

## Rewilding January 2021 – Areas suggested by Cllrs for DBC consideration

Please note that these areas have been selected as an outline area for the DBC Officer to then confirm which section will be utilised for re-wilding. It is the intention of NMPC that smaller sections are used to enhance the area and that pathways margins are left neat and tidy as appropriate. The area within the play park should ensure that sufficient space is remaining for safe play and to facilitate football etc within the main body of the playpark. The area selected at The Denes should be sympathetically incorporated into the design for the 'Jubilee Garden' area which will also contain some more structured planting.

### Bunkers Lane Play Park [what3words](#) /// [money.hooked.tooth](#)



#### DBC Officer suggestions

- That a full ecological survey is undertaken prior to any commencement of planting so that the area can be assessed, and any benefits measured for the purposes of the grant funding.
- Survey to be conducted Summer 2022 as this is when max species are likely to be found.
- That the woodland area of the park (to the left as you enter) is naturalised using wild garlic and bluebells.
- That an information board is provided to explain what we are doing, species etc (for the benefit of children and adults using the park)

### Opposite the Denes [what3words](#) /// [assume.museum.zebra](#)



#### DBC Officer suggestions

- That the edge nearer to the wall is used to create wildflower planting (this area is sloped so difficult to mow)
- Approx 10mx 2m (20sqm) of wildflower turf to be planted in Spring 2022.
- Possibility of an information board to inform residents of the purpose of the project/biodiversity aims etc?

Opposite Pond Road [what3words /// lift.moved.cloud](https://www.what3words.com/lift.moved.cloud)



#### DBC Officer suggestions

- This area is a large area that would benefit from wildflower seeding in the Autumn.
- As there are currently works being undertaken there will be an obligation for the agency to reinstate the land-the recommendation is that they should be requested to seed the area with a good quality native wildflower seed mix. This would need to be approx 90% wildflower/10% grass to ensure a quality result.
- Possibility of an information board to inform residents of the purpose of the project/biodiversity aims etc?

The Denes incorporated (within the new plans for the Jubilee Garden) [what3words /// quiz.neon.truth](https://www.what3words.com/quiz.neon.truth)



#### DBC Officer suggestions

- Wildflower planting is incorporated into the overall design
- 20Sqm metres approx of wildflower turf to be laid in the autumn but with bulbs being planted underneath to give a longer coverage period.



#### DBC Officer suggestions

- This project is already under way and will not be included in the grant application.
- Rewilding of the verge.

#### Budget details from DBC Officer

The cost for the biodiversity initiatives-

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Wildflower turf (All native species) 45m2 | £597,25          |
| Wildflower plugs (All native species) 200 | £220             |
| Bee houses, with bee cocoons              | £150             |
| Ecological survey (Bunkers play area)     | £750             |
| Info sign                                 | £400 x 3 = £1200 |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>£2917.24</b>  |

Rob

Please can you confirm the above plans are correct please can you also answer the following for me?

- Would it be feasible to have 3 x info boards? (Opposite Pond Road/Opposite The Denes/Play Park)
- Where would the bee cocoons go?
- Can you please remind me where the wildflower plugs would go?

#### CLlr Actions

- A planting group will be required to assist with the project
- Own tools to be supplied to assist with grant objectives
- Invite local schools to assist
- Clerk to arrange insurance/risk assessments in association with DBC
- Ongoing maintenance costs to be ascertained

#### Clerk Actions

- Complete grant application
- Contact Herts & Middx Wildlife trust
- Contact Butterfly World
- Liaise with Rob re scheduling/information boards

- Communicate with Abbots Hill School
- Draw up communication plan with magazine Working Group/Social Media group

### *Grant Questions -draft responses*

**3. Provide an outline of the project or activity that you are applying for funding for and give details on how you expect your project to contribute to mitigating the Climate and Ecological Emergency? (max 1000 words) \***

**Note: For practical energy projects and biodiversity projects please also provide separately relevant technical documents to support your application, such as, the specification of the proposed works, feasibility study, technical reports, site plans and maps etc. These should be prepared by a suitably qualified professional where required. You are also welcomed to send in images, maps, sketches of your project or similar case-studies to help support your application. Include these when you email your supporting documents.**

Please see attached plans.

NMPC have recently arranged to 'rewild' one verge in association with the DBC opens spaces officer, initially as part of a wider project to look at protecting our verges. As with many urban parishes we have an issue in balancing protection of our green margins and parking within the parish.

A presentation by the borough officer at a recent council meeting to talk about this issue then prompted the council to review all of our green spaces within the parish to ascertain what more could be done locally to support the global impact of climate change.

NMPC were keen to support the DBC Climate and Ecological Emergency objectives, enabling us to educate our residents about climate change and to enhance our local area with a project that would have long term benefits for our residents and our planet.

As a parish we do not own any of our own land, but we were confident that we would be able to find a way of working collaboratively with the landowners (DBC and Abbots Hill School) so that we would be able to obtain the relevant permissions to contribute in our own particular way.

It was decided that biodiversity was an area in which we would be able to have the most significant impact. We do not own any parish council buildings or have any parish council vehicles therefore we could mitigate the effects of emissions within the parish by planting trees and native flowers to provide homes for invertebrates and small mammals whilst making a contribution to offsetting carbon emissions. A number



of our inhabitants live in densely populated areas, but we are also very fortunate to be surrounded by some fabulous open parks. Many of our residents are commuters and it was only through the recent Covid-19 lockdowns that many of these residents managed to explore the local area, often finding spaces that they had not been previously aware of. Council felt that by capitalising on this new-found enthusiasm for our local area it would be perfect timing to commence a new community project.

Council have highlighted 5 areas within the parish, 4 of which are included in this application. The largest site in Bunkers Lane Playpark is leased to us by Abbots Hill School. The school have enthusiastically given permission for the play park to be used as one of the target areas.

Following a site survey with the DBC officers it has been suggested that the way forward would be a mixture of rewilding resulting in a change to our usual cutting schedules which would then be supplemented by a change to our cutting schedule and a wildflower planting initiative. The planting of native species (sourced by DBC as locally as possible) would encourage invertebrates and pollinators and would then start the process of supporting the food chain at the earliest entry point. We would also be looking to install bee cocoons to encourage more pollinators to our sites and to assist in raising the community of solitary bees who have been in huge decline. The sites selected are mainly in prominent areas within our parish and we are hoping that this visibility will encourage discussion around the wider climate change crisis and the effects of planting responsibly to encourage biodiversity.

We have requested that information boards are installed as part of this project as having explanations of tangible benefits will assist us in the education of our residents, particularly the younger ones in the play park site. We would also be looking to help reinforce the educational aspect by placing articles on our social media and in our parish magazine. The responses to the questions below further evidence the benefit that this project will have to our parish. As the first parish to actively embrace this initiative we would hope that we would be able to be used as an example of collaborative community working, enabling the issue of climate and ecological emergency and the positive actions that can be taken to mitigate the effects, to be communicated across the borough.

***15. As a borough, we need to reach net-zero carbon emissions as quickly as possible.***

***Explain how your project relates to our Key Environmental Theme: Energy and Emissions?***

- Tell us what actions you will be taking specifically in this area and the outcomes you expect to see.***
- Outline how you plan to measure and report on the success of this?***

***(maximum 500 words)\****

Wildflower meadows are a good way of lowering our carbon footprint. A wildflower meadow can store up to three tonnes of carbon per hectare. Climate change and biodiversity loss are intrinsically linked and it is impossible to talk about the causes and effects of one, without the other.

We will rely heavily on the expertise of the partner organisations to ensure that species sourced and planted are all provided with the DBC goals in mind.

The reduction of the cutting schedule by 75% in these areas will reduce emissions and all volunteers will be encouraged to walk to sites where appropriate.

**6. In the UK, transport is the biggest sector for releasing greenhouse gas emissions.**

**Explain how your project relates to our Key Environmental Theme: Sustainable Transport?**

**Less cutting**

**More walking**

- Tell us what actions you will be taking specifically in this area and the outcomes you expect to see.**
- Outline how you plan to measure and report on the success of this?**

**(maximum 500 words)\***

Our rewilding and planting would dramatically reduce the cutting cycle by DBC. The reduction of the cutting cycle would reduce the emissions caused by the usual cutting but would also reduce the visits from the depot to our local area.

This will be easily measured by knowing that it likely that DBC will only cut once per season -a reduction of 75%. (currently they cut 4x per year).

The reduction of cutting would also reduce the amount of green waste that is currently being transported out of the borough to waste sites.

By improving our local verges and areas we would hope to encourage more resident to explore these areas on foot for example rather than using a car to visit the local shops. This project is creating local areas of interest that would be missed if residents were travelling by car. Our playpark is largely undiscovered but is within walking distance of one of our most densely populated areas. We are hoping that education and information sharing about the project would assist us in drawing more people to this valuable, local, green space. This outcome would be harder to measure but there is a possibility that should we offer to be part of initiatives like the DBC wild seed giveaway from this location we could provide measurable results via attendance figures.



## Question Title

**\* 17. In the past 50 years we have lost a global average of 68% of our wildlife populations.**

**Explain how your project relates to our Key Environmental Theme: Biodiversity?**

- Tell us what actions you will be taking specifically in this area and the outcomes you expect to see.
- Outline how you plan to measure and report on the success of this?

Our main introduction explains this objective in more detail.

Our project is predominantly aimed at improving biodiversity within the parish. Working with the DBC team we can ensure that the whole project is based around the DBC metrics. Native flowers in both seed and plug form will be used, using varieties that are known to encourage pollinators and small invertebrates. Nepeta (Cat mint), Achillea, Helenium and Echinacea are all known pollinator friendly species, however even species more commonly thought of as weeds such as dandelions and various types of cow parsley are hugely important in attracting the hoverflies, bees and invertebrates needed to support biodiversity. Some wildflower meadows can hold up to 40 different varieties of flowers. We hope to plant in excess of 45m<sup>2</sup> of wildflower turf and over 200 wildflower plugs. As well as improving biodiversity the wildflowers also have an important use in protecting the soil structure and nutrients. Some of our planting will be on a slope where it is anticipated that the root network will lend additional support to an area that could degrade over time.

The relevant expert knowledge in this area is the key to the success of the project which is why we are collaborating with DBC. There will be use of bee cocoons to capitalise on the anticipated rise in biodiversity and pollinators. This will assist by providing adequate food sources to encourage small mammals which will provide a valuable food source to owls and other birds of prey. We will be undertaking a full ecological survey on our largest site pre commencement to give us a baseline with which to benchmark and report any improvements. This initial survey, along with the project aims will be communicated via our parish magazine and social media. We will also seek support from the community support team at DBC to further the communication. By communicating the survey to our local school (and landowner) it may be something that supports their learning via their curriculum too. The chosen sites (apart from the playpark) are in areas that are prominent within the parish and therefore we expect them to promote communication about the objectives of this project. The other site is in an area where wildlife is likely to be found but which requires enhancement via planting to enrich its diversity and suitable ongoing support to retain its environmental wellbeing.

**(maximum 500 words)\***

**18. Living sustainably and 'Reducing, Reusing and Recycling' are all key behaviours that can help to mitigate environmental damage.**

**Explain how your project relates to our Key Environmental Theme: Waste and Consumption?**

- Tell us what actions you will be taking specifically in this area and the outcomes you expect to see.
- Outline how you plan to measure and report on the success of this?

**(maximum 500 words)\***

The ultimate aim is that by educating our residents we would encourage a more environmentally approach within the parish. At the moment this is not seen as a primary result but as a complementary matter that is harder to measure.

We would encourage any volunteers to use existing tools/share tools and will not be encouraging the purchase of any new equipment with this project. The project is right in the midst of the parish so local enough to encourage walking to the various sites rather than using cars. Other projects may be the opportunity to remind residents about the wider DBC initiatives such as encouraging the use of home grown produce, composting and reducing food waste. NMPC very much see this project as a 'gateway' project to start discussions.

#### Question Title

**\* 19. Explain how your project involves the local community and encourages them to 'think global and act local'?**

***Outline how your activities will meet our Key Community Benefits; 'making new connections', 'being more active', 'learning' and 'volunteering'.***

- Provide an estimation of how many people it will engage and will be positively affected.***
- Tell us what actions you will be taking specifically in this area and the outcomes you expect to see; including how many residents you expect to benefit from the project.***
- Outline how you plan to measure and report on the success of this?***

***(maximum 500 words)\****

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NMPC have an electorate of over 2000 people and each and every one of these will benefit in some way from our contribution. We have a number of residents associations and schools within the parish, and it is hoped that we will be able to gain a band of willing volunteers to assist in the planting.

NMPC are joining the DBC Climate Action Network and hope that our communication strategy will result in new members.

As a PC we received a number of enquiries about allotments during lockdown and we will be appealing to those individuals to ask if they would like to help. Many of our residents are commuters so by encouraging them to engage with the parish council we may be able to assist them in making new local connections where previously they may have been isolated.

We live in a densely populated urban area with many residents not having their own outside space. The mental health benefits to those living a solitary life and engaging in active group works or simply by being out in nature aren't easy to measure but it is an area with significant proven benefits.

The chosen project locations are ideally situated to encourage passers-by to stop, engage and enquire as they are highly visible to a number of our residents.

As mentioned previously NMPC see this project as a gateway to opening discussion and action within the parish about the much wider global issues. The project areas are ideally located to target the next generation so with clear communication and educational initiatives we will be able to measure the reach



on local youth groups. If we start with our younger residents, we are laying foundations to build upon in subsequent years.

By communicating the global issues and the local initiatives on our social media platforms we will be able to measure the reach of this messaging.

By working with the DBC teams our project can be used to highlight our success but also to learn from any challenges encountered during the process, particularly with biodiversity for which results can be affected by outside factors and results can be highly variable, contingent that it is on conditions being favourable.

#### Question Title

**\* 20. What are the long-term benefits of this project to Dacorum's environment and residents and how do you plan to sustain the project's benefits after completion?**

Increasing biodiversity in the parish will grant us an entry into the world of climate change improvements. Whilst the initial visual gain will be relatively quick the longer-term effects will take much longer to quantify. This is a starter project that will lay foundations for a longer-term education and environmental project for NMPC. Ongoing enhancement of areas and measurement of results will be paramount. This project will start the discussions with residents, and we would hope to see some change in behaviours and thought processes, particularly as we will be targeting our younger residents too. To sustain this project NMPC will be earmarking funds for this project over the longer term to enable us to enhance it further and to continue the messaging. It will incorporate it into its longer-term strategy. NMPC will be applying for the NALC quality council status and part of the criteria for attaining and retaining this prestigious award is evidencing environmental or biodiversity projects.

As a separate measure NMPC are currently a statutory consultee on all planning application within Nash Mills. We use local planning policies to consider all applications and by implementing this project we will have more awareness about the types of measures that can be taken to support climate change initiatives within the planning process.

**(maximum 500 words) \***

#### Question Title

**\* 21. What evidence do you have that this project is needed?**

Quoting the DBC website "A staggering 97 per cent of wildflower meadows have been lost in the UK since the 1930s." the impact of this loss of habitation has resulted in a catastrophic loss of invertebrates and pollinators that support the food chain and biodiversity. NMPC feel that this is their opportunity to make a tangible effort to address this issue.

The other benefits as listed below are equally impactful

- Flowering species add a changing palate of colour to the urban environment throughout the seasons
- Active involvement of the local community in managing the site encourages ownership values to be fostered – activities may range from mowing to the collection of seeds for use at a new location or for sale.
- Opportunities for education and recreation abound (ranging from nature studies to art lessons).

- Even small plots of wildflower planting can change the feel of a setting, so that the creation of a wildflower meadow as part of an urban greenspace can bring a little piece of countryside into the town. Source [Wildflower meadow habitats - Forest Research](#)

**(maximum 500 words)\***

Question Title

**\* 22. Please give details about how you are working in partnership with other organisations or groups to deliver this project?**

**(maximum 500 words)\***

NMPC will be working collaboratively with the DBC team as they will be advising and assisting with delivery. We have also worked collaboratively to obtain permission from one of our local landowners.

By joining to Dacorum Climate Action Network we hope to extend our partnership working. NMPC will also be using our local resident associations to cascade information and request volunteer help.

We have links with the Herts & Middx Wildlife Trust as they manage Long Denes nature reserve which is within the parish and will be able to call upon them for advice or assistance should it be required. We would also be keen to offer the 'Friends of Bunkers Park' the opportunity to join us as they are another parish community group.

With our educational messaging we would cascade this information out to our local schools and may seek the assistance of Butterfly World in conducting some local surveys later in the project.

Question Title

**\* 23. What kind of promotional activities will you be undertaking as part of the project and approximately how many people will you aim to reach with these?**

**(maximum 500 words)\***

The project will be featured in our publications and social media. We have a parish magazine that is delivered to over 1600 houses within the parish. We also have a very active Facebook page that has a reach of approximately 3000. We will be using 'information boards' to promote discussion and to provide a visible means of finding out about the project for the demographic that may not have access to social media. We hope that regular communication with our local schools will also foster interest in the scheme and the wider green initiatives within the borough.

Question Title

**\* 24. Are any particular permissions and consents required to deliver this project and if so, are these in place?**

Most areas are owned by DBC. The non-DBC site has given permission.

When the planting takes place, we will ensure that the relevant risk Assessments and Insurance requirements are in place with the lead DBC team.

**Please fully explain your answer. Provide details of any relevant legal and liability aspects of the project, such as: land owner consent, child protection (DBS checks), insurance etc. and what provisions are already in place. What permissions, consents etc have yet to be put in place? We do not expect you to have all necessary permissions in place at the time of applying, but this will be required before funding can be awarded.**

**(maximum 500 words)\***

Question Title

**\* 25. Please outline the current financial setup of your organisation/ group: \***

NMPC are a precepting authority with some earmarked funds. Funds will be allocated from reserves to enable longer term support of this project and ongoing maintenance costs once these figures are supplied by DBC. It is anticipated that should NMPC be successful in obtaining the full grant of £3000 then at least the same amount again will be earmarked as a contingency for this project.

Question Title

**\* 26. How will a grant from Dacorum Borough Council support you on your project/ initiative? \***

The grant will enable NMPC to obtain support from the DBC team to source and deliver the project with our volunteers. This expertise and the initial surveys will be paramount to the ongoing success of this project. The use of a central DBC procuring team will also ensure that the most appropriate sources are used for materials and planting.