

Parish Council Meeting 6th Sept 2023

Jubilee Meadow Makers Working Group update

Note: The Working Group meeting provisionally scheduled for 31st August was cancelled



Jubilee Meadow Makers
making space for nature

1. Progress since last report

1.1. A professional plant survey was carried out by Jo Parmenter and her colleague on 26th July. They identified over 100 species and took our plant list for the Meadow to around 140 (depending on how you count microspecies, hybrids etc!). Although not directly comparable, this is a significant increase on the 40 species identified in the initial baseline survey carried out in May 2022 and indicates that we're making decent progress with our aim of increasing biodiversity.

1.2. The summer cut of the Meadow took place on 4th August and was followed by harrowing of some sections on the 23rd. This was the first work on the Meadow by Ribbonsdale Nurseries and Bob must be thanked for his helpful and considerate work.

1.3. An open community day was arranged around the delivery of the 'green hay' from NWT on 29th August. Our "Green Hay and Cakes on the Meadow" event was well attended by visitors of all ages who helped sow seeds, spread the green hay, take part in the craft activities (including making paper flowers, colouring in a butterfly or bug or making a bookmark) and meeting some of the wildlife (including a display of moths trapped the previous night and hunting for bugs). Through donations and the sale of refreshments (including a fantastic spread of homemade cakes and savouries made by Meadow Makers) we made £57.29 towards the Meadow budget.

1.4 As a result of the event, we have a section (Area 1c) that has been enhanced with 'green hay' collected from roadside verge reserves from Bedingham near Topcroft and seeds collected elsewhere in S.Norfolk. Also an area of weed suppressant membrane has been removed to create a wildflower strip sown with a commercial seed mix aimed to produce a colourful pollinator friendly display.

1.5 Apart from the plant surveys, regular bird monitoring has continued (58 species have been recorded so far this year) and the Meadow butterfly list is now up to 19 with a notable increase in some species including Meadow Brown (maximum 2023 weekly count of 52 compared to 22 last year), Gatekeeper (61/19) and Brown Argus (17/2) although disappointingly we did not record Ringlet this year (maximum of 2 last year). Other notable 'finds' have been Bee Wolf wasps colonising the soakaway, a Bee Orchid by the soakaway, a number of specimens of Dwarf Spurge (an unspectacular plant but with a limited distribution in Norfolk), a Norfolk Hawker dragonfly and at least 3 female Wasp Spiders. It was pleasing to see Blue Tits fledged from at least three of the nest boxes put up around the Meadow and Jackdaws bred successfully in the Tawny Owl box. In preparation for the 'Green Hay' event a moth trap was run on the Meadow and 28 species were attracted in a couple of hours.

2. Forthcoming

2.1 Planting. We will be working through the agreed planting work-plan which will include:

- Turning and raking the hay in Area 1c
- Planting about 500 NWT provided plug-plants that were delivered too late to plant in spring
- Patch seed areas with brought buttercup and cowslip seeds and other collected seeds
- Planting crocus bulbs in autumn
- Purchasing and planting ‘in the green’ bulbs in spring
- A winter cut is anticipated and budgeted for (given the vigorous grass growth this will be essential)

In addition an area of the Long Lane verge at the car park entrance has been lightly harrowed with the intention of patch seeding with wildflower seeds and we may also enhance the cycle track ‘oval’.

A bid has been submitted to the Woodland Trust for a pack of 30 hedge saplings to infill losses in the Harrold Place hedgeline. In addition we aim to acquire some Purgung Buckthorn (the Brimstone butterfly food plant).

2.2. Promotion and activities. Embers have suggested holding a ‘nocturnal’ event on the Meadow in October - further details have been requested.

3. Resources

3.1 The programme of regular Meadow Maker work sessions has worked well (evening of first Wed of the month & morning of third Mon of the month) and we have benefitted from having two members of the team who work for Aviva using their volunteering hours on the Meadow.

3.2 Allowing for a winter cut of the Meadow and planned purchase of bulbs we estimate that we still have a balance of £114 including the receipts from the Green Hay event.

4. Issues

4.1. As noted above, a winter cut of the Meadow will be required. Tractor and attachment access will be required to the Meadow during works on the Pavilion.

4.2. Arisings have been put along the playing field hedge at the back of the ‘forage strip’. This however may not be a sustainable solution going forward.

Dave Jones

Meadow Makers Working Group (2nd September 2023)