

August 2020—Planting the wildlife Rich Grassland at Butlin’s Hill

We are pleased that the Parish Council supported the planting of wild flowers on part of the Butlin’s Hill verge. August, particularly the heatwave at the start of the month, was not the ideal time to do this. We did the planting at this time because the plants became available at no cost.



Bragborough Farm gave us more than 80 plants consisting of bird's-foot trefoil, wild carrot, knapweed, oxeye daisy, campion and crimson clover, all flowering plants naturally found in this area.

The week after planting was very hot and dry, so it took regular watering to keep the plants alive. A few may not survive the transplanting but the more recent rain has helped.

As flowering plants they will attract more butterflies, grasshoppers, shield bugs, spiders and moths. The taller plants will provide cover for small mammals. Birds should benefit from a wider food supply.

Instead of being mown every week, the area will be cut twice a year, thereby avoiding much of the emissions currently generated. A strip next to the road will be kept short.



After a few weeks to allow the plants to develop their roots they will be cut back and the area will be mown in mid-September.

Cutting back at that time helps the plants establish and get stronger.



The area will be mown again in early spring. Removing the grass cuttings will reduce the fertility of the soil. The flowering plants prefer a less fertile soil so this process will allow them to steadily spread within the area where we have planted them.

It takes about 4 years of this type of management for a flowery sward to look its best. In the first couple of years it may not look particularly colourful but amongst the flowering plants there will be the seed heads of fine grasses which are also beneficial for wildlife.

Thank you for the positive comments about the planting. The volunteers who did the work appreciate this. Do get in touch if you are able to help with the project. If you can identify different species of flowers, butterflies and bugs your knowledge could help us survey the area. It would be good to accumulate a record of the increasing biodiversity.

We are a group of about twenty Braunston residents working to reduce the carbon emissions of the village and beyond. If you are interested in joining us, please message 07989 421836 or 07554 264742. Please let us know if you would like to receive our email updates.