



Greening Wymondham

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November 2021

Introduction

Nicola Maunders

The last six months have seen Greening Wymondham coming out of hibernation and re-commencing some of our activities as well as starting up some new projects.

We have continued to work at Ketts Park with The Norwich Fringe Project to assist the management of the woodland there and work on path improvements to enable the area to be more accessible. In addition we have undertaken bulb planting at Ketts Park to encourage wildlife and in particular the bee population.

One of our group has organised for every Y6 school child to be given a tree to plant and we are continuing to offer support to the children and schools to ensure those trees are planted.

Greening Wymondham has organised another successful Town Litter Pick and in the coming months we are to commence the development of a community orchard in the Browick Road area.

Free Trees for Wymondham Pupils

Jay Andrews



"We love trees, we love trees!" A heart-warming chant broke out after Y6 pupils at Robert Kett Primary School received a free tree each from Greening Wymondham.

Nearly 200 saplings were handed out to students from Robert Kett, Browick Road and Ashleigh schools. The project was the brainchild of Greening Wymondham's Mary Howard. "It's a tangible way of helping children understand and care for the environment," she says. "As the plants grow, they help fight climate change, reduce flooding, encourage wildlife. And give pleasure."

Mary chose the plants bought from The Woodland Trust so they were suitable for small gardens, including hazel, juniper, and native roses. Some were suitable for pots and each pupil had a guide to planting and keeping them.

"It's a wonderful way of reinforcing what they learn at school," says Robert Kett's headteacher, Carla Fahy. "They're still talking about their trees!". And for those students who have nowhere to put the saplings, Greening Wymondham are working with all three primary schools to plan areas for those trees to go.

In early 2020, Greening Wymondham successfully lobbied the town council for a "No Mow Strip" and a halt to summer mowing of a long narrow strip of land between the front of Kett's Wood and the parallel public footpath in the park. The "No Mow Strip" is part of Greening Wymondham's project to improve diversity at Kett's Park Wood and we are very pleased to report that, so far, this is a success story.



The No Mow Strip, June 2021

Thanks are due to the town councillors who supported Greening Wymondham's request and town clerk, Mr. Gurney plus the park maintenance contractors who have facilitated our request.

The objective is to build up a species rich wildflower meadow strip and results this year have been very encouraging. In June there was a spectacular display of buttercups which attracted many types of bees and all sorts of insects, improving the biodiversity of our local environment to benefit us all. This flowering diversity carried on into July and August with other bee and insect friendly plants such as Bugle and Clovers. So, next year, please stop, take a few minutes to scrutinise an area of the meadow and be amazed at just how many bees and insects are feeding in the meadow.

Bulb Planting - why plant bulbs at Kett's Wood?

As a young and densely planted wood, Kett's Wood has never really developed the early flowering species which bees and other insects rely upon in the Spring. We are attempting to redress this by planting a few native bulb species which insects love and we believe will do well in Wymondham. By providing nectar and pollen plants we are helping our own future as we - the community - need bees and other pollinating insects.

Greening Wymondham held 2 successful community bulb planting sessions on 10th and 17th October. Bulbs were planted in the Wood's meadows and beside paths as well as the No Mow Strip.



Bulb Planting, Kett's Wood, October 2021

Many thanks to all the Greening Wymondham supporters and friends who turned out to help plant the bulbs.

We have planted pollen and nectar rich native wildflower bulbs. A spring continuity of flowering native bulbs to improve the diversity and assist our bees and insects. The bulbs included: 100 Winter Aconite which flower in March - emerging Queen Bees will seek out the flowers. 500 Snakes Head Fritillary, flowering in April, beneficial to many Bee species and early insects. 500 Ramsoms, flowering late May - beloved of just about every sort of insect from the largest Bumblebee to the smallest fly. We hope in Spring 2022 visitors to the Wood will be rewarded with the sight of these plants in flower with plenty of Bees and insects actively seeking pollen and nectar.

A little bit of history (for any new readers of *Greening Wymondham* newsletters): Prior to 2019 the woodland path was a winter mud fest, churned up and avoided by all but the hardest of dog walkers. Fundraising by *GW* with the councils permission and a contribution enable the hard-core path to be opened with the promise of all year walking in 2019. Alas in 2020: The wettest winter in decades, the path churned up and sections subjected to inundations. And in 2021: Not to be outdone, winter 2021 proved even wetter than 2020. Sections of the meadow flooded (water trapped by improvements made to the path the previous summer). In places the top surface (particularly at the entrances to the wood) semi-slurried as water levels in the park rose.

This summer *Greening Wymondham* under the direction of the Norwich Fringe Project with funding from the Town Council set about necessary upgrades - in modern parlance, upgrades 2.1 and 2.1

Upgrade 2.1

June 2021: *Greening Wymondham* volunteers spent a day installing drainage pipes under the path. Hard work with picks and shovels. Laying the ground works for the second phase of works.

It is planned that the water will drain to the ditch further into the woodland and towards the houses from the Harts Farm estate thereby making it dryer in the area between the path and the main field



Installing a drain across the path

Upgrade 2.2

Over 5 days in August, volunteers from *Greening Wymondham* together with an influx of Norwich Fringe volunteers laid tonnes of hard-core. They raised the height of the path, including a better camber to aid water runoff and resist winter deterioration to the path. The results are impressive and we hope will reduce the need for major repairs in the future.



Raising the height of the woodland path



An idea of the amount of hard-core required

Special Mentions

Greening Wymondham are indebted to the Norwich Fringe Project Manager Matt Davies and the Fringe Volunteers, without whom these works wouldn't have taken place. Special thanks also to Peter from Greening Wymondham who supported Matt, lobbied for funding and organised us locals. We must also thank the Wymondham Town Council for funding the upgrade.

Amenity Asset

The path is an outstanding amenity asset and benefit to all Wymondham residents as a recreation facility. Worth the expense for the wellbeing and health benefits to all town residents.

Many visitors comment and tell us on how nice a walk through the wood is, oblivious of the muddy mess which used to exist.

A Plea to Path Users and Greening Wymondham Supporters

Please mention how pleased you are with the path and the wood amenity to town councillors you happen to know or meet.

Going forward, obtaining ongoing funds from the council for maintenance and improvements to Kett's park wood in 2020-21 was difficult. **Funding** for Volunteer working days with Norwich Fringe have been **halved**. We will be working one day a month instead of two this winter.

The wood and path is a far more popular place thanks to the hard-core path and ongoing efforts of Greening Wymondham and the Norwich Fringe Project.

Future Work Days

Interested in learning about woodland management?

Want to get out into the fresh air in pleasant surroundings

and contribute to the community, improve the wood and encourage wildlife?

Dates as follows: Dec 7th; Jan 11th; Feb 8th; March 1st. 9.30am until 3pm

Bring a pair of gloves.

Meet at the start of the woodland path

Parking in the Community Centre car park off Harts Farm Road.

Contact Peter via email greening.wymondham@gmail.com for further information or just turn up!

Big Wymondham Autumn Litter Pick

Peter Knights

Having not held a Town litter pick since 2019 it was great to once again be able to do so. Prior to Covid this had become a popular biannual event in the Wymondham calendar.

The 'Big Wymondham Autumn Litter Pick' was based at the Baptist Church in Queen Street and approximately 30 enthusiastic volunteers turned out and collected 20 bags of litter with tea and cake on hand on their return.

There were the normal litter suspects, drinks cans and plastic bottles topping the list with used face masks unfortunately becoming a new challenger. However it was encouraging to hear overall that the amount of litter was not as bad as in previous years.

A big thank you to everyone who turned out, to the Baptist Church for hosting us and Morrisons for supplying refreshments.

Finally an early 'heads up' to all that we will be holding another town litter pick in the Spring.

Greening Wymondham Go Balsam Bashing

Jay Andrews

"Extreme gardening" is how volunteer Graham Welsby described an hour and a half on the banks of the Tiffey in Abbey Park, trying to control Himalayam Balsam.

Himalayam Balsam is a giant relative of Busy Lizzie (impatiens). It is a very pretty pink flowered plant that grows between 2-4 metres, mainly along river banks. Another Victorian import like Japanese Knotweed that bedevils our countryside. "The problem is," says Jay Andrews who organised the Bashing, "that it outgrows other plants and when it dies back, leaves river banks bare and eroding. "It can lead to more intense flooding and means animals who use the banks for nesting are in peril."



There are more huge stands of the plant downstream on the right bank of the Tiffey which Greening Wymondham hope to tackle next year with permission from the landowners. There are companies who deal with it but the cost and chemicals put it off the table for those who love rivers.

Six people - two in the river, two hauling it out along steep banks and two bagging the plants up - managed to do a great job.

The Himalayan Balsam can then be disposed of if prior to seeds being developed in normal composting routes or if seeds are present through incineration.

Scythes & Scything

Andy Speller



Last summer several volunteers from Greening Wymondham attended a Scything course in nearby Wreningham. Learning how to set up the scythe, the correct posture and technique. The group have now purchased a scythe and successfully used this in the autumn, cutting back two wildflower verge-side areas (projects which are ongoing in the town).

Once into a rhythm, scything is a very efficient way of cutting sward and uses human energy - not natural resources, so very environmentally friendly.

Lizard Work Days

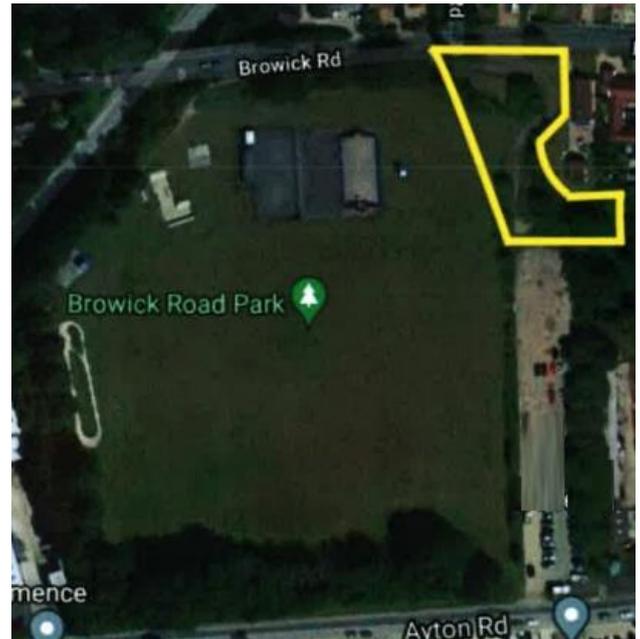
Jeannie Harris

These are all Tuesdays starting at 9.30am with a finish time of about 3pm - again come for as long as you feel you can - these are on 16th & 30th Nov, 14th Dec, 25th Jan, 1st & 22nd Feb, 8th & 22nd Mar meeting by gates to the Lizard.

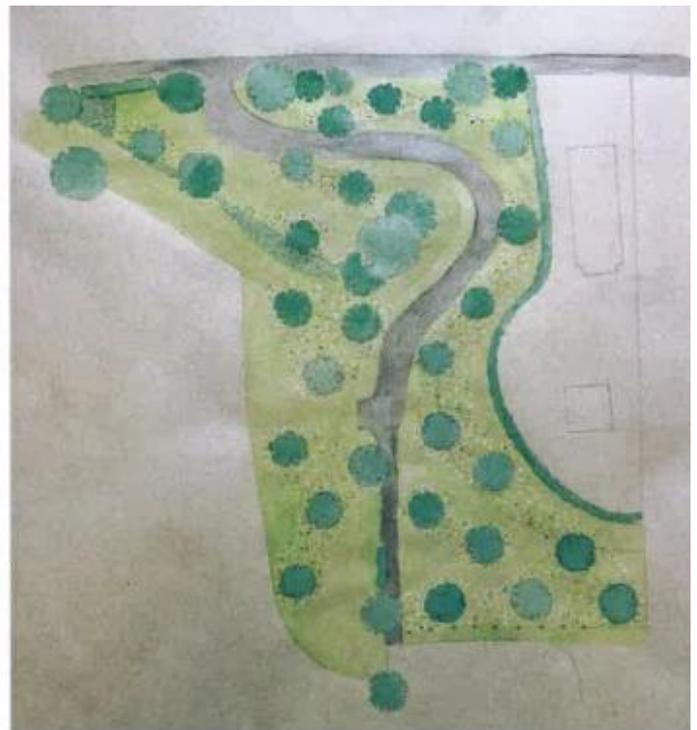
Following the successful presentation to Town Councillors at the September full council meeting Greening Wymondham are very pleased to announce this exciting project opportunity.

The vision is to create a Community Orchard for Wymondham by the community for the community. The plan being to plant 25-30 local heritage variety fruit trees to include apple, pear, mulberry, plum, quince and medlar, surrounded by wildflowers creating a biodiverse place for community activities and a green haven in which to relax.

The location is a partly neglected area on the eastern border of the Browick Road Recreation Ground, shown to the right.



CURRENT AREA



PROPOSED PLAN

All work and ongoing management will be carried out by volunteers over the next year with Greening Wymondham funding the project.

Following a public meeting at the site where 40 people attended, work has already commenced with a fantastic turnout of volunteers, who have cleared areas of turf, planted over 400 native daffodil bulbs, sown wildflower seed and not to mention some scrub clearance.

Want to get involved? Work is carried out on selected Saturdays between 10am & 12noon, everyone is welcome so for further details including the next dates visit the Greening Wymondham website. Should you wish to be involved with this please e-mail greening.wymondham@gmail.com.

Following on from the government initiative to offer grants, I'd previously heard of Air Source Heat Pumps from a friend's installation, I was intrigued to want to understand how they worked and whether such a change of heating energy was relatively straight forward switch (from gas or oil) utilising existing radiators & hot water systems. My friend told me his experiences and in essence, much more forward planning is necessary from the sounds of it.

So an Air Source Heat pump basically works like an air conditioning unit in reverse - so quite an established technology. (There are Ground source heat pumps which it's believed are more efficient but much more expensive to install - see the project occurring at <https://heatingswaffhamprior.co.uk/>)

My friend used a company they had dealt with previously who installed a Mechanical Ventilation system for them. My friend had always wondered what they would do when their Gas Combi boiler came to the end of it's life and whether they could get a 'greener' alternative and so made enquiries, the outcome of which was they were recommended the Air Source Heat Pump.

The investigations revealed some complexities,

- the system differs from a gas system in the sense that the heating of water is much slower with the central heating being at a lower temp from what would be produced from a gas boiler, the outcome being that the system runs continually but with larger radiators.
- Extra equipment had to be housed - an insulated hot water tank, small insulated cold water tank, small expansion tank - this wouldn't fit in the existing airing cupboard and had to be housed in the garage.
- A water softener was also recommended
- The old boiler had to be removed by a gas fitter (so not necessarily the installers of the air source heat pump installers.
- There will be some making do after items are removed & others installed.
- The installation cost circa £16,000 (and at the time there were Government grants which are no longer available).
- My friend is aware that there are some "cowboy" installers of these schemes, so beware.
- The external unit is big - see the picture with dimensions 141cm high x 128cm wide x 33cm deep - as this had to adhere to government regulations (due to the grant)
- Whether my friend could have managed with a smaller unit without the need for larger radiators was not considered as the size was driven by government regulations (and as such may not be applicable now)
- The external unit can be slightly noisy but for them is well away from their house (again there are government regulations about not disturbing neighbours).
- The planning of the change was quite significant, so waiting until the old gas boiler fails might not be the best option.
- Currently my friend does not expect the air source heat pump to be cheaper than the gas boiler as gas is currently cheap - but that is not likely to be always the case - as recently proved.

