



Village briefing notes
South & South East in Bloom
2020

West Farleigh in Bloom - Village

Foreword & Welcome to our Judges

We would like to extend a warm virtual welcome to our judges for 2020!

The West Farleigh in Bloom campaign is now in its 3rd year of South and South East in Bloom village category. We were thrilled to achieve a Silver medal in 2019 (1 up from our Bronze in our first year) and also gained a Silver in the Churchyard effort too. We have entered both categories again this year and despite the unusual times have kept up our efforts and evolved our plans in awareness of social distancing.

We are fortunate to have a strong community in our village with many additional volunteers joining our team, for example teenagers undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh service awards & new interest from our lockdown garden photo shares. We have tried to stay connected with our village during lockdown and social media has helped with that, gaining many new interactions and support.



Our campaign is organised by a committee of local volunteers with support from the local Pubs, village organisations and grants that have been won this year.

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



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Foreword & Welcome

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- Map of the Village
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* Photos of neighbours gardens shared during lockdown.

A1: Overall Impression

WF 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
 - The Green
 - Ewell Lane 'Wildflower' Triangle
 - Teston 'Designated Wildlife' Triangle
 - Wildflower/Daffodil Island, Lower Road
- Cultivation
 - Genny who is part of the Flowers from the Farm collective
 - School children at East Farleigh Primary School
 - Plant swaps in the village
- Businesses
 - Good Intent Pub, Tickled Trout pub, Jewelultra paint supplies – all supporting our efforts and donating goods.
- Green spaces
 - Village Green – Rockery, New road sign, Better planting of the large planter under village sign
 - Churchyard – its continued inclusion in S&SE in Bloom & increased focus as communal space.
- Grow Wild
 - Planned talk on Wilder Gardens at East Farleigh School from Kent Wildlife Trust
- New regeneration areas
 - Goulston Villas



A2: Maintenance - Ewell Lane Triangle

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

- In October we planted daffodils and updated our planter. We also planted wildflower seeds including yellow rattle to reduce the grass regrowth.
- In April a group of us set about clearing any new weeds whilst leaving a grass verge around the edge to ensure it was neat and looked cared for.
- The flowers came up well, though were a little tall for some motorist. In 2021 we will use a shorter variety.



A2: Maintenance - Mill Cottages

Mill Lane was a focal point for West Farleigh in Bloom in 2019. It is on the banks of the River Medway and has the Medway Valley Walk pass by in front of the old Linseed mill cottages.

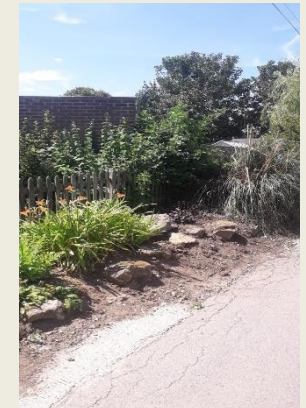
Last year the neighbours all worked together to create a harmonious colour scheme of planters outside their windows and down the river bank.

This has continued in 2020 and we hope will continue to do so into the future.



Goulston Villas

Another areas of the village we have been addressing is the bank outside Goulston Villas. Through the year we have been adding bulbs and shrubs. We hope to continue its cultivation for the rest of 2020 and 2021 too.



A2: Maintenance - Churchyard

The church in West Farleigh is a focal point of the village, not just from a religious perspective but also helped by being next door to the Cricket Pitch, in a picturesque spot on the banks of the River Medway and moreover now being used as a community hall as there are no other communal buildings in the village.

The bloom team have repainted the front and rear gates, planted poppies in a large war grave, left areas of grass unmown except for paths winding through them to allow wild flowers to grow and support a diverse range of insects, sown wild flower seeds in new borders, added a compost bin to encourage recycling of green/brown matter and in general shown the area attention and thought.

The Farleighs
Published by Cathryn Meddemmen [?] · 1 May · 🌐

🌻 Did you know that 5 of the tomb stones in All Saints Churchyard, West Farleigh are Grade 2 listed? 🌻

As yet, this very beautiful terracotta tomb stone is not listed, however it is believed to be designed by Eric Gill, a prominent stone mason from the beginning of the 20th century. The tomb is of a prior resident of Court Lodge. Does anyone have any history to support it being an Eric Gill please?

At some point it was planted up with Wild Garlic which is currently in bloom and looking beautiful.



499 People reached 76 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

In general the churchyard is very well maintained and allows full accessibility to all.

We have added to the noticeboard a history and map of the graveyard for visitors to find out more details about the rich history it offers.

All Saints is part of the United Benefice of Coxheath, Linton, Hunton, East Farleigh and West Farleigh.

The Farleighs
2 July at 10:50 · 🌐

🌻 There are 2 war graves in All Saints Church: 1 the grave of Bertram Leney who died in WW1 and the second a family grave of the 3 Fletcher brothers who all died in WW2 and used to live in Elmscroft on Charlton Lane.

West Farleigh in Bloom planted red poppies in remembrance in the Fletcher grave earlier this year. It is a real pleasure to see them grow. 🌻



499 People reached 76 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

A3: Plant Selection

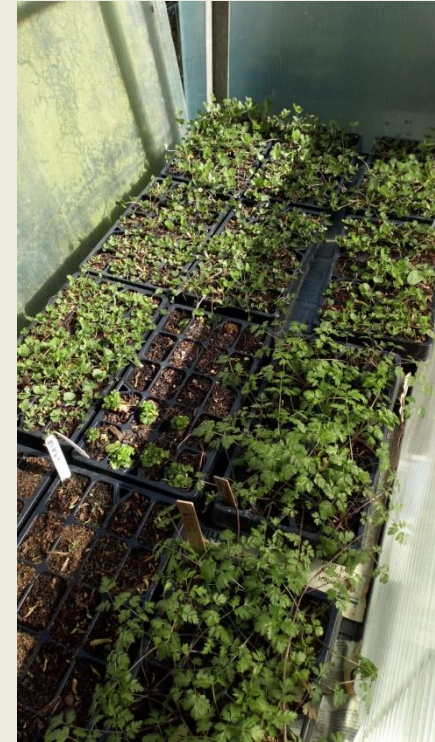
Throughout the presentation you will see photos our villagers have taken through Lockdown and which we have shared daily on our Facebook page.

New Planting for 2020:

- Bulb Planting Day : more bulbs bought by WF Bloomers for communal Bulb planting day and for any villagers who wished to plant them on their verges or front gardens. These included:
 - 25 kg Daffodils – Red Devon
 - 25 kg Daffodils – Sempre Avanti
 - Snowdrops
 - Sylvestris (Native Tulips)
 - Bluebells
- Update Planters
 - Skimmia Japonica x 12
 - Grasses Carex x 12
 - Cyclomen x 12
- Teston Triangle Wildlife Area
 - Digitalis x 12
- Wildflowers for Lower Road Layby from seed in peat free compost:
 - Red clover
 - Bird's foot trefoil
 - Tufted vetch
 - Viper's bugloss
 - Upright hedge parsley
 - Musk mallow
- Gifts from our gardens to communal village areas:
 - Wild geranium, heuchera, crocosmia, anemones, Lily of the valley,
 - bluebells, sedum, cosmos And many more.
- Rockery – various alpines

Oxeye daisies
Lupins
Rudbeckia

Genny runs 'Bow Meadow Flowers', part of the 'Flowers from the Farm' collective and grew the wildflower plug for us



A3: Wild Flowers



Looking for Wildflower Spotters!

With our connection to Kent Wildlife Trust, we asked them to include in their monthly email to their subscribers a shout out from the West Farleigh in Bloom team. In November it went out:

Does anyone in the wider vicinity have time and expertise to help West Farleigh in Bloom analyse what wild flowers we already have growing in the village and along our roadsides?

We had 2 responses - a lady from Bromley and also our very own Genny who is part of our group and saw the newsletter request! We contacted both people saying that we would be back in contact in spring to arrange. However again due to Covid-19 this has had to be postponed to next year.

Knowing what is already growing naturally here is important so that we can work with it and monitor its success and spread. We will roll this to our 2021 plan too.



A4: Plant Quality - Kent Men of Trees – Trees in the Village Competition

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

Having entered the competition for many years and always being highly commended, in October 2019 we won this competition!

We expanded the route that we showed the judges, taking in domestic houses and their trees as well. This includes what we believe is the oldest tree in the village, a 450 year old Beech (see below).

Winning this award meant that we were gifted some new trees to plant. Below is one of those trees which is growing well.



B1. Local Identity: Sunflowers

Our brand is a Sunflower and every year of Bloom we run a tallest Sunflower competition. In 2018 we judged in July but have moved it back last year to August to get taller entries. This year we will measure on August 14th.



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



Any villager who was on holiday and saw Sunflowers abroad were encouraged to send us pictures to share on our Facebook page. We had photos from as far a field as Tanzania and Melbourne.

We also had an entry from Sydney!





B1: Local Identity - Planters

In Autumn 2019 one of our Bloom signs on Charlton Lane was stolen. However another villager saw the (below middle) 'table' for sale at a local 'antique' fair! At least it had been 'recycled'...

We have added another new planter by Oliver North social housing and replanted all the other planters in the parish. We have also added sunflowers to them as our branding.



B1: Grass Cutting



In December 2019 we were able to work with the Parish Council to review the grass cutting contract for the village that was up for tender in spring 2020.

Referencing Plantlife's publication 'The Good Verge Guide' we asked to have the following text included in the tender:

Consideration will be given to contractors who have some experience of managing 'wild' areas or are keen to extend their experience in this increasingly important practice of managing public spaces for biodiversity.

We were able to give our opinion on the number of cuts per year as well as for the clippings to be removed to allow for species-rich vegetation to thrive, however the latter was not deemed possible.

We asked for grass to be left to grow longer on the green with some short and some long areas and as you can see from the photographs adjacent, this was possible.

We feel that we have made some progress and will continue to do so as more people get comfortable with areas of longer grass and change in practices.



B1: Street Furniture - Heritage signage & Post Boxes

In 2019 we added carved surrounds to our village signs. In 2020 we aimed to add a further point of interest sign as an old Linseed Mill on the banks of the River Medway that is now a ruin in a parish 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.

Our plans were delayed by Coronavirus but we have all the above now organised and are arranging for it to be completed in the second half of 2020.

As mentioned in our 2018 information pack we will be adding QR codes on the signposts to link back to our village website <https://thefarleighs.co.uk>



As per our facebook post to the right, we also approached the Post Office to see if they would repaint our post boxes around the village and they agreed. We are very pleased with the results.



B2. Natural Environment – Teston Wildlife Triangle



Our Bloom team regularly hold working parties at Teston Wildlife Triangle, normally to manage the ivy, ground elder and fallen branches. However in March 2020 we were approached by Edward Waters, a local 15 year old.

He is currently undertaking his Silver Duke of Edinburgh award but the service element of it had to stop due to Covid-19. He asked us and gained approval from his award leaders to volunteer on this area of land to enhance its wildlife and add more planting to it.

He has made a fantastic start and is currently helping out for a couple of hours each weekend. We have received comments from locals and passers by alike on its progress and we hope we have inspired Edward with our project.



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. The Project is a partnership between Kent Highways Services and Kent Wildlife Trust.

WF 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 but that our site was suitable to be classified as such. The result is that Kent Highways will now only 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 – however with Covid the Kent Wildlife staff were furloughed in March and there was a break down in communication with Kent Highways. The layby has been fully cut this year but we will ensure that for 2021 it will be left wild.

3 New trees have been planted and poppy heads were saved them scattered here too.



B3: Cleanliness- Monthly Litter Pickers

In 2016 we started a monthly litter pick around the village, the first Sunday of the month at 9am, followed by hot sandwiches and tea at the end. We have support from the council in regards to equipment but otherwise are fully motivated ourselves.

There was a couple of months break for the first time during Covid-19, but once we were able to recommence, social distancing was observed – as shown by Terry and Brian below!



In June 2020 one of our members noted “62 people (?) this week choose to hurl a bottle or can out of the car window and 10 a coffee cup. We are seeing roughly 2.5kg of trash per mile of B road per week.”

This is despite new sign posts asking people to take their rubbish home.



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 Country Eye app to report it quickly. Social Media helps here. Moreover as the borough household waste site is less than 1 mile away there are good refuse options available.



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 01922 482061 to request a paper copy.

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

www.maidstone.gov.uk

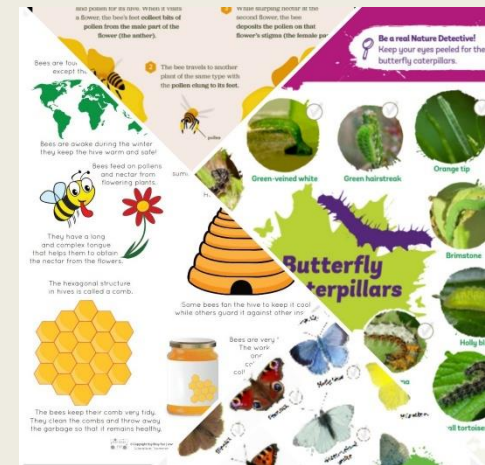


A compost bin has been acquired for the Churchyard to promote reuse of green / brown materials. They also have a water butt fixed to a down pipe.

C1: New Community Engagement – East Farleigh School

West Farleigh does not have its own school, however East Farleigh has a Primary school which we have begun working with. The Governors, Parents Association and Head Master have all been very supportive:

1. Bee and Butterfly project: We created Bee and Butterfly tracking projects for local school children in Lockdown. With the packs we also gave them wildlife friendly plants to plant in their own gardens.
* See Appendix for pack that was distributed to the children *
2. Greenhouse fund raising & Gardening club: In partnership with the school we have helped them relaunch their gardening club and get their greenhouse back in use.

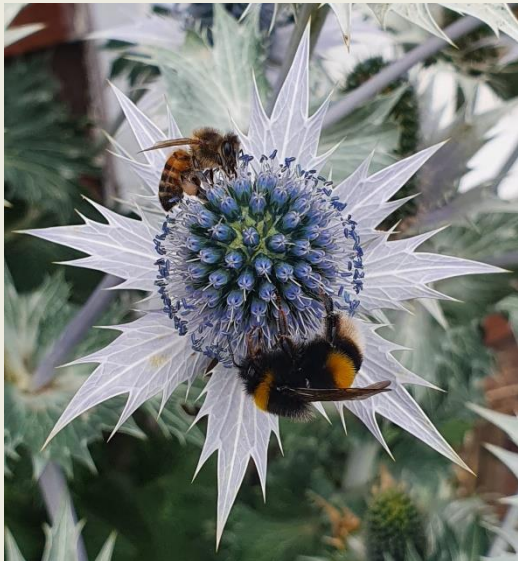


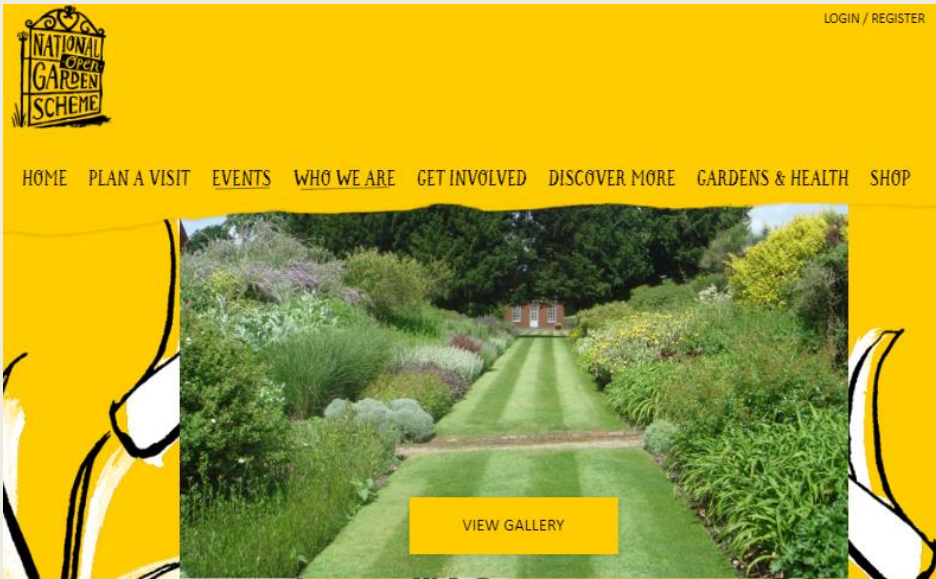
C1: New Community Engagement – continued....

3. Following the theme of 'Grow Social' we wanted to get non-Bloom members interested in gardening and the environment.

Using our new contacts through the East Farleigh school Gardening Club we jointly approached the Head Master to propose we hold a talk in their school hall given by Kent Wildlife Trust on the Topic of Gardening for Wildlife. We would charge a nominal entrance fee and all proceeds would go to new equipment for the gardening club. He was very supportive and we started to make arrangements. However Covid-19 happened and all was put on hold. We do intend to run this event though in spring 2021.

As the name of our group suggests 'West Farleigh in Bloom' originated in West Farleigh, however we do already have some East Farleigh members and many of the West Farleigh children attend East Farleigh school. We hope that this ongoing partnership will build new links and increase our membership of volunteers.





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](#)



C1: 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 Time

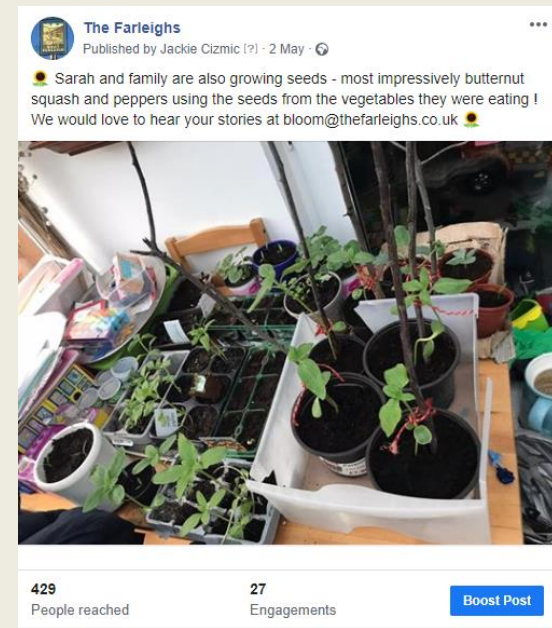
Their gardener also writes a monthly column in Lifeline about what jobs he is currently doing, advice of what needs to be done in the garden now and answers questions posed by his readers.



C2: Year Round Communication: Lockdown activities

During lockdown for Covid-19 we ran 2 initiatives:

1. Daily postings on 'The Farleighs' Facebook Every day we post pictures of local gardens so those residents who were shielding and unable to get out did not miss out on our beautiful surroundings. All photos that you see in this presentation are samples from what we received in. Our posts are reaching over 400 people each time. We are still posting daily at the time of writing this report.
- We were also very touched to receive personal thanks on the feed from another editor for our efforts:



C2: Year Round Communication: Lockdown activities

Attached are our lockdown Facebook statistics. Daily postings with lots of interactions. We were very pleased and kept / keep on receiving emails to our group email address 'Bloom@TheFarlieghs.co.uk' with more photos from non-bloom members.



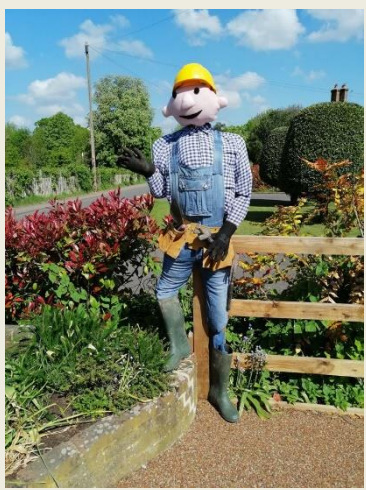
In Bloom stats – May 2020

Date	Reach	Engagement	Likes	Loves	Wow	Comment
1	499	76	20	4		2
2	429	27	14	2		
3	543	103	20	2	3	7
4	426	38	21	3		1
5	426	51	17	4		2
6	286	15	7	2		
7	436	68	26	5		2
8	375	31	18	2		
9	317	17	11			
10	372	27	10	2	3	
11	507	76	18	1		2
12	489	67	12	2		3
13	348	32	17			
14	419	42	17	1		
15	435	34	18	7		
16	428	32	10	3		2
17	461	48	28	2		2
18	446	42	24	5		1
19	480	67	26	6	1	5
20	581	147	47	6	9	4
21	324	19	16			
22	492	41	24	1		2
23	360	16	9			
23	417	57	18	2		
24	426	24	15	1	1	
25	348	11	6	1		
26	315	19	8			
27	386	32	11	4		
28	414	36	11	1	1	
29	390	46	20	1		
30	470	81	22	5		3
31	396	25	10	1		
Totals			551	77	18	38

C2: Lockdown – continued...

2. Scarecrow Competition!

It was very popular during lockdown to create rainbows for your windows for people to see on their outings. We extended this to creating your own themed scarecrows. Some of them are shown here!



C2: Community - Education

Via our Monthly free Periodical 'LifeLine' that is delivered by a group of local volunteers to everyone's houses, we have a monthly column and have run a few competitions.

One of them was to name the new Bug Hutches in our village:



We had 2 winners: William Fowles (5) and Oscar Waters (13) and using Pyrography we created 2 name plates for the bug hutches and these have been added for all to see.

We then also bought both boys a small bug hutch of their own for their gardens.



C3: Fundraising – For us



- We did not ask the Parish Council for any money this year as we had successfully raised enough funds in 2019 through bird box making, plant sales, cream tea afternoons and a gardening party for the village in a Bloom members garden. However:
 1. Another Village Fund that was obsolete awarded us £235 to enrich the village.
 2. We applied and won a Grant from Maidstone Community Fund for £200. The purpose of this pitch was to create a new signpost for the old linseed mill on Mill Lane.
 3. We applied and won a Grant from Maidstone Go Green Go Wild for £250 – to promote wildflower meadows and planting in rural communities
 4. Kings Hill Rotary Grant were offering a grant for £100 which we applied for to help with the Bee and Butterfly competition. No grants were given due to Covid-19.



Fundraising & Support – By us for SpadeWork

In September 2019 we held a garden party in one of the Bloomers gardens to celebrate our achievements as a group. There was entertainment and cream teas were supplied and all profits split between our own funds and those of a local gardening charity – [Spadework](#).

£357 was raised from this enjoyable afternoon.





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

[http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk/
village in bloom](http://www.thefarleighs.co.uk/village_in_bloom)

Facebook – ‘The Farleighs
Kent’

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

Go Green Go Wild Forum

GO GREEN GO WILD NETWORKING FORUM

If you are a 'friends of', wildlife or community group, that is doing great things for nature, join us on...

DATE 23RD NOVEMBER 2019

PLACE LIBRARY ROOM, MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

TIME 10:30AM TO 12NOON

- Find out how to apply for the NEW Go Wilder for Maidstone Grants, to help with your nature project.
- Meet, network and share ideas with other local groups
- Hear updates on the local Biodiversity Strategy

RSVP to:

NicolaToulson@maidstone.gov.uk

01622 602568

The Farleighs
21 June at 11:34

Stephen Norman writes
t's been a great year for the bumble bees and the flowers at Smiths Hall are full of them. There are at least six species doing well. So we're going to have a bumble bee spotting competition for kids during the Garden Open...every child will get a bumble picture card and a chance to spot the different species of these wonderful creatures.

White-tailed Bumblebee

		WHAT DID YOU SEE?			
DATE	LOCATION	COMMON CARDER BEE	WHITE-TAILED BUMBLEBEE	OTHER	OTHER
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Common Carder Bee White-tailed Bumblebee

490 People reached 27 Engagements

[Boost Post](#)

Appendix

Village Entry

2018	Bronze	Jim Butress & Peter Mountford
2019	Silver	Vince Gradwell & Paul Dalby
2020	Silver Gilt?	

Churchyard Entry

2019	Silver	Vince Gradwell & Paul Dalby
2020	Silver Gilt?	



Map of the Village

