



Wildlife Ways Update - Issue 7

Welcome to the Wildlife Ways Stay Connected bulletin, giving you all the latest news about this exciting three-year programme.

Wildflowers – spraying and cutting

You might have noticed that we have been cutting down the wildflowers in some of our parks. We just want to explain that this is not a mistake - it is part of our planned maintenance to make these wildflower displays even better in the future.

There are two types of wildflower turf, Pictorial Meadows (or Pict) which you'll find at Station Approach, by Solihull station, and 'Type 2' meadow turf, which is at Elmdon Park. To keep the meadows and other types of wildflower turf healthy and looking good for years to come, they all need cutting and the cuttings removed. This controls weeds, woody growth and promotes fresh growth of the species we want to encourage.

The 'Type 2' meadow turf is cut up to three times a year for the first two years: end of July, end of September and in March. This is the type of wildflower turf that has been planted in Elmdon Park and in parts of Malvern Park. The 'Pictorial Meadows' type turf can vary according to the results required, but typically will be cut if the plants become too leggy and if a particular flower begins to dominate, in order to reduce the number of plants and achieve a second flowering in late summer/ autumn. Examples include the 'Woodland Edge' mix in Malvern Park and at Hall Road in Castle Bromwich.

For many of the Pictorial Meadow mixes, one cut in February may be all that is required as the dead stems can look attractive over autumn/winter, especially in the frost. Station Approach and the old herbaceous borders in Malvern Park may be assessed to determine when their first cut is needed, to balance between what looks acceptable and what helps the plants develop into the future.

Councillors get update on projects latest

Councillors have been getting progress updates on Wildlife Ways and Solihull's [Habitat and Nature Improvements Project](#).



Cllr Ian Courts, Leader of the Council, and Cllr Andy Mackiewicz, Cabinet Portfolio Holder – Climate Change, Planning & Housing were shown the landscaping plans for Wildlife Ways in Chelmsley Wood by Project Manager Danny Hodson and given a tour of the Meriden Park Wetlands Improvement scheme by Project Manager Roy Lowe.

Meanwhile Cllr Ken Hawkins, Cabinet Portfolio Holder - Environment & Highways and Lyndon Ward Councillor Kathryn Thomas were given a tour of the proposed works to Hatchford Brook in Olton's Jubilee Park (more below).

Pictured l-r: Roy Lowe, Cllr Mackiewicz, Cllr Courts and Danny Hodson.



Wildlife Ways competition - don't miss the closing date!

Youngsters aged 16 and under have until 14 September to send in drawings, poems, photos and records of bugs they've seen in our wildflower verges and meadows. We'll post a selection on our website – www.wildlifeways.co.uk – and there will be some prizes for those judged the best.

Parents and carers should email their children's entries to wildlifeways@solihull.gov.uk stating their child's name (full name or first name only), age, email address and the location of the wildflowers that have inspired the entry. Please do not include close ups of people in the photos. Records of bugs should detail which bugs, how many, and where and when they were seen.

Photo by local teenager Kurt - can you match him?

Job Vacancy – Ecologist

We have a fantastic opportunity for a Development Officer - Ecologist to join our Conservation of the Historic Environment, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Ecology team.

The successful candidate will be responsible for delivering 'Bees and Trees' an ambitious three-year scheme funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) via the Greening the Grey Project. Bees and Trees will deliver a range of habitat improvements including woodland

management and grassland enhancements on Solihull Council land.

Closing date is 8 September. To read more and apply online, visit the [WM Jobs site](#).



Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvements

Hatchford Brook, Olton

Olton's Jubilee Park is to benefit from some much-needed environmental improvement works to Hatchford Brook.

Hatchford Brook is contained in a concrete channel. This has led to poor water quality which impacts on local wildlife.

To improve the environment and create a new habitat where wildlife can flourish, the existing concrete water course will be altered to form a naturalised stream.

The concrete slabs will be removed from the sides and some excavation will slightly widen parts of the brook. This will make for a more natural stream with shallow profiled banks and meanders which will be planted with wildflowers and grasses which will restore the watercourse and make it more natural in appearance.

Initially, during the first winter, the ground may look bare and muddy, but once the planting is established we will start to see an increase in wildlife at the park, both in numbers and types.

Meriden Lake Wetlands Improvement Scheme

During August we joined in the Meriden Park Adventure Playground's play day to promote the Meriden Park Wetland Improvements Scheme and Wildlife Ways.

We were joined by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and wetland scheme contractors Ebsford to provide activities and giveaways for children and spoke to local people about the works to the lake and the Wildlife Ways footpath improvements also underway in the park.

The current lake is being de-silted to make a healthier habitat for wildlife and a better amenity for local people. When complete, the area of the existing lake will form a new wetland with reeds, a wet meadow, tree planting, two ponds and a restored watercourse. The river banks will be reinforced and the river course will be covered with excavated soil and planted.

Visit [the project website](#) to see FAQs and plans of the works.

Ward Updates

Bickenhill (Route F)

The next route we are due to commence is Route F between Gloucester Way to Coleshill Road – see [here](#) for the route plan.

The works will include an upgrade to the existing pathways through Marston Green Park. Weather permitting we will be carrying out these works from mid-September to November 2019.

Chelmsley Wood (Route G)

Work continues on Route G through Meriden Park near the River Cole, with new shared paths for walkers and cyclists under construction between Cooks Lane and Chester Road. You can see more about these plans including pedestrian diversions [here](#).

Kingshurst & Fordbridge (Route H)

The upcoming works in Babbs Mill Park as part of [Route H](#) between Cooks Lane and Yorks Wood, scheduled between September and December this year, have been rescheduled for spring 2020 following a review of the programme.

This change will allow residents to continue to enjoy the park during the rest of this summer holiday period and for the Park Run, due to get underway this September, to become established.

About Wildlife Ways

Wildlife Ways is a £16.8 million programme – part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – to improve the borough for the benefit of people and wildlife alike. The programme will include tree, bulb and wildflower planting. It will also make it easier for people wanting to walk and cycle across the borough by widening and connecting paths and cycle routes with green spaces.

There's more on our website www.wildlifeways.co.uk - and if you've any comments or questions, please email us at wildlifeways@solihull.gov.uk



For more information about Council services, please see our [website](#).

