

Arnside Parish Council
Wildflower Verges Update
Autumn 2022

We are now well into the autumn and the dry hot summer is a distant memory. The rain over the past month to six weeks has replenished the ground water as can be seen by the springs once again running along the foreshore and elsewhere.

The three pilot verges have had their late year management cuts and the the arisings have been removed. All three verges look less rank than at this time last year indicating that the taller grasses have been inhibited, which is good progress for so early in the project. We are very pleased with the service we have had from our new contractor this year, Andy Brayshaw, and look forward to working with him on the project in the future.

The hedgerow planted to disguise the recycling bins on Blackdyke Road has had mixed fortunes - many of the beech shrubs have succumbed to the dry summer but the copper beeches look to have done better and the roses and hawthorns seem to be thriving. Some remedial work on this hedge is clearly necessary before the spring.

After a cancellation because of heavy rain, the Arnside School children have at last managed to get in their plug plants and scatter their wildflower seeds on the bare ground at the Beachwood left by the loss of the pines in Storm Arwen a year ago. Eight children from the school Ecogroup, accompanied by two teachers and guided by Dougie Watson of Arnside and Silverdale AONB, spent an hour working on the site on 2nd November. The site has been fenced off and an information board put up explaining what's happening. Passers-by have shown a lot of interest and support and the site has been respected, so far. The children really enjoyed the session and were very attentive and hard-working - and the event was greatly enlivened by the presence of the local robin, who helped by removing any worms and grubs the work turned up! Well done to Dougie for organising the bird! Dougie and the AONB volunteers will be on-site there again soon, carrying out the annual management cut of the wildflower bank.

The next phase in the Beachwood restoration is to plant some fruit trees to replace those lost in the winter last year. We have taken advice on suitable varieties for the locality and they are on order. They'll be planted before the end of the year ready for the spring of 2023. They will greatly improve the amenity of the site and help to restore Beachwood to its former role as an orchard.

Finally, as reported in the summer update, we are hoping to extend the wildflower verge along Sandside Road as far as the Parish boundary, to the point at which the Leighton Beck crosses the the road. We are looking at a way of funding this extension of the scheme and, if the bid is successful, the initial work will be done by the end of the year or early into next year. After that we hope to work with other local bodies to have a coordinated wildflower and pollinator plan for the future. There is still much to do!

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