



**Report No. 2024/06-03**

## **Provision of a Wildflower Meadow Report [Extension of Trial Area]**

**Report created by the Assistant Clerk (Victoria Fear)**

**To be considered by the Full Council on 27 June 2024**

### **Purpose**

This briefing paper outlines the benefits and legal considerations for the provision of a wildflower meadow within the parish, promoting biodiversity and enhancing community well-being.

### **Background**

Wildflower meadows are increasingly recognised for their ecological value, offering habitats for a variety of species and supporting pollinators. Establishing a wildflower meadow aligns with national biodiversity goals and can serve as an educational and recreational asset for the community. In England 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s.

Two trial areas (each measuring 10m x 15m, and covering 300m<sup>2</sup> in total) within Harry's Meadow were established in Summer 2023.



One of the two trial areas (rotavated in August 2023 and directly seeded with UK native wildflower mix in September 2023) was photographed above in early June 2024.

## Benefits

### 1. Biodiversity Enhancement:

- **Habitat Creation:** Wildflower meadows provide essential habitats for insects, birds, and small mammals, supporting a diverse ecosystem.
- **Pollinator Support:** Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators benefit from the rich variety of flowers, contributing to overall environmental health.
- **Ecological Resilience:** Diverse plant species enhance soil health and resilience against pests and diseases.

### 2. Community and Educational Value:

- **Recreational Space:** Offers a tranquil area for residents to enjoy nature.
- **Educational Opportunities:** Provides a living environment for local children and community groups to learn about, and appreciate, native flora and fauna.

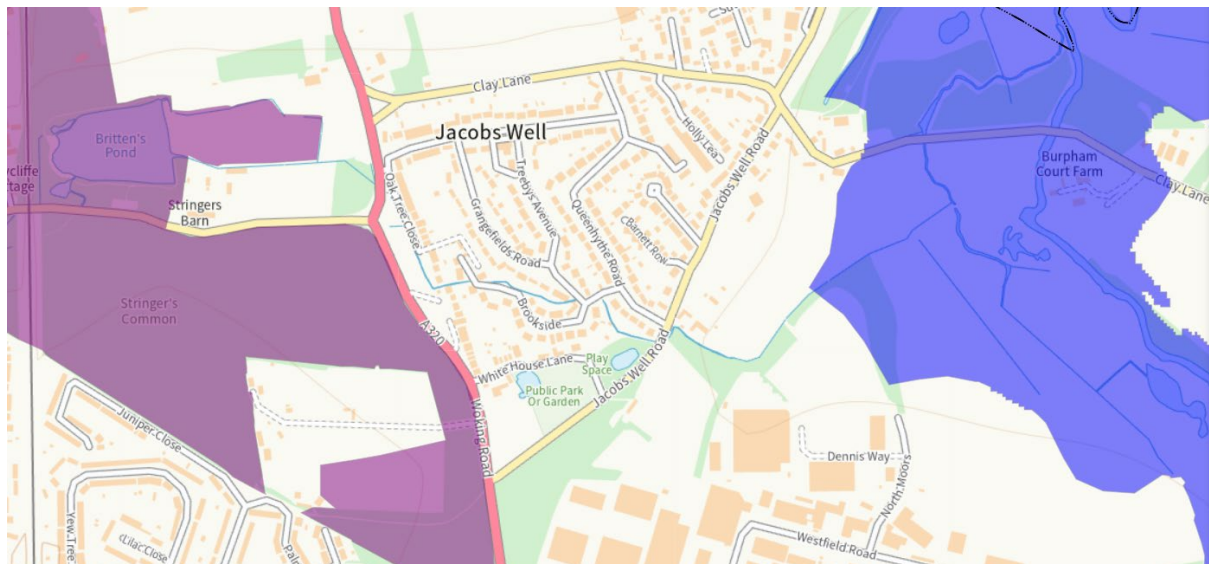
### 3. Environmental Impact:

- **Carbon Sequestration:** Meadows can act as carbon sinks, helping to mitigate climate change.
- **Reduced Maintenance:** Once established, meadows require less maintenance compared to traditional grass, reducing costs whilst benefitting the environment.

## Legal and Policy Framework

### 1. Biodiversity Duty:

- Under the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**, public authorities, including parish councils, have a duty to consider biodiversity in their functions. Establishing a wildflower meadow is a positive step towards fulfilling this duty. Harry's Meadow is located between two significant biodiversity opportunity areas:



The site is also within the SPA 400m to 5km buffer for Whitmoor Common.

### 2. Planning Policy:

- The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** encourages the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, emphasising the

importance of biodiversity. Development of a wildflower meadow aligns with these principles.

### 3. Local Initiatives:

- Local councils are encouraged to contribute to **Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)**, aiming to restore and enhance biodiversity at a local level. A wildflower meadow would be a significant contribution to these efforts.

### 4. Crime and Disorder:

- It is not envisaged that the provision of a wildflower area would have any effect on crime and disorder.

## Implementation Considerations

### 1. Site Selection:

- Choose an appropriate location within the confines of the existing meadow to extend the wildflower area.
- The proposed area is shown on the map below [outlined in red]:



Harry's Meadow covers approximately 2.17 hectares (21,700m<sup>2</sup>). The proposed wildflower area measures 7,350m<sup>2</sup>. This would represent approximately **34%** of the meadow being dedicated to encouraging **wildflowers**, whilst continuing to support the existing meadow species (approximately 66%).

By utilising the natural boundary created by existing well-used footpaths to form the perimeter of the proposed wildflower extension area it is not anticipated that fencing would be necessary. The cost of fencing would be prohibitive.

Additional signage would need to be displayed highlighting the negative impact of dog waste if it is not picked up and disposed of correctly.

## 2. Seed Selection:

- Use UK native wildflower species to ensure compatibility with local ecosystems and maximise biodiversity benefits.
- The seed purchased in 2023 for the trials undertaken within the meadow was a Restore and Enrich Wildflower Seed Mix (sourced from Boston Seeds). The mix contains 'carefully selected UK native wildflower species'.

Taken from the [Boston Seeds website](#):

### Restore & Enrich Wildflower Seed BSRE 100%

BSRE Restore & Enrich wildflower seeds mixture contains carefully selected UK native wildflower species. Choose this wildflower seed mix to restore biodiversity and improve habitat. Sow the seed into existing meadows or to brighten up grassy areas.

- ✓ The seeds should be sown into the soil not onto grass leaves
- ✓ Rake or remove thatch, and reduce thick swards or lawns
- ✓ A colourful mixture of twenty-two different annual & perennial wildflowers
- ✓ All species are listed by the RHS as 'Plants for Pollinators'.
- ✓ Sow at 3 grams per sq/m - 1kg covers 330sq/m
- ✓ Mixture contents and information (Image taken Aug, sown March)

Mixture Specification						
	Common Name	Latin Name	Quantity	Flowers	Height	Type
1	Bedstraw, Lady's	Galium verum	5%	Jun - Sep	50 - 80cm	Perennial
2	Black Medick	Medicago lupulina	3%	May - Oct	15 - 80cm	Annual
3	Burnet, Salad	Sanguisorba minor	5%	Jun - Sep	15 - 50cm	Perennial
4	Buttercup, Meadow	Ranunculus acris	6%	May - Jun	30 - 100cm	Perennial
5	Campion, Red	Silene dioica	6%	Apr - Sep	60 - 90cm	Perennial
6	Campion, White	Silene alba	5%	May - Oct	50 - 100cm	Perennial
7	Carrot, Wild	Daucus carota	4%	Jun - Oct	30 - 100cm	Perennial
8	Chamomile, Corn	Anthemis arvensis	3%	Jun - Jul	30 - 50cm	Annual
9	Corn Cockle	Agrostemma githago	9%	May - Aug	50 - 70cm	Annual
10	Cornflower	Centaurea cyanus	4%	Jun - Oct	20 - 80cm	Annual
11	Daisy, Ox-eye	Leucanthemum vulgare	5%	May - Sep	20 - 100cm	Perennial
12	Goatsbeard	Aruncus dioicus	4%	Jun - Aug	30 - 90cm	Perennial
13	Knapweed, Common	Centaurea nigra	7%	Jun - Sep	30 - 80cm	Perennial
14	Marigold, Corn	Chrysanthemum segetum	3%	Jun - Oct	30 - 50cm	Annual
15	Meadowsweet	Filipendula ulmaria	3%	Jun - Aug	80 - 200cm	Perennial
16	Poppy, Common	Papaver rhoeas	1%	May - Jul	50 - 70cm	Annual
17	Scabious, Field	Knautia arvensis	2%	Jul - Sep	30 - 200cm	Perennial
18	Self-heal	Prunella vulgaris	5%	Jun - Sep	15 - 30cm	Perennial
19	Sorrel, Common	Rumex acetosa	5%	May - Jul	30 - 100cm	Perennial
20	Trefoil, Bird's-foot	Lotus corniculatus	3%	Jun - Aug	10 - 40cm	Perennial
21	Vetch, Tufted	Vicia cracca	2%	Jun - Sep	100 - 150cm	Perennial
22	Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	2%	Jun - Oct	20 - 100cm	Perennial
23	Yellow Rattle	Rhinanthus minor	8%	Jun - Sep	25 - 50cm	Annual

### 3. Community Involvement:

- Continue to engage local residents in the process (communication through newsletters, social media posts, and interpretation board) to foster a sense of ownership and involvement.

### 4. Maintenance Plan:

- Develop a long-term maintenance plan, included in our Biodiversity Action Plans (which are site specific), to reflect periodic mowing and removal of invasive species to maintain the health and diversity of the meadow.
- This is a known 'tick' location. The proposal to extend the wildflower area would not exacerbate this issue. Ticks provide a vital source of nourishment for birds and numerous other animals. It is up to meadow visitors to take reasonable precautions with regard to ticks – i.e. wear light clothing, avoid patches of long grass and overhanging vegetation (keep to footpaths), tuck trousers into socks (if possible), wellies are a good defence, check themselves and any pets for ticks regularly, and be aware of the symptoms of Lyme borreliosis (also known as Lyme disease).

## Costs

### 1. To plough the area highlighted on the map [plough, roll with furrow press and power harrow, to create a fine tilth]:

- **Option 1: Contractor £400** quotation received (who would undertake the works using a tractor)
- **Option 2: Groundstaff and Councillors**  
For the trial areas a rotavator was hired for a period of three days costing **£37** (excl VAT). The Head Groundsman's time spent using the rotavator (3 days at £108.94 per day = **£326.82**) and then the subsequent time spent by the Head Groundsman and Cllr Snowball to break up the rotavated lumps with a spade (estimated 4 days to cover 300m<sup>2</sup>).  
If we were to pro-rata this based on the area the proposed wildflower extension would cover [25 times larger], it would cost an estimated **£9,000 to hire the rotavator and the staff time to operate it** (although it should be noted that this would remove Groundstaff from their normal duties, plus require significant councillor assistance).

### 2. To sow seeds:

- **Option A:** to sow the prepared soil with BSRE Restore and Enrich Wildflower Seed Mix in year 1 (Early Autumn 2024)  
22kg would be required to cover 7,350m<sup>2</sup>  
Cost **£3,360 plus preparatory costs**
- **Option B:** to sow 100% Yellow Rattle in Year 1 (Early Autumn 2024), and then sow BSRE Restore and Enrich Wildflower Seed mix in Year 2 (Early Autumn 2024) [this would require a second ploughing between Years 1 and 2 – at an additional cost of £400 (Option 1) or £9,000 (Option 2)]  
22kg would be required to cover 7,350m<sup>2</sup>  
Cost £6,198.60 [100% Yellow Rattle] plus £3,360 [BSRE Restore and Enrich Wildflower Seed Mix]  
Total cost **£9,958.60 plus 2 x preparatory costs**

## Conclusion

Establishing a wildflower meadow offers substantial ecological, educational, and recreational benefits. It aligns with statutory obligations under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and the new duties placed on the Parish Council under the Environment Act 2021, and supports both national and local biodiversity strategies. The Parish Council is encouraged to proceed with the provision of an extended wildflower meadow to enhance the natural environment and promote community well-being.

## Clerk's Recommendation

The Clerk's recommendation is to accept the quote from the contractor in the amount of **£400** to prepare the soil within the area highlighted in red on the plan within this report, and to proceed directly to sow the Wildflower Seed Mix on the soil (**£3,360**) without using 100% Yellow Rattle due to the prohibitive costs – Projected costs totalling: **£3,760**.

Funding to be sought from multiple opportunities including: Heritage Funding, COF, Open Spaces, Your Fund Surrey, Surrey Community Action – Rural Funding, and Suez Communities Trust.

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## References

1. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
3. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)
4. The Environment Act 2021

This summary report aims to provide the Parish Council with the necessary information to make an informed decision about the establishment of a wildflower meadow, promoting biodiversity and benefitting the community.

Prepared by: Victoria Fear, Assistant Clerk

Date: 21.06.2024