



Village briefing notes
South & South East in Bloom
2021

West Farleigh in Bloom - Village



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* All photos submitted from residents of their gardens



Foreword & Welcome to our Judge

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our judge, Nick Hagon for 2021!

The West Farleigh in Bloom campaign is now in its 4th year of South and South East in Bloom village category. We were thrilled to achieve a Silver Gilt medal in 2020 and also gained a Silver Gilt in the Churchyard effort too. We are a small core group of people totalling 8 volunteers (plus a separate litter picking team).

We are fortunate to have a strong community in our village with some additional volunteers joining our core team or helping out on special events. We try to stay connected with our village with a regular column in the monthly *LifeLine* village newsletter and on social media.



We have noted all advice from our prior year judges and have implemented all suggestions to the benefit of our local area. We thank-you for the guidance as we aim higher and higher in the Bloom awards.

The West Farleigh Bloomers x



A1: Overall Impression

West Farleigh in Bloom's aim has been to achieve year round horticulture impact to uplift our residents and those who pass through our village whilst creating new friendships and learning more about our environment.

- Focal Points

- *New heritage information board of Teston. (5 now created.)*
- *New Community Orchard*
- *New Kettle Lane border*
- *New Elmscroft border outside Dandelion Times Charity*
- *New Bee Line*
- *Teston 'Designated Wildlife' Triangle*
- *West Farleigh Green and land adjacent*
- *Gaulston Villas border*
- *Planters with sunflower motif (8+)*
- *'Wilder Verge' on Lower Road.*
- *Autumn Bulb planting day*



A2: Maintenance – Bench opposite Smiths Hall

One of the established areas to maintain is now the bench opposite Smiths Hall. This sits in a very attractive setting with wide views across the valley of established specimen trees and sheep grazing in the field.

The bench has received a lot of use over the past 18 months with cyclists and walkers. It is adjacent to the local pub, The Tickled Trout and the start of the [15+ Village Walks listed on our website](#) as it is adjacent to a footpath down hill. The bench is regularly painted and in good maintenance.

There is an information board here too, with additional wood surround created by our team and sourced from local wood in the village.

The planters were created by and are maintained by Smiths Hall and look stunning with their evergreen interest and seasonal planting. The gardening team have also planted numerous daffodils with successional flowering and in structured patterns for spring and leave the grass longer through the summer for wildlife.



A2: Maintenance - Ewell Lane Triangle

A couple of years ago we built a planter to go under the Ewell Lane street sign. This we regularly top up and try to keep colourful and neat.

Over the years we have planted a profusion of Daffodils here which always look very colourful and bright in springtime. They sit well with the newly planted daffodils on the front lawn of Smiths Hall, opposite.



Last year the Bloom team also created a Wild Flower meadow on the small triangle at the bottom of Ewell Lane. Visually it was very successful, however despite regular cutting around its edges, the parish council received complaints from drivers regarding visibility.

We have now managed to locate a wildflower seed mix that is ideal for roadside verges due to its reduced height. We are aiming to use this mix in 2022 following the introduction of more yellow rattle in Autumn 2021 to reduce the vigour of the existing grass.



A2: Maintenance - Goulston Villas

Another areas of the village we have been addressing is the bank outside Goulston Villas, homes managed by the local Housing Authority Golding Homes. The project started when an elderly lady living there asked if we could plant some spring bulbs. That grew and we have been adding shrubs and perennials here (mostly from divided plants of members own gardens) as well as bulbs.

2019



We have regular working parties to keep it looking bright and attractive and are pleased with the results.



2021



A2: Maintenance - The top of Kettle Lane

The village Bloom team are always looking for suggestions of new places within the village to add colour and pollinators for wildlife. With more walkers out and about during Lockdown, the footpath from the Green highlighted a verge that had gone unnoticed and unloved for many years:



Technically the verge is in neighbouring East Farleigh, but it is most visible at our village centre by the Green. We therefore gained permission to enhance it and manage it with Comfrey and Lavender and added further plants over the course of the year as they became available.

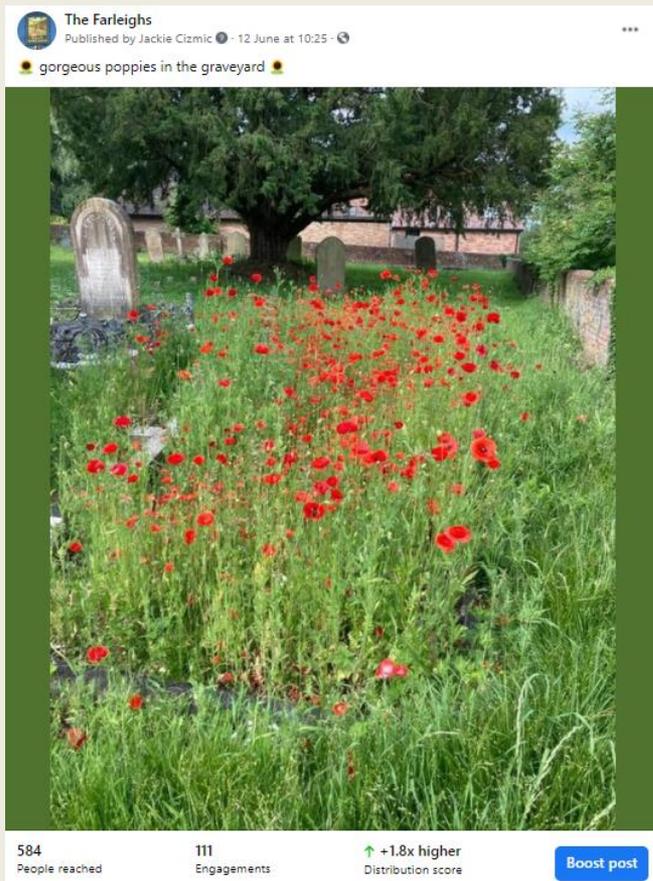
It also became the start of our 1st Bee Line, leading from the top of the village at the green, down Charlton Lane (Gaulston Villas > Dandelion Times > Oliver North House > Planters > Community Orchard > Church to the river Medway.)



A2: Maintenance - Churchyard

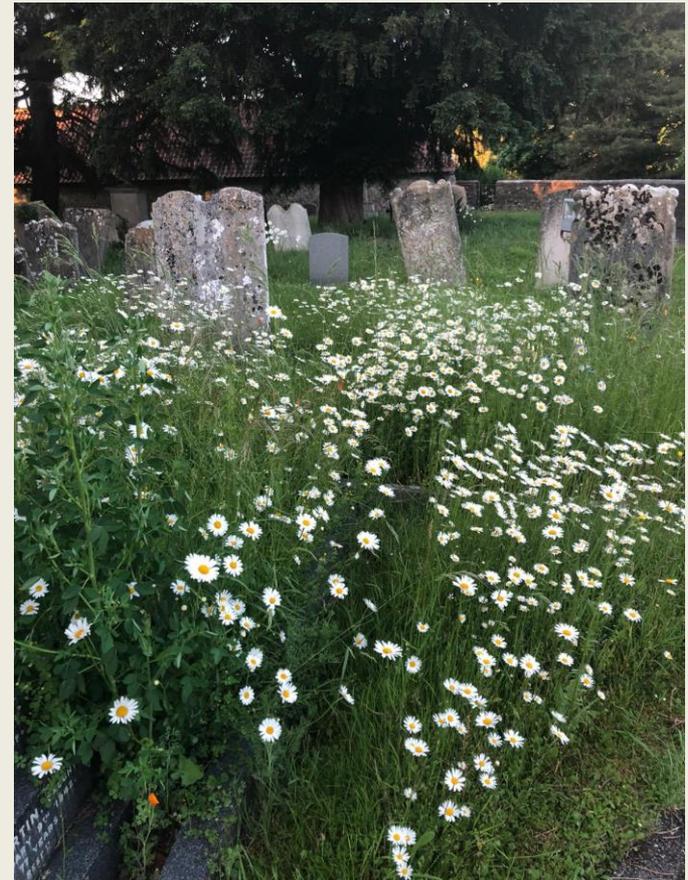
All Saints church in West Farleigh sits in very elegant surroundings on the banks of the river Medway. It is next to the village Cricket Club and used in normal times as a community hall as well as a place of worship.

In past years we were advised that the churchyard was kept too well to the detriment of wildlife. We have therefore started to let areas of grass grow longer and have paths cut through them. This year 1,000+ spring bulbs were planted in the Autumn bulb planting day. We didn't see as many come up as hoped for (which may be due to the 'bodpave' matting that is just beneath the grass throughout.) We still have high hopes for them though next spring.



One of our projects has been to establish red poppies in one of the large war graves. This was first achieved in 2020 but 2021 has seen them self seed much more fully to a very satisfying result.

Another project that we have underway is to create a booklet of people who are buried in the churchyard and some background about where they lived in the village and what they did.



A3 / A4: Plant Selection & Quality

New Planting for 2021:

- Bulb Planting Day : more bulbs bought by West Farleigh Bloomers for roadside verges, Teston triangle & All Saints churchyard
 - 25 kg Daffodil Tahiti
 - 125 x Hyacinthoides NonScripta (English Bluebells)
 - 325 x Skilla Siberica
 - 675 x Iris Reticulata Harmony, Natasha, Alida, Spot On, Painted Lady
 - 150 x Eranthis Hyemalis (Winter Aconites)
 - 125 x Leucojum Aestivum
 - 125 x Chionodoxa Forbesii Pink Giant
- Bedding Plants
 - Supporting an independent small local business.
 - Pelargonium Pretty Little – saved from M&S composting
- Community Orchard
 - Apple Vista Bella MM111, 1 year maiden
 - Apple Shenandoah MM111, 1 year maiden
 - Plum Reine Claude Doree Brompton, 1 year maiden
 - Plum purple Pershore Brompton, 1 year maiden
 - Plum Rivers Early Prolific Brompton, 2 year standard
 - Plum Jefferson Brompton, 1 year maiden
- Elmscroft Verge
 - Arthur Bell yellow Rose
 - Lavender
- Gifts from our gardens to communal village areas such as Goulston Verge:
 - Wild geranium, heuchera, crocosmia, anemones, lily of the valley, foxgloves, bluebells, sedum, cosmos and many more!



B1. Local Identity: Sunflowers

Our team logo is a Sunflower and every year of Bloom we run a tallest Sunflower competition. We started judging in July, but have moved it back to August to capture the height that they continued to grow to. Each year we present a trophy to the winner and have been pleased to find one in the shape of a sunflower!

Year	Height	Type	Winner	Age	Entries
2018	1m 74	Pike Peak	Holly French	8 years old	30
2019	3m 90	Unknown	Jackie Ellis	Retired	35
2020	3m 55	Giraffe	Peter & Pauline Mack	Retired	36

1st



B1: Street Furniture – New Heritage information board at Mill Lane

There are now 5 information boards around the village. We added carved surrounds to 4 of the existing boards in 2019.

In 2020 we aimed to add a further point of interest board on the old Linseed Mill on the banks of the River Medway that is now a ruin in a private garden.

We applied and successfully won grant funding from the Maidstone Community Fund for £200 towards the costs of materials, building, graphic design and printing of the new signpost and agreed with the land owners that we could add the information sign on their verge which is also on the Medway Valley Walk route.

We liaised with Wateringbury history society for their research and images and then with Hadlum printers in Barming to create the new information board. Using fallen wood from 'Quarry Wood' which is further back on the Ewell stream, a Bloom member built the board surroundings and the new owners of the Mill kindly installed it in front of their house, along with cobble stone footings. The surround of this board features an image of the mill.

We have added our village website URL so that readers can find out further information : <https://thefarleighs.co.uk>

 **The Farleighs**
Published by Jackie Cizmic · Yesterday at 12:04 · 🌐

📍 check our new village information board which the new owners of Mill Cottage in Mill Lane have kindly made space for at the front of their house 📍



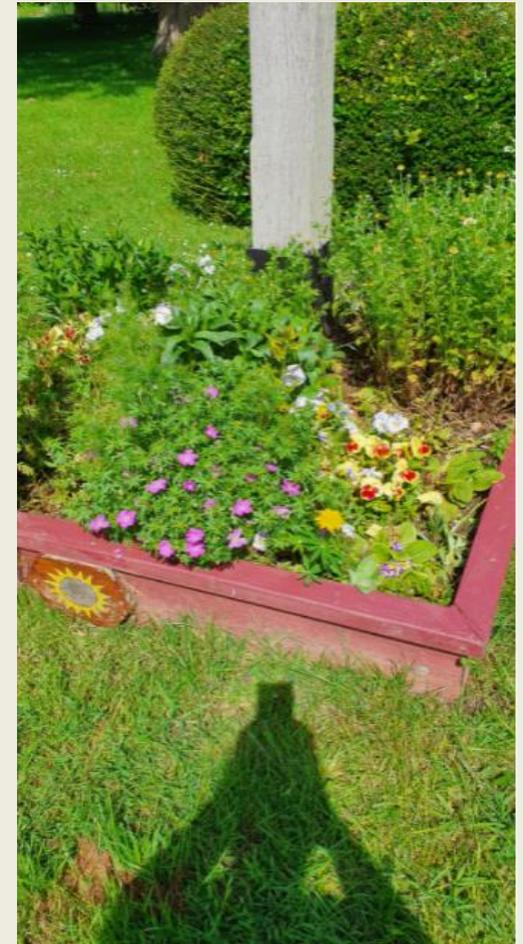
586 People reached 133 Engagements ↑ +2.1x higher Distribution score [Boost post](#)

  You and 20 others 7 comments



B1: Local Identity - Planters

Our aim was to add a planter (all painted Pompei Red) with a wood carved sunflower on the front, under all road signs in the parish. This has now been achieved and the planting being maintained along with a rockery on the green.



B1: Local Identity – Planters (II)

As the Bloom team started creating the new planters, other local households joined in and created their own planters as well.



2 ceramic planters were added either side of the bench opposite Smiths Hall. This is a popular rest point for walkers and cyclists.

The residents at the bottom of Charlton Lane look after their own planters too now.



Court Lodge on Lower Road also created their own planter outside their main gate.

B2: Grass Cutting – Parish Council & neighbours

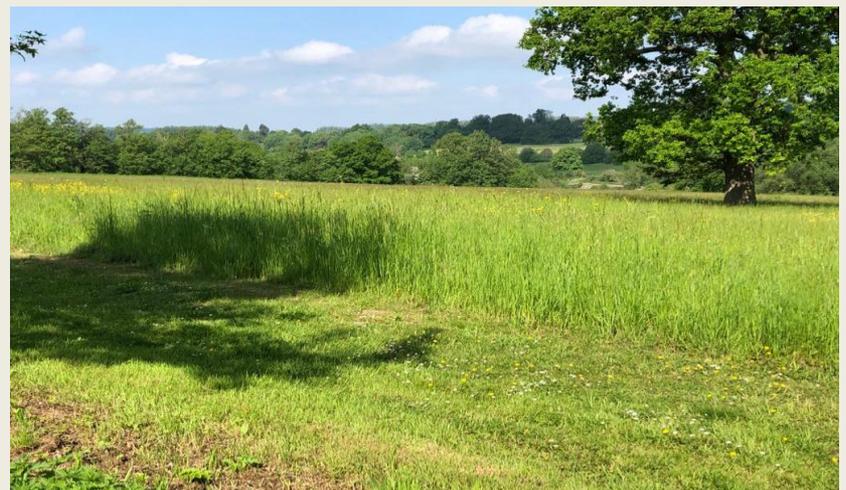


The grass cutting contract managed by the Parish Council was up for tender in spring 2020 and the Bloom group consulted for their input.

Our main aim was to reduce the cutting frequency to allow more wild flowers to flower and set seed naturally.

This was taken into account and the tender document updated to allow for just grass edges to be cut in certain areas, leaving the rest to grow longer. However there was opposition to doing this on the village green and to date we have not been able to get this changed. (We had hoped for edges of the green, football area, picnic tables and children's playground to be cut shorter only.)

Moreover, our raising this request did resonate with some villagers; awareness of the ecological importance of not cutting the grass down but leaving wild grass areas and this can now be seen as we walk around the village. This practice is becoming more common to the greater good of us all.



B2: Grass Cutting – Kent Highways

With the support of Bethany Pateman, the Roadside Nature Reserve Officer at The Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) and Sarah at KCC Soft Landscaping Team, we have managed to persuade the Kent Highways mowers to keep a wild green verge and just strim around the edges for visibility purposes on areas that they manage – this they call a Conservation Cut.

The above was agreed last year, however due to furlough at KWT we were not able to get it implemented. Now in 2021 it is agreed and in action.



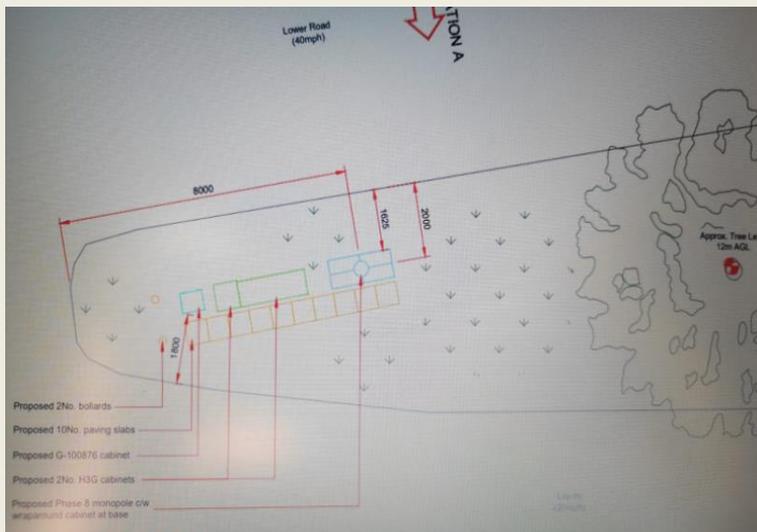
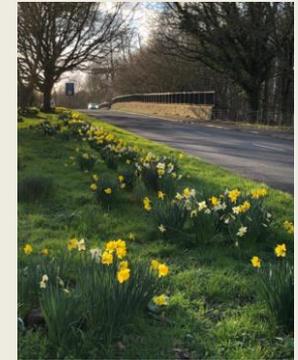
B2: Wilder Verges

The Kent and Medway Road Verge project was set up in 1994. It works to identify, protect and manage road verges which contain threatened habitats or wildlife. These are marked by special signs to inform passers by. The Project is a partnership between Kent Highways Services and Kent Wildlife Trust.



West Farleigh in Bloom identified a layby that had beautiful wild flowers in 2019 until they were all cut down in late June by Kent Highways. We contacted Kent Wildlife Trust to ask if we could become a Roadside Nature Reserve. They advised that these are being rebranded as Wilder Verges and that our site was suitable to be classified as such. The result is that Kent Highways will now only perform 2 full cuts per year (April and September) and will trim round the edge of the layby to ensure it looks neat and managed at all other times. The Bloom team will remove the grass cuttings so as not to overly enrich the soil. The Trust were unable to supply a sign and so we are hoping to create our own. 3 New trees were also planted in 2020.

A new threat to this area is a 5G mast and control boxes. It is with Maidstone Planning department currently.





515 People reached 130 Engagements [Boost post](#)
 36 6 comments

12 New Community Orchard

On Monday, 22 February 2021, 09:15:46 GMT, anna.jezewska <annajezewska@yahoo.co.uk> wrote:

Morning,

I have just seen a post on Facebook in regards to the planting of 6 tree's behind the cricket pavilion. I would love to "donate" a tree (purchase tree or send the funds). Would be willing to fundraise for more too and help with planting. I think it's a wonderful idea starting a new orchard. Please let me know how I can help in any way.

Kind Regards
 Anna Jezewska

B2. Natural Environment – Community Orchard

In November's LifeLine we read Ray Morris's article about the continued loss of habitat for birds in the local vicinity following the grubbing of the pear orchard off Gallants Lane. We therefore wondered if there was anywhere in the village that we could plant a few fruit trees where they would be useful to migratory birds and also benefit any passers by with their fruit crop.

Having admired the new area at the cricket club that is being developed for net practice, we approached the local land owner to propose the Bloom group purchased 6 trees to plant near that area, that could be enjoyed in the summer by the cricketers? They were in agreement so we then approached Keepers Nursery who specialise in fruit trees and who are based further down Lower Road. They suggested MM111 Apple and Brompton Plum bare root trees which would still be beneficial to the birds but also be producing fruit in Cricket Season and need minimal maintenance. We have duly bought and planted those trees and would ideally like to finance a bench and underplant with wild flowers for people to enjoy the surroundings in years to come as the land is also bordered by a public footpath.



B2. Teston Lane triangle designated Wildlife area

The Bloom group have been working on this area of private land since our inception. To begin with it had poor visual sight lines for traffic and accidents often occurred here. Our aim was to promote wildlife here and encourage naturalization.

We often have Sunday morning working parties to address overgrown plants to ensure it is safe, to camouflage the sub-power station as best as possible, cutting back ivy and clear away the majority of fallen branches as well as litter from passing traffic. We have been adding shade tolerant plants and spring bulbs and additionally ran a children's competition to name a new Bug Hotel that we created (the Bug Disco where the bugs go to bop!)

We have also added 2 bird boxes and upon inspection by a knowledgeable bird expert, have been pleased to find nesting families.



It has been the focus of a successful 'service' unit for a Silver Duke of Edinburgh award during Lockdown and due to its largely inaccessible location has thrived.



B2: Land adjacent to the Green and the Good Intent pub

The plot of land adjacent to West Farleigh Green has been empty for many years. In 2017 the Bloom team contacted the then land owners to ask them to cut back the brambles. They did this and started to be more proactive in managing the land, however they put the land up for sale in late 2020. It was purchased by a developer and a proposal put to planning (20/504300/FULL) that they were seeking permission to build 2 bungalows and moreover they would give a portion of the land to the parish council for village improvement. It is hoped that this development will also result in 'Section 106' money that will assist us in the transformation of the new community area.

The Bloom team met to brainstorm ideas that we could share with the Parish Council. The Parish Council wrote to support the application, saying:

“With regards to the buffer area, between the new dwellings and the pub, Councillors welcome the offer to make this an ecology area (without the pond); with a wildflower meadow and specific habitat features to encourage wildlife. We would like to confirm our request for this portion of the land to be transferred, as a gift, to the Parish Council in order for us to be able to protect the meadow in perpetuity. We are grateful that the landowner will landscape this area ready for transfer, to save any costs to the residents of the village.”



B3: Cleanliness - Monthly Litter Pickers

On the 1st Sunday of every month we have a group of local volunteers who litter pick the village with the assistance of 2 pick up trucks driving in front of them. This has been happening for 4 years now and the number of people attending was growing through winter 2020.

However, February 2021 was our last litter pick as we were told by Maidstone Borough Council that we were no longer allowed to do this for health and safety reasons (the speed limit is above 30 miles per hour and there are no pavements on our roads).

We have had meetings with the Maidstone Street Scene Officer, Street Scene Operations Manager and the Chair of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee in March 2021.

They have withdrawn their support that previously included supplying high visibility jackets, litter picking sticks and most importantly of disposing of the rubbish collected. They have advised us that we are not allowed to collect our own litter and take it to the local household recycling centre as we proposed.

We have followed up with a letter to our local MP, Helen Grant.



B3: Cleanliness – Dog Fouling, Fly Tipping & Recycling

Like many rural villages we have many dog walkers and also suffer from either people not picking up their dogs mess or else leaving the bags of mess for others to collect. We regularly remind people in the community to please take it home and now there is also a borough wide initiative starting which is welcomed.

We are fortunate not to suffer from any graffiti or vandalism. Flyposting has not been an issue this year for West Farleigh nor chewing gum.

We do suffer from fly tipping, especially on Kettle Lane which is a small unmade road but use the local 'Country Eye' application to report it quickly. Social Media helps here too.

Moreover as the borough household waste site is less than 1 mile away there are good refuse options available.



A compost bin has been acquired for the Churchyard to promote reuse of green / brown materials. They also have a water butt fixed to a down pipe.

A screenshot of a social media post from 'The Farleighs' dated 13 May. The post features a consultation poster titled 'TAKE THE LEAD' with the subtitle 'CONSULTATION ON NEW DOG CONTROL MEASURES' and 'OPENS 12 MAY UNTIL 12 JULY 2020'. The poster lists several proposals for a 'Public Space Protection Order' (PSPO) and includes a QR code and a website link for more information. A cartoon dog is also featured on the poster.

The Farleighs
13 May · 🌐

Good news and about time....

TAKE THE LEAD

CONSULTATION ON NEW DOG CONTROL MEASURES
OPENS 12 MAY UNTIL 12 JULY 2020

Have your say on 'Public Space Protection Order' proposals to:

- Increase the fixed penalty notice fine for dog fouling from £75 to £100.
- Expand on the existing dog control order to include exclusion of dogs from all children's play areas and Council owned tennis courts, whether they are fenced or not.
- Renew the existing ban of dogs in Vinters Park Crematorium and the grounds. This measure will not apply to certified working Assistance Dogs.
- Make it a legal requirement for a person in charge of a dog to comply with a request from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.
- Make it a requirement that dogs are kept on leads whilst in the grounds of the Sutton Road Cemetery.
- Make the straying of dogs an offence under the PSPO resulting in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £100 (£80 if paid within 14 days) which will replace the current 'collection fee'.

If you would like to take part in our survey but do not have access to the internet, please contact us on 01622 602301 to request a paper copy.

To respond to the consultation visit:
<https://wh.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=158747742146>

www.maidstone.gov.uk



C1: Year Round Activity – Bee Line

Kent County Council have launched 'Plan Bee – Kent's Pollinator Action Plan' and we are very much embracing that in our village. Focusing on shelter for insects and the ability to forage, we have been asking villagers through our monthly column in 'Lifeline' and through the village Facebook page to plant with a focus on the pollination ability. Our neighbours have then been sending us in photographs of bees and other pollinating insects on their plants and we have mapped those over our village to create 'Bee Roads'

Last year we ran a competition for children to win some pollinating plants from the Bloom group, with the request that the children monitor what insects they get and keep a photographic log. This year the winners sent us some more photos as they continue to enjoy the wildlife their plants have brought to their garden. Some of their plants included; buddleia, honeysuckle, Salvia Bumblesky & Salvia Kisses & Wishes

The BBC have also announced that in July 2021 they are running the 'Big Bee Challenge' for children and we intend to take part in that too.

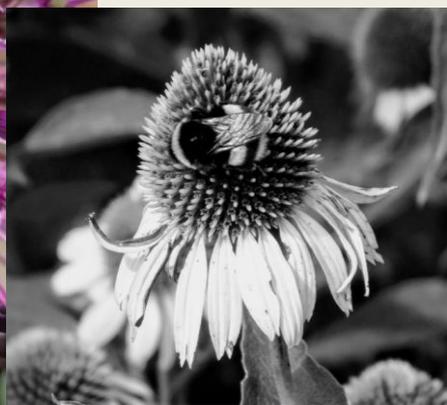


C1: Bee Line (2)



C1: Bee Line (3)

Photos sent into us of bees on pollinating plants in villagers back gardens



C1: Community Engagement – Bulb Planting Day

Bulb planting day – is now an annual event!

We had a good turn out of people to help this year, anyone with children went to the churchyard to keep the young ones contained!

We bought Tahiti daffodil bulbs this year and thought them very beautiful.



C1: New Community Engagement – Track Wild Animals....

In 2020 we ran a Facebook campaign asking people to send us pictures of their gardens that we could share so that those who were sheltering and unable to see the local environment could still appreciate the beautiful environment in which we live. We continued this through until the end of summer 2020 and our statistics generated by Facebook proved that we were the most interactive and engaged topic being discussed.

In 2021 we asked people to send us pictures of any wild animals that they saw in their back gardens or local walks. The results were fascinating:



- Home made bird boxes
- Hedgehogs
- Albino Squirrel
- Goldfinches on Lavender



C2: Elmcroft Verge @ Dandelion Times charity

Dandelion Times is a charity based in our village with the purpose of helping children with challenging emotional issues, often resulting from trauma, violence or serious health issues.

They have a verge outside their charity and we offered to take care of the upkeep for them so that their frontage is welcoming to all new families coming to visit.



The overgrown ivy has been tidied up along the wall and trimmed back. Underneath lavender has been planted and a new yellow rose added along the side wall.

Team members have also volunteered with the charity in their garden.



C2: Elmcroft Cottage @ Dandelion Times charity

Our Phase 2 of planned works with Dandelion Times involve a cottage on their site which has a very unruly front border. We are looking to regenerate this with sensory plants: including herbs such as rosemary and dill and grasses such as Stipa Tenuissima.

BEFORE...



BEFORE...



Michelle Forster

To: Jackie >

Yesterday

Re: Volunteering

Hi Jackie, sorry it's been a while, but I would just like to say thank you to your volunteers for all the hardworking they did tidying the front for us. We look forward to using the lavender with are families. Michelle.

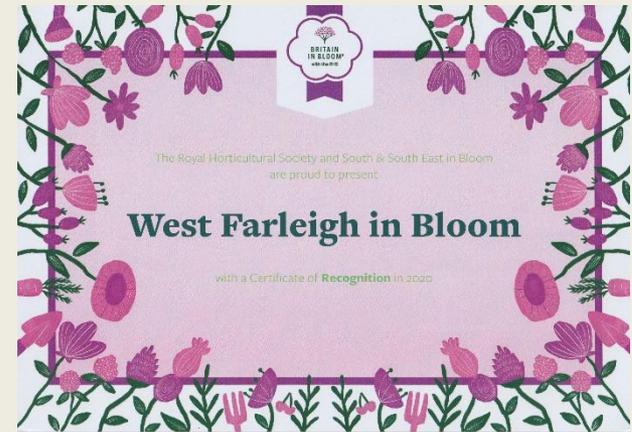
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Michelle Forster
<michelleforster@dandeliontime.org.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 3:32:48 PM
To: Jackie Ellis <jackiecizmic@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Volunteering

Hi Jackie, yes that will be great thank you. I meet your lovely volunteers on Friday. Many thanks. Michelle.



C2: Communication, Education & Awareness



[http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk/
village_in_bloom.html](http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk/village_in_bloom.html)

Facebook – ‘The Farleighs’

LifeLine – A free monthly publication for the village, contributed, edited and delivered by neighbours for each others enjoyment.

Share on:  Facebook  Twitter

Smiths Hall

West Farleigh, Kent

Delightful 3 acre gardens surrounding a beautiful 1719 Queen Anne House (not open). Lose yourself in numerous themed rooms: sunken garden, iris beds, scented old fashioned rose walk, formal rose garden, intense wildflowers, peonies, deep herbaceous borders and specimen trees.

Features and Attractions

Walk 9 acres of park and woodland with great variety of young native and American trees and fine views of the Medway valley. Cakes available.



[Read More](#)

Opening Times

Find Us

Owner Info

Open Days (Click dates for more info)

Many gardens are now offering cashless payment - if they are they will show the  icon - here to the left. Otherwise it is payment by cash.

Sunday 27th June 11am - 5pm [Pre-booking available](#)

For this open day you can pre-book your tickets in advance, but it is not essential. Click on the yellow book now button below or you can just turn up and pay on the day.

Refreshments:
Home-made teas.

Admission:
Adult: £5.00
Child: Free

C3: Community - National Garden Scheme @ Smiths Hall

The Norman family at Smiths Hall is very supportive of the village and opens its gardens every year to the public in aid of the NGS.

This year the gardens have been opened to villagers with proceeds going to local charity: Dandelion Times.

Their head gardener, Jon Fenlon, also writes a monthly column in Lifeline about what jobs he is currently doing, advice of what needs to be done in the garden now and answers questions posed by his readers.



C3: Fundraising

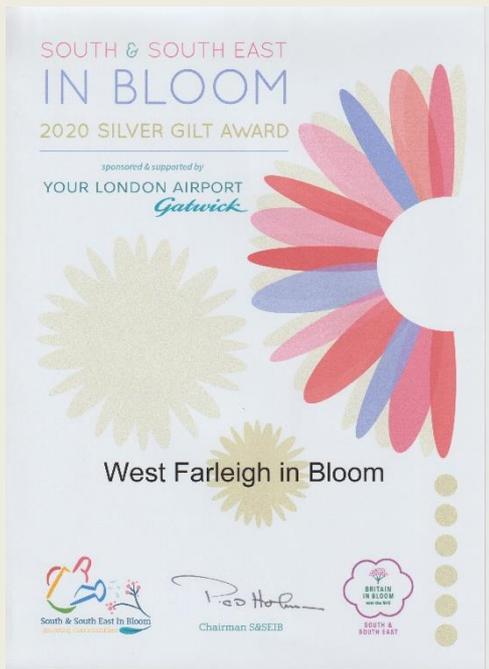
- In prior years we have always held fundraising events and applied for grants where applicable. This left our bank account quite healthy for our needs and so we also fund raised for another local charity; Spadework.
- During Covid we have not been able to fundraise as normal though wish to start adding events to our social calendars as soon as we can be sure that they can go ahead. Another garden party is likely as that was a real success last time both in terms of enjoyment and monies raised.
- For now we still have £300 available which allows us the freedom to continue.



Thank-you for visiting us in West Farleigh, Kent!

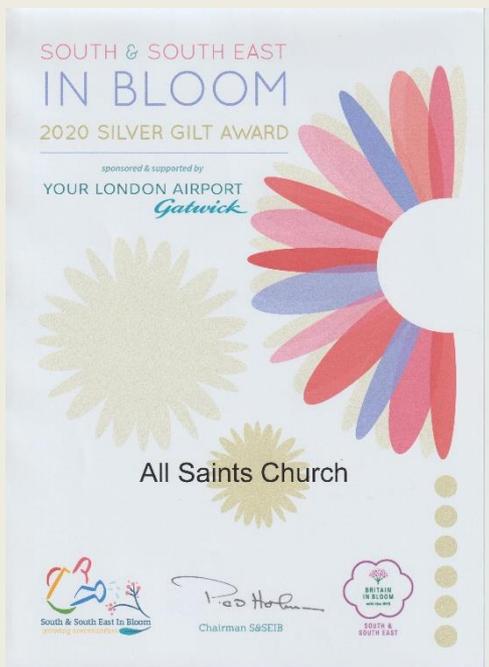
Village Entry

2018	Bronze	Jim Butress & Peter Mountford
2019	Silver	Vince Gradwell & Paul Dalby
2020	Silver Gilt	Remote invigilation
2021	?	Nick Hagon



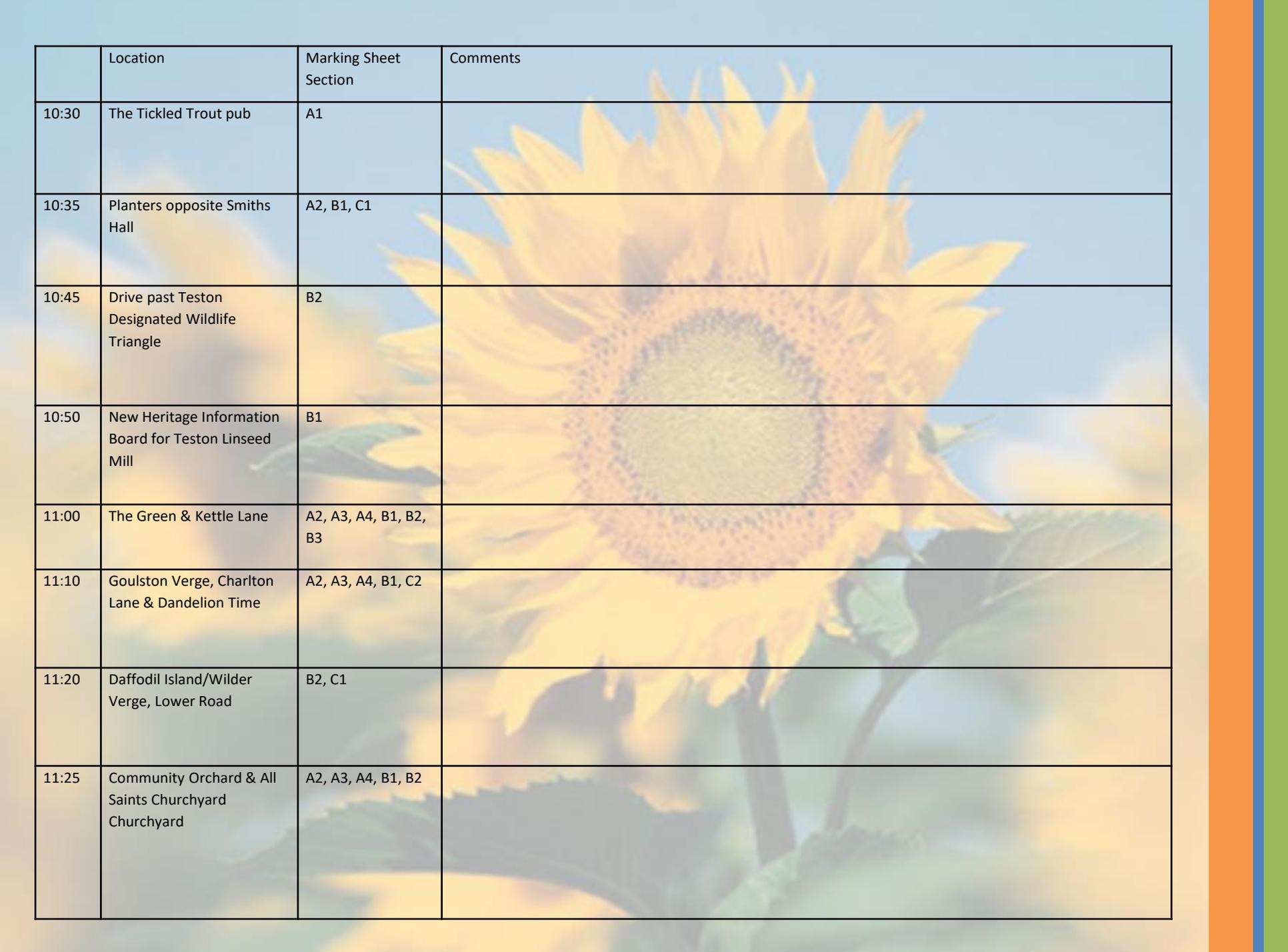
Churchyard Entry

2019	Silver	Vince Gradwell & Paul Dalby
2020	Silver Gilt	Remote invigilation
2021	?	Nick Hagon



Map of the Village





	Location	Marking Sheet Section	Comments
10:30	The Tickled Trout pub	A1	
10:35	Planters opposite Smiths Hall	A2, B1, C1	
10:45	Drive past Teston Designated Wildlife Triangle	B2	
10:50	New Heritage Information Board for Teston Linseed Mill	B1	
11:00	The Green & Kettle Lane	A2, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3	
11:10	Goulston Verge, Charlton Lane & Dandelion Time	A2, A3, A4, B1, C2	
11:20	Daffodil Island/Wilder Verge, Lower Road	B2, C1	
11:25	Community Orchard & All Saints Churchyard Churchyard	A2, A3, A4, B1, B2	



Spotted on our UK Staycation 2021