

Trial planting in Shamley Green... for wildlife and villagers

Last week saw volunteers led by the Shamley Green Environment Group plant thousands of bulbs as well as wildflower seed, plugs and turf on small areas of common land around the village. The group selected a few trial sites as an experiment and, if successful, hope to add more to enhance our village in the future. We will see next year which are most successful and build on that. The sites this year include common land between the Bricklayers and the Shrubbery, the village green end of Hullmead and on Lords Hill. While not common land, bulbs were also planted near the main road at the end of Nursery Hill. Later this winter some trees largely for wildlife, probably varieties of hawthorn and crabapple, will be added near Lords Hill. We hope to link this to the Queens Green Canopy initiative to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

The aim is to enhance the village for both people and wildlife. We had expert advice from Professor James Hitchmough of Sheffield University and others. Both Prof Hitchmough and a recent entomological survey concluded that common land in Shamley Green is very species poor in terms of both vegetation and insects, and by implication other wildlife. This is due to decades of excessive mowing by the council at the wrong time of year, and is in contrast to areas such as The Platt in Womersley which has never been mown and therefore has much greater biodiversity.

Our initiative has been made possible by a substantial donation from a generous villager, and in the Bricklayers area by kind donations from near neighbours in memory of three very long-standing and much loved residents that we have lost over the last year. Interestingly Prince Charles has recently suggested communities plant hedges and trees in memory of those lost to Covid.

We hope that this is just the beginning of a longer term project to enhance biodiversity in our village - and also make it an even better village in which to live.

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