



Village & Churchyard briefing notes
South & South East in Bloom
2019

West Farleigh in Bloom - Village

Foreword & Welcome to our Judges

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our judges for 2019, Vince Gradwell and Paul Dalby.

The West Farleigh in Bloom campaign is now in its 2nd year of South and South East in Bloom village category. Last year we were very proud to achieve a Bronze certificate and have been working towards improving on that this year. We have additionally entered the Churchyard category for our beautiful 11th century village church; All Saints West Farleigh.

We are fortunate to have a strong community in our village with many additional volunteers joining our team for 2019. Our team is the initiative behind our activities and enhancements, with the aim of improving the visual and environmental aspects for residents and visitors whilst strengthening our rural community. Our campaign is organised by a committee of local volunteers with support from the local Pubs and village organisations.

Our Judges from last year, Jim Butress and Peter Mountford, provided valuable feedback and their proactive comments helped us to focus and improve our efforts. We have continued in expanding ideas from the first year and enlarged our strategic campaign with successes listed in the following pages.

The West Farleigh Bloomers x





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* Photo of Mill Lane project

A: Horticultural Achievement

WF in Bloom's aim has been to achieve year round impact though a consistency:

- Colour Scheme
 - Blue for the linseed (old Linseed Mill at Mill Lane), Red for Apple Orchards, Yellow for sunflowers.
- Appropriate Planting
 - Colourful but drought tolerant.
- Focal Points
 - Parish council gave £220 for the purchase of materials for new planters which our members then built. 4 under road signs and 1 large planter on the green.
 - Additional focus on Mill Lane in 2019.
- Cultivation
 - Complimentary pack of sunflower seeds sent to all residents with monthly LifeLine. We purchased a bulk supply and local charity Dandelion Time helped pack them.
- Businesses
 - Good Intent Pub, Jewelultra, Mindful Panda – all supporting our efforts and donating goods.
- Green spaces
 - Village Green – new rockery, new road sign planter, new large planter under village sign
 - Football pitch (inc new parking from local landowner) Jewelultra Paint in the village sponsor the upkeep of the Sports Club inc buying lawnmowers.
 - Cricket pitch – also benefit from sponsorship above
 - Churchyard – its inclusion in S&SE in Bloom and increased focus on this open space.
- New planting – more bulbs bought by WF Bloomers for Bulb planting day and for any villagers who wished to plant them on their verges or front gardens. These included:
 - 75 kg of mixed daffodils
 - 1,000 crocus bulbs
 - 2 hop plants to reference the old hop gardens of the village. Both growing at Good Intent sign.

Sunflowers

We were very honoured at the prize giving day in Brighton last year to be referred to by Jim Buttress as 'the village where they all grew sunflowers!'

Our winner in 2018 was 8 year old Holly French who grew a Pike's Peak sunflower to 1m.74. Hers was the tallest entry out of 30 households that participated. We also had a competition for best display which was won by Gabby King of Charlton Lane. The best display was judged by head gardener of Smiths Hall, Jon Falcon.

This year we intend to judge the height later in August as all the sunflowers grew taller after measurements were taken in 2018.

Sunflowers have now become our brand and in April with the help of Dandelion Time charity we sent every household an envelope of sunflower seeds with their monthly village journal. Our Little Angels also spent a happy afternoon planting sunflower seeds.

There is evidence of another great show of sunflowers to come - we even have a follower in Australia who keeps us up to date with the progress of his sunflowers!



Mill Cottages

A member of the West Farleigh in Bloom team has very successfully involved her neighbours to create a new area of interest in a part of the village popular with walkers due to its proximity to the river and good footpaths.

They have all bought identical baskets and planters and filled them with the same plants - and it looks lovely. The houses here are called “Mill Cottages” and would formerly have been for the workers at the now derelict Tutsham Mill (photo below). We are currently researching the history of the mill and would like to get a local interest sign out up there with information about the mill - planning permission allowing!

- The planters and hanging baskets outside each cottage have red and pink geraniums with blue lobelia (colours reflecting pink apple blossom, red cherries and blue flax from Teston Mill) of W Farleigh
- We have planted Ceanothus Victoria to complete the hedge around the septic tank at the front. This is blue (for the flax) and drought tolerant
- We have planted more climbing roses along the front garden in red and pink
- A pensioner at no 3 grew some sunflowers, some of which have been planted along the side of no 7, others still to be planted in the front garden when ready. They are being looked after by a 2 year old and his mother at no 2
- No 1 provides the water and hose pipe to water everything
- All cottages pay towards the upkeep of the planters





Planters

Some feedback in 2018 was to make more of an impression in our planting. We therefore sourced funds from the parish council for materials and built our own new planters. They are all 'Pompei Red' with the exception of Church Lane which was painted blue to match the pre-existing information board above.

We have followed the agreed colour scheme of Red, Blue and Yellow as below.



B: Environmental Responsibility

Our focus on conservation has stepped up considerably in 2019:

- Teston Lane Wildlife corner
- Ewell Lane Wildflowers – driven over by lorry / wall opposite knocked over in 2018 – sign reset by Bloomers and ground replanted.
- Bird Box supply – request to villagers for old pallets which we collected. Ray then made 5 boxes for the Teston Lane corner, 3 for the Church and we sold 12 at the plant sale for fundraising and included personalization by pyrography (decorating wood by controlled burning).
- Local Heritage – additions to village information signs
- Local Environment
 - vacant plot next to the Good Intent – owners now maintaining it after request from Bloomers
 - Litter pickers – working together for a better village environment
- Pride of Place
 - Street furniture – new Neighborhood watch signs have been requested as they are very faded
 - Signage – Additions to our local information boards
 - Art in the landscape – Court Lodge have now installed 5 metal deer into their grounds which are clearly visible from the Church and Cricket Pitch



Wildlife Triangle

We have a triangle of land which is very difficult to cultivate so designated this our wildlife area.

We have installed a bug hotel, 5 bird boxes, a pile of logs and are investigating door mice activity. Our bird expert reported in May that there were 11 eggs in one of the bird boxes.

We have made several bird boxes out of old pallets - and one of the team added extras to personalise them and we sold those at the church plant sale cream tea to give us an additional source of income.

Apart from bluebells and some other plants from our gardens we have left it to run wild after our annual tidy up in spring.

We would also like to do something for the bees and butterflies being aware of their current increasingly fragile existence. Next year we aim to expand into more planting for them and join forces with bee keepers.

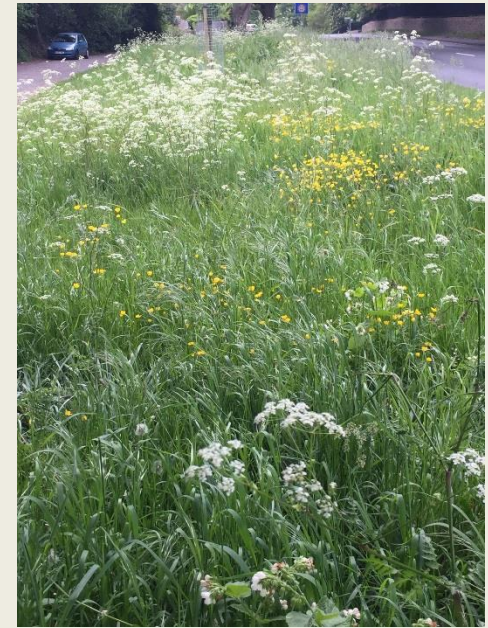


Wild flower meadow

One of our objectives set by the judges last year was to create a wild flower meadow on the triangle at the bottom of Ewell Lane.

In April a group of us set about clearing away the weeds leaving a grass verge around the edge and planted seeds. We then had the spell of very hot weather and no rain so we are not quite sure if the seeds managed to germinate despite best efforts. We have topped it up with cosmos but await to see what appears!

We also tried to enhance the green area by the lay by on Lower Road. Instead of being fully cut back, it was just cut round the sides to make it look cared for but maintain the wildlife habitat.



Monthly Litter Pickers

For the last 3 years we have had a monthly litter pick organised in West Farleigh. It is organised and staffed by residents but with support from the local council who supply the high vis jackets, litter picking equipment and help with the removal of litter sacks.

They always end up with a social breakfast after their hours work on a Sunday morning.



Heritage signage

2018: We had hoped to add QR codes to noticeboards around the village which would link back to our local website. However we postponed this and decided to spend our money and time by:

1. Repainting all village signs and benches
2. Adding to these signs to include heritage information in wood carvings – see photos below.
 1. Teston Bridge curving on the notice board adjacent to the Grade 1 listed structure
 2. Semper in Flore on the main noticeboard by the Good Intent pub on the village green
 3. Stumps and a ball on the notice board by the cricket pitch



C: Community Participation

We already have a very involved community in West Farleigh. We have engaged more people by:

- Sunflower Competition – 30 households entered in 2018. More this year!
- Bulb planting Day
- Monthly litter picking – the first Sunday of the month followed by breakfast and teas!
- Ramble with Refreshments & scavenger hunt – defined route around the village to showcase our work
- Little Angels (toddler play group) – growing sunflowers
- Evergreens (retired social group) – growing sunflowers & winning lunch at pub
- Good Intent Public house
 - Posies for the pub over the summer, locally grown and donated
 - Monthly meetings held here
- Garden party with music
 - August in back garden of Bloomers house
- Communication
 - Facebook posting regularly to our 400+ followers about plans for the village
 - LifeLine – hard copy newsletter that goes out monthly which we have a column in.
- Kent Messenger article
 - The main newspaper for the Maidstone area came to our bulb planting day and took photos which were published in their paper.





Little Angels

Although our small village does not have a school, we do have a lively toddler group run every Friday at All Saints Church. It is aimed at pre-school children and their carers and regularly attracts healthy numbers of the local and wider community.

One of the activities we have been running with them is their entry in the Annual West Farleigh Sunflower competition. The Bloom group supplied them with seeds and propagation trays and a lot of fun was had as all the children took part with filling their seed trays, planting and watering them. They have followed up regularly with the plants growth and visit them in the churchyard to see their progress. They are hoping to grow the tallest sunflowers in the village this year!





Fundraising

- Now that the parish council have seen our commitment they gifted us £220 towards our costs.
- We joined forces with the annual plant sale by selling cakes cream teas in the church - where we also sold several of our bird boxes, handmade by one of our team and personalised by another.
 - We were given the left over plants and have put them in one of the planters on the Green for everyone to enjoy.
- In June we held the 2nd Fathers Day Ramble with refreshment on the green and at one of team's houses. This year to add interest we devised a quiz to test local knowledge and a scavenger hunt for the children which we distributed in advance through LifeLine.
- In August we are holding our first garden party in one of the team's gardens with entertainment by a popular West Farleigh band.



Bulb planting

With lots of willing volunteers we used some of our fundraising to plant more daffodils on grass verges around the village; this is something we plan to do every year.

We concentrated our efforts on Lower Road and saw wonderful results in Spring 2019. We offered all villagers the option to have daffodil and crocus bulbs delivered to their homes for planting in their front gardens and verges free of charge and many people took us up on this offer.

We also inspired mass planting of bulbs by land owners to join the effort. Smiths Hall is a notable house in the village with a wide grass bank outside. For the first time they planted over 1,000 daffodil bulbs in drifts over their banks and it looked stunning and was enjoyed by residents and through visitors alike. We look forward to them spreading even more in 2020.



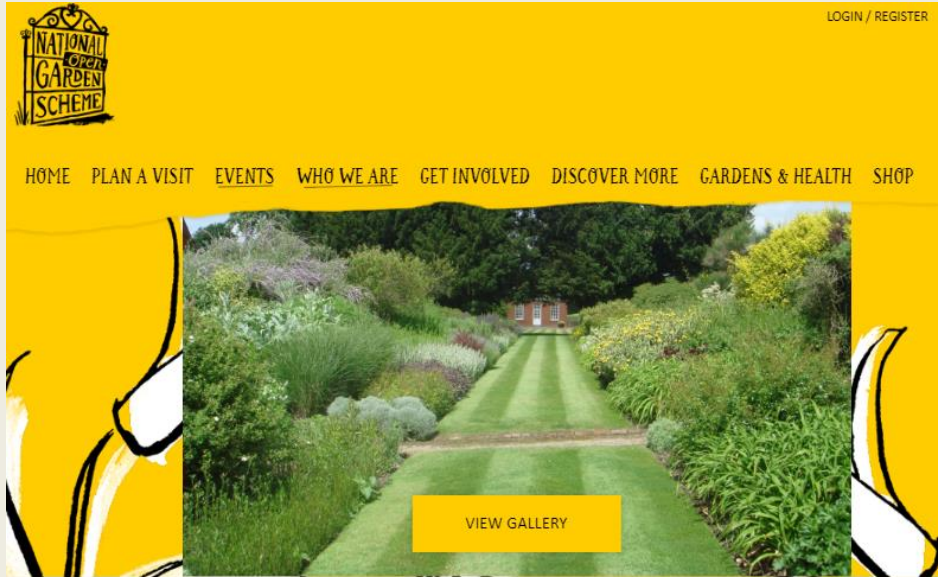
Evergreen Social Group & Pub Posies competition

A villager approached the West Farleigh in Bloom team and asked to join (yes, brilliant!) and she had an idea to help...

She grows flowers for cutting in her garden and proposed to supply the Good Intent pub with table posies for the summer in exchange for them giving an elderly person and their guest from the village a 3 course complimentary Sunday lunch.

The Good Intent publicans were very happy to help and we teamed up with the 'Evergreens' social club to offer the prize. The Evergreens is a fortnightly club for retired people to get together and enjoy some entertainment. The draw comprised a sticker under the lucky recipients plate and a voucher to use the prize when suited them, bringing great joy to all.





Smiths Hall

West Farleigh

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 wild flowers, peonies, deep herbaceous borders and specimen trees.



Opening Times

June 30, 2019 11:00 - 17:00 ▼

Refreshments:
Light refreshments.

Admission:
Adult: £5.00
Child: Free

Add to calendar

National Garden Scheme

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.

Their gardener 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.

The gardener also judged our Best Display competition as part of the Sunflower initiative.





Kent Men of Trees – Trees in the Village Competition

<http://kentmenofthetrees.co.uk/>

The aim of this competition is to assess the quality of trees in public places and private gardens throughout the villages of Kent, promote new planting and any remedial action needed.

The village has entered this competition many times over recent years with successful results resulting in prizes of new trees being planted on the green.

We always have a Village Tree Warden appointed but this changed personnel in 2018 due to ill health. Our new warden Ed Boyd has been updating all our documentation for the village website and had been helping land owners make informed decisions on what to do with their trees.



* Our 2 trophies given out for the Sunflower competition 2018 & an examples of an entry.



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

[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.

*Some years back a resident of the village planted the
seed of a Paulownia Tomentosa or foxglove tree and
hoped for the best...

Known as the Princess tree in China it only flowers
every 7 years! Now that it has grown large, for the first
year ever it has flowered and featured in our village
newsletter with offers for anyone to visit who was
interested.