge has chance to grow in the spring; and the inverted turf will provide natural fertilizer and mulch to help the plants get established. Passers-by will also notice the somewhat ugly plastic tubes encasing some of the plants - these are for protection against nibblers and will be removed as the plants enlarge.

The plants will grow only slowly in their first year; they will spend much of their time in the spring of 2022 establishing a good root system. We are confident that most will survive but any gaps that appear will be filled in.

We hope this latest piece of the wildflower verges jigsaw will meet with everyone's approval. Whilst we were planting, several residents made very positive comments as they were visiting the recycling bins. We hope that, together with the treated verges opposite and on the village side of the level crossing, the hedge will provide a better welcome to our village for residents and visitors alike.

Finally, the Council expresses its very grateful thanks to Paul Barnes, a local resident, who paid for the plants and all their accoutrements and did much of the hard work of planting; and to Dougie Watson of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB, who has provided expert advice on this as well as all aspects of the wildflower verges project, and who, like Paul, digs a mean hole!

Look out for the first spring flowers in the verges at the recycling site and at Sandside Road in the spring!

Best wishes for the festive season and the New Year from all involved in the project.

SP
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