

Wild Verges Update February 2022 – Steve Porter

Hi all,

Happy New Year! Well, I think this the first bulletin on the verges for 2022. Just a few observations and thoughts for the next year of the work.

1 We have £1500 in the APC budget for verges work for the fiscal year 2022-3. This should be plenty and I hope we can raise some money from other sources so as not to draw on the Council's funds any more than strictly necessary. I remember Dougie saying there may be AONB money we might claim for and Paul mentioned the Barnes Trust as another income source.

2 My contact in Cumbria Wildlife Trust has given me some ideas for leaflets/ information boards - I'm thinking of the Beechwood in particular here, but there's no reason why we can't have info at all the verge sites - and some ideas on linking them through QR codes onto the APC website. Something to discuss when we next meet, I think.

3 I am meeting with APC colleagues tomorrow (Fri 4th) to meet our new contractor, John Lawrence's replacement, and management of the verges is on the agenda. To confirm, Dougie: we settled on a twice-yearly cutting regime for all three sites, spring and late summer/ early autumn. All cuttings removed from site, no chemicals/ other fertilisers applied: is this still OK?

4 The process of getting retrospective licences to allow us to do the work we've already done moves at plate tectonic speed but Pete McSweeney, bless him, has offered to help with the IT aspect of the submission. It is, he assures me, a formality. However, to be on the safe side, I propose to make no further public announcements on the project until the licences are safely delivered. I will keep you posted.

5 We need to decide what the next stages of the project might be. I am keen to expand it - I'm looking next at the whole of the Sandside Road verge to our boundary with Beetham (and perhaps look to involve Beetham in wilding their stretch of verge). For discussion and ideas.

6 Finally, I had a look at the recycling site verges and hedge yesterday and was delighted to see bulbs (I suspect *Narcissus*, probably not wild ones) shooting up all over, three clumps of Snowdrops (*Gallanthus nivalis*), all the hedge plants with buds that look to be moving and loads of the existing flora doing well (eg Cow Parsley, *Anthriscus sylvestris*, and [less welcome perhaps] Cleavers (*Galium aparine*)). The only issues are dog droppings and tyre tracks on the edge of the verge opposite the recycling bins. So looking good, I think.

Perhaps a meet next month? Main agenda item: planning for 2022. At the Fighting Cocks, Paul, you'll be delighted hear - C19 permitting.

Best wishes everyone, keep smiling..

Steve

With best wishes

Steve Porter

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