

Sustainable Thornbury AGM 20 June 2018

Morton Bridge Wildflower Meadow – Annual Report

This is an addendum to Marian's concise and comprehensive report for Orchard Group.

The Scything training day was a major meadow event training local volunteers.

The Open Day a great success with interest in the quiz which focussed on the fruits and wildlife found in the Orchard and Meadow by means of lots of A4 laminated photographs with captions.

It is I think appropriate again to state the great achievement by all in creating the Wildflower Meadow. We not only achieved RHS Its Your Neighbourhood level 5 award, the highest possible in our first year of entry, but more amazingly the Monk Trophy for Best Native Planting from RHS South West in Bloom! Please do not expect the same level of success this year although the meadow is progressing well.

The RHS national judge said 'that is the best meadow of yellow rattle I have seen'. Special thanks to all those who contributed starting with those who first gave us some yellow rattle seeds.

In addition, aside from a special life time achievement award given by Thornbury in Bloom, we won their highest honour the Chairman's Cup. We sat all through the certificates and cups only to receive our two awards at the end of proceedings. We do not do it for the cups but it is nice to be recognised.

As Marian said Thornbury won their category in SW In Bloom. It was a close run thing with Falmouth and we scored maximum points I have heard, so the meadow surely made the difference.

Marian mentioned the increase in volunteers and the "men's section". These men not only repaired the meadow wall but straightened and cleaned the streamside sign. Erected a new fence at the Orchard end of the meadow from wood I saved when the old fence was replaced at the Road end.

South Gloucestershire council provided sand and cement and the men even made and fitted a gate.

I was kept busy at our blossom open day with people asking about the meadow and how we did it. Several local people want to start their own either on their own or public land. It may be there is enough interest and support to extend our activities to another local site in addition.

There is renewed activity along Morton Way and the Butterfly Bank and Thornbury In Bloom have found funding for a sign there.

I have shared my meadow concept plan with South Gloucestershire several times and have recently heard back that they are researching a seat for the meadow should we want one. My concept plan shows a circular seat around our one tree. South Gloucestershire have said they would support us in a funding bid. Any seat would need to be robust and have minimal impact, so I favour a strong but light framed metal construction which allow light and rain to reach plants around the tree.

All the seeds we planted almost two years ago now are making themselves known, a few annuals from last year have reseeded in the margins by the road and around the edge of the meadow. All the perennials are, as should be, becoming prominent in this second year. Red Champion, Ragged Robin, buttercups, wild red clover, ox-eye daisies, etc. have all appeared as expected. We are getting some lovely grasses also and the yellow rattle is strong again and flowering.

We are maintaining the public pathway with Scythes in an attempt to keep the rest of the meadow as free from trampling as possible. We will need to cut the meadow again in late August or early September once seeds are set then clear off the cuttings.

John Mills 2018