

# WYMONDHAM IN BLOOM

## 2023 Portfolio



*The Market Cross, June 2023*



## Contents and Introduction

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Wymondham – pronounced Windham – is the largest market town in South Norfolk, with ~17,500 residents. The town is full of history and charm with its medieval Market Cross (now a Tourist Information Centre), timber framed shops and houses in the town centre, an Abbey – which began life as a monastery in 1107 – and the 14<sup>th</sup> century built Green Dragon pub, to name just some of its many attractions.

Laying as it does, in the A11 technology corridor between Cambridge and Norwich, the town proves attractive to families who move to the many new build estates for the transport links, job opportunities in the town and nearby, and highly rated schools. Our older residents benefit from the wide range of clubs and activities and community groups and good care homes.

As with many developing towns demand on infrastructure is high and council budgets do not grow at the same pace. Our In Bloom efforts rely heavily on volunteers and community spirit. Luckily Wymondham has community spirit in abundance, and we are proud to showcase some of our dedicated volunteers' work here.

Our approach to compiling the portfolio is to engage with the many volunteers and groups who assist the Wymondham in Bloom Committee and ask them to write their 'Annual Reports' for us to use. We edit as little as possible because we believe our supporters deserve to be heard in their own words. All contributors have been asked to base their contributions around the three main principles behind the Anglia in Bloom Campaign, namely:

**Horticultural Achievement**  
**Environmental Responsibility**  
**Community Participation**

We have worked really hard on litter picking and, especially, weeding as they were our weakest points last year. Two AIB Silver Gilt awards so far. Now it is time for GOLD!



*Priory gardens, June 2023*

## Wymondham in Bloom Committee & Team Members

### Committee:

Janet Benjafield – Business liaison, volunteer

Kim Carsok – Founder and Coordinator, District Councillor, volunteer and our team's driving force!

Paula Gorst – Planting scheme design, volunteer, business competition lead

Diana Grant – Station adopter, community litter pick organiser, planting scheme design, business liaison, Town Council liaison, volunteer

Annette James – Deputy Mayor and Town Council liaison, Lizard

Charity Trustee, planting scheme design, volunteer

### Wider team members:

John Beckett – Warden of Toll's Meadow

Lesley Clarke – Garden designer

Mary Howard – Leader of Wymondham Growing Together (Vegepod)

Andrew Howell – Chair of Wymondham Garden Club, partner organisation

Hilary Hunter – Abbey herb gardener

Nicola Maunders – Chair of Greening Wymondham, partner organisation

Janis Raynsford – plants woman, Priory Gardens and Chandler's Hill maintenance, volunteer

Jacquie Tobin – social media promotion, volunteer

Our regular volunteers including but not limited to – Caroline Evans, Ian Gorst, Chris Grant, Janet Stevens, Lionel, Mary Primrose, Nina Wayte, Susan Savage, Chris White



Volunteers Jacquie, Lionel and Nina, Spring 2023

## Information on Themes

For 2023 our theme is 'incredible edibles' – focusing on one of our favourite topics – food.

Participants can incorporate edible plants into their displays by using tomatoes, herbs, strawberries, chillies and more. Or they might be inspired to upcycle used food containers or pots and pans into planters. For simple inspiration bloomers could even simply choose some flowers named after our favourite foods. The town council planters contain tomatoes, strawberries and herbs as well as edible flowers such as nasturtiums and we are encouraging residents to help themselves. The aim is to encourage healthy eating and compliment the town's Vegepod.



Diana getting ready for planting, May 2023



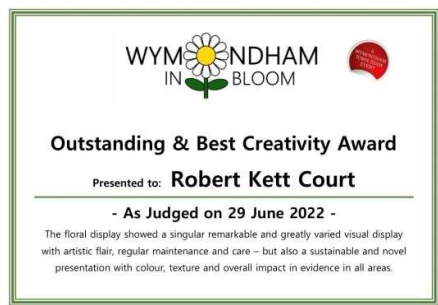
Replanted Vegepod, April 2023



Strawberry planter, June 2023

## Review of the Past Year

<i>July 2022:</i> litter picking (youth volunteers), Wymondham In Bloom Award winners announced, Anglia In Bloom judging.	<i>January 2023:</i> Christmas lights taken down by volunteers, initial planning for WIB/AIB begins.
<i>August:</i> Home Frontage competition winner announced, WIB Awards Ceremony – winners of special categories receive certificates and prizes.	<i>February:</i> WIB planning meeting, community orchard tree planting session, Greening Wymondham (GW) consult locals on plans for Rothbury Park.
<i>September:</i> Anglia in Bloom results, Great Big Green Week, sunflower competition judging and prize giving, businesses begin removing hanging baskets.	<i>March:</i> Community seed swap, Browick Rec redevelopment public consultation, community litter pick, AIB launch event, WIB design planting schemes and meet with Town Council for planter planning.
<i>October:</i> Halloween Trick or Treat Trail, Hedgehog Haven stall at the Farmers Market, AIB Awards ceremony, Autumn planter spruce up sessions start, Home Frontage Competition winner prize giving.	<i>April:</i> Hedgehog Haven stall at the Farmers Market, GW's 'A butterfly Future?' event, plant order placed and volunteers plant up Town Council planters, WIB 2023 business competition launches, Vegepod replanted, ongoing weeding and litter picking, WIB's own FB page launched.
<i>November:</i> WIB 2023 kick off meeting, Vegepod replanted, Remembrance Day (War Memorial planting renewed/refreshed).	<i>May:</i> WIB team visit Brandon, GW present plans for Rothbury Park redevelopment to WTC, volunteers plant up town council planters, ongoing weeding and litter picking.
<i>December:</i> Abbey Christmas Tree Festival, Wynterfest, Christmas lights installed by volunteers.	<i>June:</i> WIB team visit Hunstanton, WIB plant stall at Food and Drink Festival, Wymondham Nature Group promote 'Go Wild for 30 days', Great Big Green Week, GW wins the 'Group' category Norfolk Biodiversity Awards 2023, Love your Burial Ground and Count on Nature Week, ongoing weeding and litter picking.

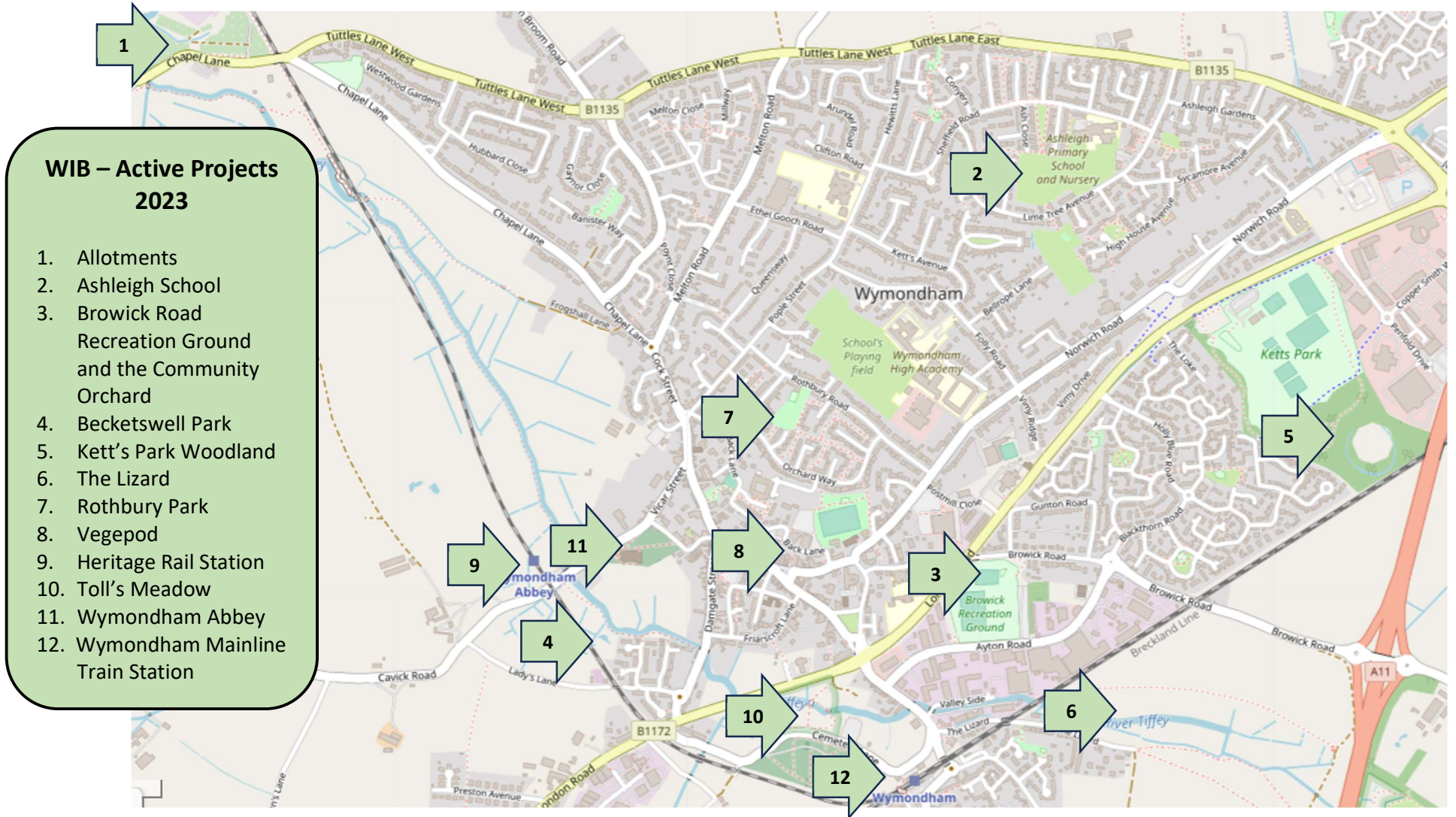


One of last year's WIB winning entries: RKC assisted living scheme's 'The Queen and Paddington Bear Take Tea', June 2022



## Wymondham in Bloom Map 2023

Shows the location of the main Portfolio projects. Please note: these are **NOT** necessarily on the judging route



## Active Projects and Partner Organisations

Wymondham in Bloom works with, promotes and supports, many of the following organisations and community groups with their projects.

### Allotments

Wymondham Town Council (WTC) has one leased allotment site which is situated on the edge of the town. Some are full 10 rod plots and others half sized at 5 rod; there are 130 allotments in total. Demand is high and there is an extensive waiting list.

#### Horticultural Practice:

- Food production
- Plant swapping
- The experienced teach the novice
- An active allotment holders' association promotes best practice.



*If only all plots were as well tended as this one! June 2023*

#### Environmental Responsibility:

- Birds and pollinators are actively encouraged with feeders and bee friendly plants
- There are untouched damp ditches forming wildlife corridors leading to the river
- Low food miles
- An arrangement with the landowners means allotment holders responsibly extract water from the river to meet most of their watering needs, plus water storage units are used
- South Norfolk's decommissioned pandemic traffic control planters were moved here from the town centre and replanted by allotment holders.



*Relocated Town Centre pandemic planter in its new home, June 2023*

#### Community Participation:

- The allotment holders' association raises money by holding monthly bacon buttie mornings at The Plotting Shed; this attracts local townspeople and encourages learning about growing as a result
- Plot holders hold open days where all residents are welcome. They sell produce, plants and refreshments, and some open their allotments to visitors where they give growing advice
- Spare produce is collected by WIB Committee member Annette during the summer months for the town's foodbank. **In 2022 a total of just over 24 stones (152 kg) of produce was donated to the foodbank**, improving service users' access to nutritious fresh fruit and vegetables. This was down by 13 stones (82 kg) on the previous year; no doubt due to the impact of the long, extremely hot, summer.

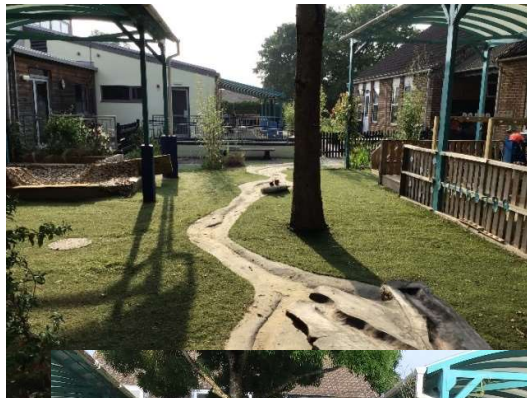


*Annette with the food donations box, June 2023*

## Ashleigh School Outdoor Learning Area

During the last 8 years, Ashleigh Primary School has spent time developing its outdoor area so that it is a space that enables staff to get the best out of children in multiple ways. Having previously developed a farm area which include a large polytunnel for growing as well as several raised beds and an area for chickens and, occasionally, rabbits the new headteacher wanted to expand this use of outdoor space by connecting this to our area for our youngest children in nursery and reception.

This expansion included an area for water play with our new stream which runs through the whole area, running through multiple planted areas before reaching our beach area in nursery. There is a farm kitchen, garage area for ride on cars as well as a willow village made up of dens and tunnels for children to explore. This redevelopment has also enabled us to make some changes in the pre-existing farm area to continue the narrative from reception and nursery to include a wood yard and various field divisions divided by hedges. It has been a massive project and is still not totally finished but will continue to grow over the coming years.



*Ashleigh School's New Outdoor Learning Area, Spring 2023*

## Browick Road Recreation Ground

The Rec has been owned by the Town Council since 1936. In 2022 WTC earmarked £250,000 to redevelop this large and underused open space; match funding will be sought to increase the funds available. The aim is to update existing facilities like the skate park and BMX pump track and make it not only a viable space for youngsters but create a community park with space for landscaping and multi-use, multi-generational, leisure facilities that are accessible to all. A specialist sport and leisure consultancy was appointed to work with the Council and run the public consultation, which received over 700 responses from adults and children.



Public Consultation Poster, March 2023

### Horticultural Practice:

- The Council's grounds team mow the grass and leave the outer margins largely untouched. This has resulted in those areas becoming a haven for wildlife and native flora (see below)
- There are new wildflower areas and native heritage fruit trees on the site thanks to the Community Orchard volunteers.

### Environmental Responsibility:

- Wymondham Nature Group (WyNG) undertook a yearlong survey of the outer margins which revealed the Rec is home to over 120 different plants, grasses and trees (from black horehound, snowberry and Yorkshire fog to small leaved lime trees) and nearly 50 different birds, insects and mammals/animals (including wrens, mining bees and bank voles)
- The redevelopment will plan for these margins to be conserved and managed to retain existing, and increase, biodiversity.



Outer margins, July 2022

### Community Participation:

- The Community Orchard is sited on the Rec's edge and well attended work mornings happen every two weeks on a Saturday morning
- The draft masterplan is being created now, using the public's responses as its foundation; accessibility for all is a key principle in the design.



Plant finding, July 2023



Women's football at the Rec, October 2022



Pump Track Section Made by the Youth Using the Park, March 2023



## Greening Wymondham

(Winner of the 'Group' Category; Norfolk Biodiversity Awards 2023)

Wymondham In Bloom enjoys a very close partnership with Greening Wymondham (GW), as seen throughout the portfolio. All the projects include one or more of the three key principles of AIB, namely horticultural practice, environmental responsibility and community participation.

Community engagement is at the heart of what GW does. We work with other local groups including three primary schools, the Baptist Church Eco-church group, the Abbey Churchyard Team, the Women's Institute, the Rotary Group, the Roman Catholic church, the Lizard Trust, Town Team/Wymondham Business Group, the Wild Tribe, Wymondham Nature Group, Norfolk Organic Growers, Norfolk Green Care Network and Voluntary Norfolk. We also liaise with Wymondham Town Council, South Norfolk Council and local businesses and have a mailing list of over 200 individuals. The constitution states that GW will:



GW members with their award, June 2023

- Promote environmental sustainability and raise awareness of climate change
- Engage with the local community in Wymondham on related activities
- Organise and carry out environmental improvements in the Wymondham area.

### 1. Becketswell Park

GW continue to liaise with WTC to work on a plan to improve this space, with the aim of planting more trees and assisting a contractor in clearing the wildlife pond. We aim to engage with local residents to help with this work and maintain the pond in future years.

### 2. Browick Road Community Orchard

The orchard was set up in Autumn 2021 with the planting of 12 heritage apple trees from the East of England Orchard Project by Greening Wymondham members and people from the local community under the leadership of GW's Peter Knights. A further 20 local heritage fruit trees were planted in Autumn 2022, including pear, medlar, gage, plum and more apples at a special tree-planting event attracting over 50 people including many young families and a representative from the Tree Council, who helped to fund them. A group of 25 + meets fortnightly and have sown wildflower and green manure seeds, planted bulbs, planted crab apple trees, constructed leaf mould bins, compost areas and a bay for woodchip to use as mulch. This has been enhanced with an herb bed, new paths and an event space. Since the project started, 91 different people have helped with the orchard.

#### Horticultural Practice:

- Food production
- Education e.g. mushroom growing in a log demonstration, explanation from knowledgeable participants on permaculture
- Plan to incorporate a forest garden into the area
- Relationship with local tree surgeon who provides woodchip.



Wildflower area, May 2023

Environmental Responsibility:

- Carbon sequestration
- Sustainability – homemade compost, leaf mould from local area, compost bins made from pallets, any necessary mowing of paths done by mechanical lawnmower, no chemicals used, peat-free compost (where bought), mostly hand tools used (including scythes)
- Increased biodiversity
- Attraction of more pollinating insects.



Community Participation:

- Engagement with the local community with increasing numbers of volunteers attending
- Improvement and maintenance of wellbeing and mental and physical health of volunteers
- Attraction of visitors to the park and social interaction
- A welcoming space for those less physically able as all are invited to the tea break.



Planning Session for the Orchard, Spring 2022



Vision for the Community Orchard, Summer 2022



Work Days and Wildflower seeding 2022-2023



### 3. Great Big Green Week - 10 to 18 June 2023

GW took part in this for the second year running with a week of events. Some of the events were organised by other groups and advertised under the GW GBGW umbrella. These included a 'Love Your Burial Ground' event organised by The Abbey involving a lichen talk by Norfolk Wildlife Trust; promotion of three plant-based food and greening activities in the café at the Baptist Church (Bronze Eco-church) award) who have recently started a raised bed for growing vegetables; a mending workshop at Needlecraft haberdashery; a Himalayan Balsam Bashing day organised by Norfolk Rivers Trust; a pub quiz including an environmental quiz round. The Greening Wymondham finale event was held at the Abbey Hall with a nature trail, herbs for sale, junk modelling, children's nature craft activities, Terracycle recycling, demonstrations of nature Apps for mobile phones, an environmental film show, Toadwatch, Wymondham Nature Group and Norfolk Organic Group.



#### AIB Principles Met:

- Social connectivity – working with other community groups
- Education
- Environmental responsibility.



Children with their Junk Models, June 2023



### 4. Kett's Park Woodland

Originally (we think) planted in the 1990s at the back of Kett's Park, Greening Wymondham have been managing the wood since 2017, under the guidance of Matt Davies from Norwich Fringe Project from October to March each year to avoid nesting season. Working involves coppicing of the trees to let more light in and create a succession in the tree canopy, with some replanting. This year we have seen the glades created have encouraged the growth of orchids. There have been more bulbs planted including ransoms and snakes head fritillaries, aconites, bluebells and snowdrops and the wildflower display has increased.



At work in Kett's Park Woodland, October 2022



#### AIB Principles Met:

- Increased biodiversity
- Improved wellbeing and mental and physical health of volunteers and people using the path (which we were responsible for installing)
- Engagement with local community.



Coppicing Lime Trees and Thinning Out Crack Willow, January 2023



*Bulb Planting, late 2021*



## 5. Litter picking

Our twice-yearly litter picks have been increased to bi-monthly under the leadership of Diana Grant (GW and WIB), with a regular attendance of 30-40 people. Some litter-picking equipment has been donated by 2 local businesses to add to our own resources. Diana organises a party of people to do frequent litter picks in the town centre to keep that area tidy all year around. Refreshments are always provided. Litter picks are now being extended to cover areas outside the town centre, including the new estates to the south and north.

### AIB Principles Met:

- Community participation and social interaction
- Keeping the town tidy and making it a place to be proud of
- Protecting wildlife from injury from litter
- Engagement with local businesses.



*Litter picking, March 2023*



*Cub Scouts litter picking, June 2023*



*After the litter pick in March 2023*



*Robert Kett Primary School Hosted a Litter Pick for North Wymondham, July 2023*

## 6. The Lizard:

The Lizard Pastures and the Oxford consists of approximately 45 acres of open land. It is managed by the Lizard Charity for the 'general benefit and enjoyment of the people of Wymondham'. GW volunteers assist the Lizard volunteers with activities such as hedge laying, often with guidance from the Norwich Fringe Project.



*Hedge laying at the Lizard, October 2022*

## 7. Roadside Verges

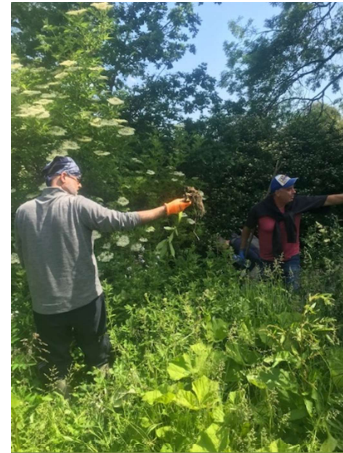
GW now have several roadside verges which have had reduced mowing to increase the wildflowers and biodiversity. We scythe them at the end of the summer and remove the cuttings to reduce fertility. This has helped the insect population and we have noticed swifts in one area, which we hope is due to the increased number of insects. We continue to promote this idea and hope to expand it next year.

## 8. River Tiffey

River litter picking and Himalayan Balsam Bashing is organised by Jay Andrews at the appropriate time, with guidance from Norfolk Rivers Trust. Progress has been made following 2 previous years of work as it is an ongoing battle. A special safety raft has been developed and constructed by Greening Wymondham. Water samples have been collected from the river and kitchen tested as part of a Citizen Science initiative.



*Jay (L) and Gabriella Collect and Test River Water Samples, Summer 2023*



Himalayan Balsam Bashing on the River Tiffey, 2023

### 9. Rothbury Park

This council managed park is an open space of grass with two trees and a small children’s play area. GW have consulted with local residents and children of the local school on a plan commissioned by a landscape architect, to improve the space. The plan, which includes some naturalistic play areas, some mounding to create different levels, a path suitable for wheelchairs, better access, more trees, wildflowers and planting spaces, has just received ‘approval in principle’ from WTC. A steering group including local residents has been set up to take this forward and grant funding will be sought.



Rothbury Park Currently, February 2022

#### AIB Principles Met:

- Working with local residents including children
- Improving accessibility
- Improving biodiversity
- Improved wellbeing for users of the park.



The Vision for Rothbury Park, February 2023



Mary Howard Introduces the Design Plan for Rothbury Park, February 2023

## 10. Trees for Schools (Year 6 pupils)

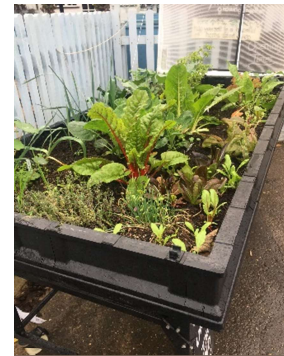
For the second year running, we have provided every Year 6 student at the three Wymondham primary schools (Browick Road, Ashleigh and Robert Kett) with a native sapling along with instructions on how to care for them. This has been very well received by children and teachers alike. We plan to continue with this project every year. Demonstrates engagement with the younger generation, education of children on the role of trees, increases biodiversity and, by thinking about the needs of future generations, promotes sustainability.



*Children with their trees - chosen for biodiversity and small gardens*

## 11. Wymondham Growing Together Vegepod

The 'Vegepod' self-watering growing container purchased last year is now in its second growing season and continues to provide edible plants for people to pick and eat. It is sited at the back of the White Hart pub, on a public footpath. Warm weather and lots of rain, and new RHS approved peat free compost on the top layer mean this did superbly well last year, even providing edibles in November.



*The vegepod, November 2022*

### AIB Principles Met:

- Working with the local pub landlord who provides water in dry conditions
- Community participation days where the public bring seeds and seedlings to plant
- Food production to increase resilience.

## 12. Wymondham: A Hedgehog Haven

This is a joint project between Annette (WIB) and Nicola Maunders (GW). Annette runs a very popular Facebook group which provides advice and information on how to encourage and care for hedgehogs. People share their videos and stories; help is given to sick hedgehogs and advice on where to take them to is also given. A twice-yearly market stall is held on the Farmers' Market to promote these activities and raise money for Hodmedods, the local hedgehog charity. These events are very popular with children and help to engage them with wildlife and nature.



*The Hedgehog Haven Team, November 2022*



*Teddy, a Rescued Hog, on her Release Day in Annette's Garden, May 2023*



## Mid-Norfolk Heritage Railway

The Mid-Norfolk Railway (MNR) is a 15-mile preserved standard gauge heritage railway, one of the longest in Great Britain. Preservation efforts began in 1974, but the line re-opened to passengers only in the mid-1990s as part of the "New Generation" of heritage railways. The current Wymondham Abbey railway station, opened in 1999, is the southern terminus of passenger services on the line towards Dereham.

The station has a vibrant well-kept garden thanks to volunteers and hosts a variety of flowers enjoyed by train enthusiasts of all ages. 1940s Railway at War weekends are held here although the next one - planned for August 2023 – will be at Dereham only. These are popular and enjoyed by many residents and visitors.

The garden is managed as sustainably as possible and uses a variety of re- and up-cycling ideas. Last year it won our WIB Sustainability Award.



*Wymondham Abbey MNR Rail Station Garden,  
July 2022*

## Tolls Meadow Natural Area

Toll's Meadow is an area covering 4.5 acres (1.82 hectares) of species rich, wet meadow and woodland situated in a gentle valley either side of the River Tiffey on the southwestern side of Wymondham. It is designated as a Local Nature Reserve by Natural England, is a County Wildlife Site and is owned by Wymondham Town Council. A pedestrian Right of Way crosses the site between London Road (B1172) and Cemetery Lane and there is a circular path around the reserve. This is suitable for wheelchairs and people with disabilities.

The site is managed for nature conservation, public enjoyment and educational purposes by a local volunteer warden, John Beckett. The management work is carried out according to a conservation management plan by specialist conservation contractors and volunteer work parties. The warden works closely with South Norfolk Councils Countryside Rangers, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Natural England on the conservation management. Wymondham Nature Group (WyNG) work closely with John to ensure this important lowland fen is maintained and protected.



**Key points:**

- Water voles are the most prized inhabitant. kingfishers, herons, muntjack and roe deer, and a wide variety of small birds are often seen. Occasionally a hare has been spotted
- Habitat: Toll's Meadow is diverse. There are drier soil conditions, damper soils, marshy grassland, coarse open vegetation and mature wet grassland
- Toll's Meadow is home to many species: frogs and common lizard, birds – whitethroat, goldcrest, thrush, blackcap, Butterflies – ringlet, large tortoiseshell, peacock, meadow brown, large white and common blue. Trees and vegetation include: aspen, hawthorn, field maple, elder and willow, great willowherb and abundant common reed, hemp agrimony, water fig wort and includes frequent hedge bindweed, cleavers, hop, meadowsweet, redshank and broad-leaved dock and occasional meadow vetchling and mugwort. Southern Marsh Orchids are found here along with water mint, common fleabane, yarrow, meadow saxifrage...
- Every year an open day is held at Toll's Meadow. Guided tours are given helping visitors to learn to spot flowers and other species. Various events are held to reach the public.



**Flowers,  
Insects  
and  
Willow  
Crafting**



**Sunday 25th  
June  
2-4pm  
Tolls Meadow**



*A Frosty Toll's Meadow, December 2022*



*In the Summer, July 2022*



*Bee on Flower, Summer 2022  
(Credit: Heather Lindsay)*



*Volunteer Work Party, March 2023*

## Weeding

The WIB team have taken on board Judges' feedback from 2022 that one area we could work on to bring us up to that elusive Gold standard was to be much more meticulous with our weeding. Diana took on the task of tackling those pesky weeds early this year, before they could become established, and she and her team of volunteers have persisted with the fight, holding regular sessions to remove weeds (and do a bit of litter picking and planter tidying up at the same time).

The town centre looks much better for their hard work and we hope this year's Judges will notice the improvement. Certainly residents are noticing and we have received favourable feedback.



*Caroline goes to weeding war with the flame thrower! June 2023*



*Enjoying a Post-Weeding Cuppa, May 2023*



*Before and After Weeding, April-July 2023*

## Wymondham Abbey

The Abbey was built as a Benedictine monastery (founded in 1107). In the 16th century Henry VIII ordered that Wymondham and many other monasteries be demolished and the stone repurposed, however part of the building survived, and still stands today. It is the jewel in Wymondham's crown and a focal point of worship and community for our residents.

### 1. The Medieval Herb Garden

A medieval herb garden, with a medieval bench, are situated on the south side of the Abbey. Designed by George Carter, one of the country's top designers, four beds were created in November 2015 – aromatic, culinary, industrial and medicinal – to show the plants the monks would have used. Each bed has an information board describing their uses. The beds were planted up the following spring and have since become well established.



### 2. The Wildlife Conservation Area



The Abbey churchyard is closed and cared for by the Town Council. It was a wildlife Conservation Area from 2015-2018, when it was handed back to WTC and sadly diminished as a conservation area. An initial survey in 2016 listed 37 wildflower varieties throughout the whole area but by the end of the year there were well over 100, many of them rare species. Even gravestones and churches themselves form an important part of the habitat – the stone is of particular importance for lichen and other stonework plants. It is now being reinstated as a wildlife area – with grasses being allowed to grow so that many plants existing there will be allowed to grow again. Short mown paths wend their way through the area.

The bug hotel has been refilled and a new compost bin has been built, with two small bug hotels fixed to its side. Sticks and twigs are piled in the corner to be a home for insects and hedgehogs. Bird boxes have been replaced. Conservation does not mean neglect and wilderness but by careful management this area will have a tidy, loved and cared for appearance.



The Herb Garden and Wildlife Conservation Area are funded solely from the sale of herbs.

### 3. Wymondham Abbey Roses

To celebrate the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Abbey, Peter Beales created a Wymondham Abbey Rose. Thanks to donations from members of the congregation we have been able to plant 20 roses along the boundary walls and the School Room. These have been espaliered to keep them under control and create a beautiful display in the summer months. A metre strip along the walls is left so that wildflowers may grow there too.



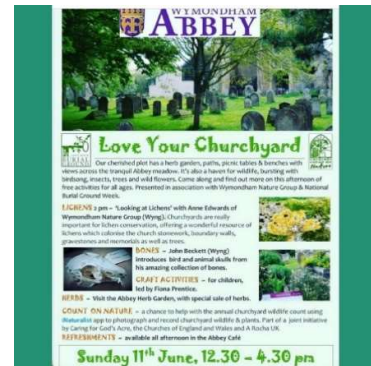
#### 4. Trees

We have received permission from the diocese to plant three crab apple trees and six hazel trees – kindly paid for by members of the congregation. The crab apple trees will be arriving soon but the hazels will not be ready until August. These trees are for the benefit of our wildlife – the apples for the birds and other insects and the nuts for the squirrels!

#### 5. Events

We have two main community events planned for this year and hope to have a full calendar of events next year now that we have been able to re-instate the wildlife conservation area. These will include workshops and talks for special occasions such as Hedgehog Awareness week.

Supported by WyNG and GW members, we will be celebrating our churchyard on 11<sup>th</sup> June as part of the Love Your Burial Ground and Count on Nature week. Events will include ‘Looking at Lichens’ a display of animal bones, use of bird telescopes and craft sessions for the children. Herbs will be on sale by the Medieval Herb Garden. Refreshments will be available in the Abbey Café.



We will run an alternative to Halloween – our Green Halloween – which includes a guided walk around the churchyard looking for fungi, snails and insects. With bat detectors we should see a display of bats at the end of the session which will finish with a blessing of the churchyard. Pumpkin soup will be served in the Abbey where craft sessions will take place.



*Bird Box Making and More.*



## Wymondham Garden Club

Affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society, Wymondham Garden Club is a friendly club of likeminded town and district gardeners who don't take themselves too seriously. The club meets monthly at the Town Green centre where a variety of fun activities take place and specialist expert presentations are given.

WIB partners with the Garden Club for the judging of the annual Wymondham In Bloom competition. Garden Club experts, with support from WIB Committee members, evaluate every entry against pre-defined criteria. The Garden Club awards Certificates of Achievement at four levels: Commended, Highly Commended, Excellent and Outstanding.

## Wymondham Town Council

WTC has again provided grant funding to WIB and worked with us this year to identify different planting plans for our theme of 'incredible edibles'. In total Wymondham Town Council owns 34 Amberol self-watering planters.

### Key points:

- Our volunteers started plans for a new planting scheme in early 2023
- We held meetings with the Town Council's grounds team and the Clerk to talk through our ideas and gain agreement, adapting as necessary
- We had to reduce the number of plants ordered due to a huge increase in prices
- The grounds team are working more collaboratively with us this year; they left all the planting to us and are watering more regularly; however, there is more we can do to further the relationship.



*Volunteers at work, Spring 2023*

## Wymondham (Mainline) Train Station

Wymondham Station opened in 1845. Regular Greater Anglia services run to Norwich and Cambridge. The attractive station building houses the Station Bistro, a unique and popular eatery which boasts a train carriage setting seating area and real log fires for cold days.



*Janet (L) and Shed members at the opening of Thomas, June 2023*

The Bistro's garden area is home to a Thomas the Tank Engine structure, which had sadly fallen into disrepair. A repair project was instigated by Keith Benjafield, husband of our Committee member Janet. Sadly, he passed away before completion. The work saw The Shed Wymondham's members renovate it completely and it was officially 'opened' by Janet in June 2023.

Committee member Diana has become the official station adopter and is now working with the Bistro owner Brendan and volunteers to improve the floral offerings on the platform and in the garden. Unfortunately, an overzealous Greater Anglia contractor recently decimated the existing garden's shrubs and mature quince tree. This has, however, resulted in Diana gaining free labour and more from the contractor by way of apology! Plans include:



*Devastation! May 2023*

- Repairing the chain link fence to prevent vandals breaking into the garden
- Waste removal
- Rearrangement of the area in front of Thomas to create a stumpery/bug hotel and wildlife area with drought tolerant plants added after the stumpery is assembled
- Children's safety to be addressed
- The remains of the shrubs and quince tree will be pruned to encourage new shoots and possible survival
- Greening Wymondham will be consulted on the plans.



*Before and after - planting up at the Station, May 2023*

## Wymondham Wild Tribe

Wymondham Wild Tribe is a friendly family meetup group who meet at least weekly in outdoor natural settings with their children. We meet somewhere different each week from Tolls Meadow to Ladybelt Country park, Becketswell meadow/river to parks, in all weathers, all year round. We learn together through experience and bringing people together outside meaning everyone has the freedom to follow their child's lead and connect with nature in their own way, reducing isolation and appreciating all the beauty around us!

We are a supportive inclusive welcoming group bringing people together from all walks of life: parents, guardians, grandparents, childminders, carers, those expecting and babies and children of all ages including those who home educate. We have previously supported Greening Wymondham with tree planting and hope to do more of this in the future. We hold twice yearly Clothes Swaps to reduce waste to landfill and encourage upcycling etc. These are funded by Greening Wymondham, which we are very grateful for.

We like to learn about nature together through exploring, shared knowledge, activities etc. We are respectful of everywhere we go, collecting our litter, trying as much as possible to walk or cycle to the meetups etc. We also visit a local care home fortnightly which has meant our Tribe is growing beautifully to bring together all generations. Singing, arts and crafts, nature story books and natural art e.g. making paint from earth and other naturally found items are integral activities. We are planning a nature and plant ID walk with our supportive network of friendly welcoming families and guardians. Teaching children an appreciation of nature and how to be respectful and caring of our surroundings etc is our mission. All of this is wonderful for mental well-being, preventing isolation and enjoying the fabulous benefits being outside in nature offers us all.



*Wymondham Wild Tribe enjoying nature, May 2023*

## COMPETITIONS

As part of our drive to involve residents, businesses and community groups in our work we hold a number of competitions during the year.

### 1. Hidden Gems

New for 2023 is our 'Hidden Gems' competition. We are trialling it in a defined area of the town initially. It encourages businesses, charities and home owners who are not eligible for the home frontage competition but have for example, courtyard gardens, to take part. One entrant is given here as an example: The Big C Wellness Garden. They say *"Our area is provided as a wellbeing, quiet space for staff and our many volunteers. It can be seen by the public, but is in an area normally reserved for our teams to have their breaks in. Please accept our application as it really has brightened up an area that was derelict [full of old mattresses] and in disrepair. We have worked so hard and would love the judges to see our efforts."*



*The Big C Wellness Garden, June 2023*

### 2. Home Frontage Competition

We are continuing with last year's home frontage competition. We want to see whose home frontage and/or front garden has the most spectacular planting display. Potential entrants are reminded of the 'incredible edibles' theme but are told this is not essential; their imaginations can run wild.



*Home front example, summer 2022*



*Our winner Ann receiving her prize, October 2022*



#### Home Frontage Competition

Would you like to be part of the Wymondham Queen's Jubilee celebrations? Do your rose bushes turn heads as people pass by?

We are holding a competition to see whose home frontage and/or front garden has the most spectacular planting display this year. It would be great if you embraced the Jubilee theme (red, white and blue or royal inspired), but this is not essential – just let your imagination run wild!

The key is to do the best you can with the space you've got. Imagine how wonderful Wymondham would be if everyone's homes had an array of shrubs, trees and flowers for all to enjoy.

To enter the competition, you just need to send us photos of the front of your home taken when it is at its blooming best.





### 3. Pumpkin Growing and Carving

New for 2023 is the pumpkin growing and carving competition. Entrants compete to grow the heaviest pumpkin and then, if they want, they can carve it (or a bought one) and bring it along to the town's popular Halloween Trick or Treat Trail in October.



Halloween Trick or Treat Trail, October 2022



Pumpkin Competition Flyer, June 2023

### 4. Town Centre Displays

Since we first entered Anglia In Bloom in 2019 our volunteers have concentrated on getting more businesses to take part in the competition and now some are contacting us to take part before we even launch! We continue to receive a council grant to cover some of the businesses' costs, which has helped.

#### Key Points:

- In 2022 Wymondham Garden Centre and Myhills supported our voucher scheme which allows participants to claim back 50% of their costs on a maximum spend of £100
- The WIB competition will be judged in July 2023 by the local Wymondham Garden Club. Garden Club members, supported by WIB committee members, go round in three judging teams and visit every participating business, scoring them on a range of pre-defined criteria
- We create a Facebook photo album of every entry
- Winners' certificates will be presented later this year – in 2022 they were presented in August.



Some Town Centre Businesses with Floral Displays, June 2023

## PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The team have made full use of all the opportunities available to them to promote 'In Bloom'. Social media, website, press and leafleting are all utilised as appropriate. We are lucky that our core team has members with media and marketing experience and we utilise this knowledge as much as we can.

Our Coordinator Kim runs the Wymondham Magazine so we are assured of regular coverage in that. The local Mercury newspaper is sadly no longer delivered to homes but we can submit press releases to be included in their digital versions.

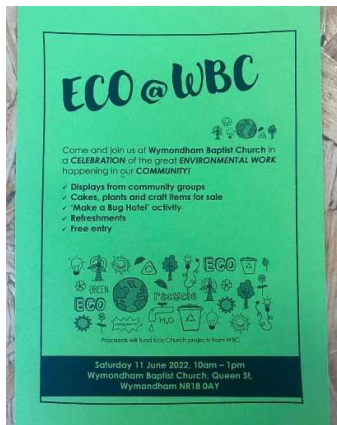
In April this year we set up our own Facebook page which is managed by our colleague Jacquie. Businesses who have put up floral displays are highlighted with photos tagged to their business accounts. Judging Day is a calendar event on the account. Our posts are shared to community groups with thousands of members.

We remain part of Town Team and have dedicated pages on their website. The Wymondham Town Team is an umbrella group which covers local groups providing events and activities for our town so it is an invaluable awareness raising resource for us. Town Team have a dedicated page for Wymondham in Bloom on their website. This page gives an overview of the project, the competitions, and highlights supporting businesses.

We have opted to have our own or share stalls with our partners at community events and markets to advertise what we do. This year we sold plants at the Wymondham Food and Drink Festival to raise funds and awareness. With all plants donated by volunteers or local retailers, we managed to raise £225! We've found stalls are a great free or low-cost way to meet residents and get the word out there about our activities. In June 2022 we attended the first eco event run by the Wymondham Baptist Church, which also allowed us to network with other like-minded groups and visitors. We gave away sunflower seedlings to encourage people to enter the 2022 sunflower competition. Some of us attended the first Community Seed Swap held in March this year.



*The team selling plants, June 2023*



*Eco Church Event Poster, June 2022*



*Community Seed Swap, March 2023*

## FUTURE PLANS FOR WYMONDHAM IN BLOOM

WIB has come a long way since our first entry in 2019. Our Wymondham in Bloom 2024 efforts will focus on the following activities:

- Continue to improve community and business involvement
- Recruit more volunteers
- Monitor and reflect on what we do so we make the small changes that will improve our town
- Continue work to improve Wymondham's mainline train station
- Continue to work with our key partner Greening Wymondham
- Develop further our relationship with the Town Council
- Visit more In Bloom contestants so we can learn, improve and utilise best practice
- Consider adopting some of the ideas we see on our visits to other AIB contestants e.g. Brandon's 'Friendly Bench'.

One thing we learned this year is to be careful with the number of tomato plants you put in a planter. They grew a little too enthusiastically and took a lot of the water, leaving other plants underdeveloped, so we had to remove some this month. However, they were not wasted as we found homes for all of them with motorists, passersby, and shopkeepers!

We look forward to the challenges 2024 may bring and the successes we anticipate achieving.



*Rehomed tomato plant, June 2023*



*The WIB Team on Tour in Hunstanton, June 2023*



*With the Brandon In Bloom team, May 2023*