



Wild About Barrow

29th March 2021

Seeds of Change

Wild About Barrow has just finished the long awaited sowing of wildflower seeds in the Millennium Park.

Over the last week two volunteers have been busy scarifying and sowing seed on the bank facing Fishpool Way.

It was originally intended that this would be done last Spring but the Covid pandemic put a stop to that. The next date was last autumn but again this was not possible. Finally, this March and in accordance with lockdown rules, two ladies set to work. "It was very disappointing not to be able to go ahead earlier but it's even more satisfying to have completed the sowing now," says Annette Richardson, Chair of Barrow in Bloom (BiB) who has been the inspiration behind this project.



Annette Richardson putting in a sign

The first step was to prepare the ground which involved cutting the grass and then scarifying and raking to expose the soil. "This took several days and the bank became our outdoor gym!" said Alison Rushton, Treasurer of BiB.



Signs made by Volunteers to protect wildflowers

The seeds were mixed with sand to make it easier to spread the seeds more evenly.

Two seed mixes were used. One aims to support pollinators such as bees, butterflies and other insects and the other, which is for more shaded areas, is aimed at birds. So look out for treats such as knapweed, ox-eye daisies and borage lining part of the park's path this summer.

The pollinator seeds chosen are recommended by the Royal Horticultural Society as perfect for pollinators. Did you know that some flowers take as much as 24 hours to replenish their supply of nectar whereas borage takes only 2 minutes? Insects are sure to love this

plant! The bird friendly seeds include plants that will be an important source of food for birds that overwinter here.

The plants will take several years to develop and look their best so we have to be patient. Attractive signs, all designed and made by volunteers, have been put in to let people know that the bank is being managed for wildlife and also as a reminder not to mow there.



At the end of summer, after the plants have set seed, they will be cut down and the cuttings removed or left under the trees. This is to keep the soil poor in nutrients as this benefits the wildflowers and not grasses.



Alison Rushton enjoying a well-earned break

Wildflowers in the UK have suffered devastating losses in the last century. 98 per cent of ancient wildflower meadows have been destroyed since the 1970s according to Somerset Wildlife Trust. There is also evidence that insects in the UK have fallen by 50 per cent since 1970 which is worrying since we depend on them to fertilize about three quarters of our food crops such as apples and beans. The good news is that it is not too late and populations can rapidly recover. We can all play a part by giving nature space in our back gardens and stopping using herbicides and pesticides.

Every space in Britain must be used to help wildlife" Sir David Attenborough

Britain in Bloom has 3 core areas: horticultural achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation. **WAB** is dedicated to the second area but we can't do this without you. If you would like to volunteer check out our pages on Barrow upon Soar village website or our Facebook group, or email **WAB**. We look forward to the help of volunteers just as soon as current restrictions allow.



Bank sown with wildflower seeds

Think global: act local
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