

## **BROOK WAY COMMUNITY BIODIVERSITY PROJECT NEWSLETTER-JANUARY 2022**

Dear Local Residents,

It is nearly a year since we sent you our first newsletter about our ambitious plan to turn the piece of derelict land at the rear of the garage at the end of Brookfield Crescent into a local Biodiversity Project. We needed some local support and we were overwhelmed with your generosity and wholehearted endorsement of our ideas – even though some of you were somewhat sceptical.

Since the beginning of this year we have managed to;

1. Clear this piece of derelict and neglected plot of overgrown Council owned land with over 30 years of dead, decaying and self-seeded trees, bushes and overgrown brambles and other vegetation.
2. Remove tons of fly-tipped waste
3. Remove cover for rats, other vermin, drug users and drug abusers
4. Cleared and flattened this plot of land and establish our Brook Way Community Biodiversity Project.
5. Obtain grants from Brent Council's LoveWhereYouLive fund, Veolia fund, and the Wetlands Trust (Environment Agency and Thames Water).
6. Establish raised flower beds from recycled wood from the demolition of the temporary classrooms on the Uxendon Manor School site – with the full support of the school and COSMUR – and with the help of a young carpenter volunteer in Hillview Avenue.
7. Obtain the support of Community Champions at the various supermarkets and garden centres in Brent and Harrow with generous donations of plants and shrubs.
8. Obtain donations of plants and shrubs from local residents
9. Receive a generous donation of top soil and galvanised steel tanks from Veolia
10. Obtain a Brent Council NCIL Grant for the painting of the Biodiversity Mural on the outside of the rear garden walls of numbers 58 and 60 Cranleigh Gardens—with the full 100% support of the owners.
11. Had the full support, backing and participation of the staff and pupils of Uxendon Manor Primary School – with help with the mural, hand painting of the galvanised tanks and planting
12. Had the Mayor of Brent cut the ribbon on the Official Grand Opening of our Biodiversity Project on the 21<sup>st</sup> October along with over 100 local residents and members of staff of Uxendon Manor School present followed by widespread publicity in the media.

Ours is a unique project in that it combines local community support with commercial support. It is an example of how a derelict piece of land can be changed quickly into a contributor towards improving the local environment, making local spaces safer, reducing our carbon footprint and making a contribution towards reducing global warming.

But we have really only just started on the local journey – call it BWCBP21 – and like COP26, we need your ongoing support.

An estimated 87.5% of flowering plants are pollinated by animals including around 33% of our most important crops such as apples and tomatoes. The annual value of pollinators to the economy has been estimated at £650 million per year in the UK.

The most familiar pollinators are bees and in particular the honeybees but the importance of wild pollinators such as solitary bees, beetles and hoverflies is often underappreciated. Wild pollinators provide a more reliable pollination service for fruit and vegetables than honeybees alone. There has been an estimated 33% decline in the

British ranges of bee and hoverfly species between 1980 and 2013. The worrying decline in pollinators is due to disease, climate change, the widespread use of pesticides and a reduction in the size and quality of their habitats. While not all pollinators can survive in urban environments, some species can survive and even thrive in built-up areas. We can provide lots of native and non-native garden plants that offer an abundance of nectar and pollen all year round. With warmer micro-climates some pollinators can remain active all year.

We can all help support our beleaguered bees and other pollinators by making a few changes to our gardens. Together, domestic gardens take up more space than all the UKs nature reserves put together. If we grow a mix of flowering plants we can create a network and mosaic of flower-rich areas.

For the next stage we need please;

1. At least 10 local residents to agree to turn a space in their back garden into a wild meadow flower area measuring at least 3m by 3m (at least 10ft by 10ft).
2. If you agree to participate then we will – free of charge – provide the following;
  - i. The services of a professional gardener with a rotary cultivator to turn over the agreed patch of land in your back garden;
  - ii. Provide sufficient compost soil to place on top of this patch for seeding.
  - iii. Provide sufficient wild meadow flowering plant seed to generate a wild flower garden area with flowering plants to provide a nectar source for our insects.

What we will require from you is;

- i. The watering of the seeded area during dry weather spells
- ii. A photographic record of the growth and development of the wild meadow area of your garden.
- iii. Any observations/photos of insect visitors to this garden area through the year.

Wild garden flowering meadow areas take several years to develop and mature. This is not a quick fix solution.

We intend to establish 5 additional Mason Bee units within the immediate area of the BWCBP. We already have 2 within close range so the additional 5 we are hoping for will provide sufficient pollinating bees to support pollination in the area. That is why we need several wild flowering meadow garden patches in the area. No flowers – no bees. Mason bees are solitary bees – they do NOT sting. They are brilliant pollinators. We need 5 additional local residents to agree to establish a Mason Bee colony in their garden. This requires more work than establishing a wild meadow garden area although if you have one the bees will love it ...and you.

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A WILD MEADOW FLOWERING AREA IN MY GARDEN

I WOULD LIKE TO HELP ESTABLISH A MASON BEE COLONY IN MY GARDEN

I WOULD LIKE A FLOWERING FRUIT TREE IN MY GARDEN

Please note:

1. The cultivation of the ground in your garden for a wild flowering meadow is free to you and is grant funded.
2. The provision of compost soil for the ground is free to you and is grant funded
3. The wild meadow seed is free to you and is grant funded as is the scattering of the seed in the springtime.
4. The watering of the patch of land put over to the wild meadow after seeding is NOT free.
5. Any subsequent maintenance of the wild meadow area in your garden will need to be undertaken by you or, on request, by a member of the BWCBP team
6. Any trees planted in your garden as result of this project will become the ownership and the maintenance of the property owner 5 years after planting. Any maintenance or issues to do with the trees up to the 5 years after planting should be referred in the first instance to the officers of the BWCBP team.

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THANK YOU