

Canterbury in Bloom 2020

because we **love** our city
Judges Portfolio



Canterbury in Bloom

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Canterbury in Bloom

Introduction

Canterbury is an ancient city at the heart of the Garden of England and home to a UNESCO World Heritage site comprising Canterbury Cathedral, with its stunning mixture of Romanesque and Perpendicular Gothic architecture, the modest Church of St Martin (the oldest church in continuous use in the English-speaking world) and the ruins of St Augustine's Abbey, once a burial place for the Anglo-Saxon kings of Kent.

Canterbury has three river tour companies operating on three kilometres of river, over 30 bridges and you are never more than five minutes from a park or garden. With its three universities, arts and culture scene, Canterbury is a cosmopolitan city with a countryside vibe. There is plenty of open space and many areas are pedestrianised.

The city itself has a population of 55,240 (with a wider district population, including Whitstable and Herne Bay, of 164,100) and, in normal times we welcome 30,000 university students every September and over 7.8 million visitors annually from the near continent, the region and further afield.

However, these are not normal times and much has changed since the COVID-19 crisis hit in March. Despite the lockdown, the businesses, organisations and community groups who contribute to Bloom have been busy, doing everything possible to keep Canterbury blooming. In addition, Canterbury City Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and appointed a Climate Change Officer in April 2020. The community has also set up the Canterbury Climate Action Partnership, on which many of the Bloom partners, including the Business Improvement District sit.

That said, it has been a challenge to keep in touch with some partners throughout the COVID-19 crisis for understandable reasons, so some have not been included in this portfolio but there are some new additions. We will keep in touch with all partners as we emerge from the crisis and plan to keep progressing plans for Bloom in Canterbury.



Pond dipping at Kingsmead Field Fun Day.



Foxglove.

Canterbury in Bloom

Our history

Canterbury participated in the regional Bloom campaign for the first time in 2011. Indeed, the city centre was largely 'flower free' and the only group that promoted flowers, gardens and all things horticultural was the original Canterbury in Bloom group that ran a front garden competition for residents, a schools' competition for local primary schools and a competition for local businesses. With limited resources the group did an amazing job, sustaining interest and commitment to all things Bloom related.

In 2011, Canterbury City Partnership CIC (CCP), a membership group representing local businesses in the city centre, developed a range of programmes to prepare the city for a potential Business Improvement District (BID) campaign. As part of this, CCP brought together a group of partners to look at whether it would be feasible to enter the South & South East in Bloom campaign in 2012. The purpose was to build relationships across the city, build capacity for future partnership projects and to enhance the city centre, which was singularly lacking in floral displays.

Our journey

2012 Silver	2016 Gold in both South & South East in Bloom and Britain in Bloom	first Green Heritage Conference, an Upcycling Competition with local schools and an environmental education project aimed at the local community called "Lost Words"
2013 Silver Gilt		
2014 No city centre entry, due to BID campaign. Whitefriars Shopping Centre entered their category: Gold	2017 Gold in both South & South East in Bloom and Britain in Bloom. RHS Community Champion awarded to BID CEO Bob Jones	
2015 Gold and Finalist in Britain in Bloom	2018 No city entry, due to focus on Green Heritage, incl the country's	2019 Gold in South and South East in Bloom.

How is Canterbury in Bloom organised?

Partnership has been at the heart of what we do and is intrinsic to how we organise our campaign. The campaign is a grouping of autonomous organisations each with their own objectives and ambitions for the development of their area. Canterbury Business Improvement District undertakes to coordinate the partnership and submit the annual Bloom entry and meets with partners to enable knowledge sharing and joint working on projects throughout the year, such as cleaning and graffiti removal with the local authority and community groups, and the Green Heritage and Lost Words initiatives in 2018-19.

Here are our partners:

Canterbury BID	Canterbury Cathedral	Oaten Hill and South Canterbury Assoc.	The Canterbury Society (civic society)
Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU)	Canterbury City Council and their parks and gardens contractor, Serco	Rough Old Wife Cider (working with CCC to manage public orchards)	The Friends of Kingsmead Field
Canterbury College	Friends of Dane John and St. Mary de Castro	St Martin's Church	The Friends of Westgate Parks
		St Mildred's Area Community Society	The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (Our Stour)
		St Peter's Methodist Primary School	Westgate Parks team (KCC and CCC)
		St Peter's Resident Association	Whitefriars Shopping Centre
		The Abbots Mill Project	

Other projects and community groups: Colourful Canterbury and Brewers Decorators, Linden Grove Community Volunteers, Webbs Garden, St Edmund's School, Sainsbury's

Volunteer hours: We have not been able to estimate volunteer hours during the COVID-19 crisis, especially given that many group community activities needed to be cancelled or postponed (eg. Great British Spring Clean).

Horticulture and Sites

Canterbury City Council (CCC) and their contractor Serco

The maintenance of the Council's main parks, gardens and open spaces is undertaken by its contractor Serco. The areas covered include: Dane John Gardens, Greyfriars Garden, Kingsmead Field, Lady Wootton's Green, Miller's Field, St Mary de Castro, Solly's Orchard, The Butterfly Garden, Westgate Parks and the City Walls. Serco is responsible for grass cutting, sign cleaning, inspection of play equipment, litter collection, responding to vandalism and fly tipping, inspections and general open space maintenance, as well as the formal planting.

The maintenance and planting programme for the parks is as follows:

Varied mowing regime

One of the methods used to enhance biodiversity within Canterbury's parks and open spaces is to have a varied mowing regime. Ornamental grass within formal garden areas in the parks are cut every 5 working days. Paths used to direct visitors through nature reserves, such as Bingley Island, are only mown every two weeks, leaving the adjoining areas to become a natural habitat. Marginal borders and areas of wildflowers are used in other parks and open spaces, such as Miller's Field and Kingsmead Field, to encourage bee populations to thrive. (A2, B2)

Extended year-round interest and pollinator-friendly planting

Ornamental beds are planted twice per year in October and May and tidied approximately every 10 days. Year-round interest is provided by early flowering winter aconites, crocuses and daffodils, and late flowering perennials such as aster, penstemons, rudbeckia, Salvia Amistad and Agastache 'Blue fortune' which also attract butterflies. (A3)

Environmentally friendly waste management

100% of grounds maintenance waste is recycled from Westgate Gardens, Dane John and Toddlers' Cove. Any trees that have been felled due to high winds or disease are reused within the parks or sent to the saw-mill to create new park benches. For example, when a tree fell on Tannery Field, the contractor sensitively cut this into smaller sections and placed it at the edges of the field to become habitats for wildlife and animals. (B2, B3)

A1. Abbot's Mill

Background and heritage

The Abbot's Mill Project was incorporated in 2010 and is a social enterprise and Community Interest Company. The mission of the Abbot's Mill Project is to develop an urban hub of environmental and social justice, powered solely by non-centralised, renewable energy. The hub will include an education/research centre about sustainable and compassionate living, renewable energy and the importance of the River Stour in Canterbury's past, present and future, a vegan community café and a community led woodland/wildlife garden based on permaculture principles. The Abbot's Mill Project will provide a platform for cutting edge environmental science and newly emerging sustainable technologies from across the UK.

Horticulture and environment

An interpretation panel has been installed on the 'arrowhead' site explaining the aims of the project. A bench, designed by a local 15-year old and carved from sycamore wood from the site by 'Tribal Animal Tree Art and Wood Sculpting', has been installed at the point of the 'arrowhead' land at the riverside. In 2017, two mill stones (and then later another two) were retrieved from the river Stour close-by and added to the site. (B1)

A native tree hedge, consisting of hawthorn, beech and yew, has been added around the arrowhead for winter shelter and food for wildlife, as well as bat boxes. (B2)

The project manages the site as a nature reserve and community education project. It organises monthly volunteer action days on site – incorporating litter picks and general maintenance of the site, as well as work to improve biodiversity and encourage wildlife. (B3)

Community and communication

The project also organises and hosts regular wildlife walks and talks on site, including bat walks. Community education events such as a mini festival for Mother Earth Day are also organised as well as education programmes for young people, including the 'Be the Change' Young Activists Project, which was a 6-month programme to encourage and support young people to learn to live in harmony with our natural environment, with other animals and with each other. (C1)

A2. Beverley Meadow

Background

Beverley Meadow is a much loved local, large multifunctional open space in the heart of the St Stephens community, on the edge of Canterbury City, with wonderful views towards the Cathedral. Popular with dog walkers, and visitors of all ages, Beverley Meadow offers both active and relaxed reflective recreation in a beautiful setting. The space has an interesting history and some unique heritage features such as an old railway bridge. The meadow is dissected by a footpath which creates a natural zoning with active space to the west of the footpath, and quiet reflective space to the east.

In recent times the council has been working closely with local residents and interest groups, and carried out a consultation on what improvements local residents would like to see for Beverley Meadow. The consultation had a fantastic response, and a list of planned improvements was drawn up.

Enhancements

Over the last 12 months many of the improvements have come to fruition. Enhancements so far include planting a row of 21 trees along the main pedestrian footpath - a mix of *Quercus Robur* (Common or English Oak) and *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' (Sweet Gum); installation of 5-a-side goals in the active zone of the open space; creation of amenity picnic areas on the quieter side of the meadow, including installation



Beverley Meadow.



Picnic Area.

of picnic tables and planting of clusters of trees to provide interest and shade, so people can sit and enjoy time in the lovely surroundings. In time we will seek to further enhance the area with an aspiration to provide bespoke entrance signage and enhance the biodiversity of the meadow. (B2)

Community

The next step is to help facilitate the formation of a Friends of Beverley Meadow Group and we will be meeting with interested residents in autumn 2020. (C1)

A3. Canterbury Cathedral

Background

Canterbury Cathedral Precincts are open to both local residents (free admission) and paying visitors. The Cathedral is halfway into a £24m programme of refurbishment which was partially funded by HLF. New garden areas are also being made in the western half of the Cathedral precincts. (A1)

Horticulture

The Cathedral houses three National Plant Collections; *Hakonechloa macra*, *Ophiopogon japonicus* and *Aspidistra elatior* cultivars. A new collection which will be based permanently at the Cathedral will hold 23 magnolia bred by Amos Pickard. (A1, A3)

Other new planting includes drought tolerant plants in the Infirmary ruins. The roses around the new Buffs statue have been replaced with perennials, shrubs and bulbs that offer a good source of nectar for pollinators. (A2, A3)

In 2016, the Cathedral had a stand at the Hampton Court Flower Show displaying their national collection of *Hakonechloa macra* (a cascading bunchgrass) winning a Silver Medal and were at the show again in 2017 and 2019. In 2019, the stand also displayed *Ophiopogon japonicus* cultivars. (A3, A4)

The roses in the Deanery are from David Austin Roses, who have also assisted with the development of a new Thomas à Becket rose. Other roses with a local identity are Christopher Marlowe and Brother Cadfael. (A3)

Heritage and Environment

Canterbury Cathedral's special feature is the Herb Garden. Interactive labels using Near Field Communication are enabling visitors to use their smartphone to see the image of a particular herb in the 1597 Gerrarde's herbal which is held in the Cathedral library. This volume is normally only available to study by appointment so this system opens it up to a much wider audience. (B1)

Other recent projects in the Cathedral Gardens include creating a woodland area within the grounds. The team also leave log piles to encourage insect life, including stag beetles, which are now being found regularly. The area also has bird feeders and a native hedge. Canterbury Cathedral has bumblebee hives located within a wildflower area in the Dean's garden to introduce more queens to the city and increase the bumble bee population. The Cathedral was also approached by a local young beekeeper who asked for space for a few hives. He now has two honeybee hives in the Precincts, increasing pollinators in the city, and giving a young starting beekeeper (these are his first ever hives) a chance to practice his hobby (B2).

Organic lawn feed is being trialled in the Memorial Garden and plant pests and diseases are treated with organic products such as SB Invigorator and Horticultural soap. The Cathedral gardeners are using peat-free coconut coir for potting up and new starch based, non-plastic pots have been introduced to decrease the use of plastic. Rain-water collection has been increased, meaning the use of drinking water for plant watering has decreased. (B3)

Composting is prioritised – compost from leaf mould, perennial plants and grass cuttings are used to add more organic matter to the borders. With the completion of cold frames and new compost beds, more plants can be grown for planting in the precincts, and apprentices will have more of a professional base from where they can learn their propagation skills. (B3)

Community and communication:

As part of the HLF-funded 'Canterbury Journey', the Precincts are being refurbished and a temporary exhibition about the history of the gardens will also feature in the future, with exhibits from the archives. Explorer back-packs will be available for children to focus on key aspects, which will include activities relating to the gardens and wildlife in the Cathedral Precincts. (C1, C2)

The HLF-funded 'Canterbury Journey' includes an extensive range of education programmes which include the Precincts, gardens and biodiversity. The Cathedral usually holds a popular Open Gardens Weekend in aid of gardening charities in May each year, although sadly, it was impossible in 2020. (C1)

A4. Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU)

Background and Heritage

Christ Church's main North Holmes campus falls within the outer precinct of St Augustine's Abbey, part of Canterbury's UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) that also includes Canterbury Cathedral and the Saxon Church of St Martin. Its green spaces and the species that live there are nurtured for their own sake, but also provide resources for learning, for community engagement, and for health and well-being.

We celebrate our unique sense of place through our 'Bioversity' initiative that includes recognition of our monastic and other heritage, but without attempting to mimic these; key spaces include our physic garden, heritage orchard and nuttury, hop garden, wildflower areas and green walls. Good stewardship of the World Heritage Site reflects our own wider concerns for the environment and helps us to make direct links with other day to day issues of environmental concern (e.g. waste management, carbon emissions, sustainable use of resources) which may otherwise be difficult to capture in a holistic manner.

Horticulture

The outer precinct of the abbey contained a brewhouse for making ale, a bakehouse, barn and cellarer's hall. In 1320 a walled vineyard was added. The gable end of the brewhouse is one of the few structures still standing in the outer precinct. There were almost certainly orchards and allotments. Stewardship of natural resources was fundamental to the early monastic community, with their requirements for self-sufficiency,



CCCU Daisies in courtyard.



CCCU flowerbed.



CCCU Wildflowers.

health and spiritual well-being. We have tried to emulate these principals with a contemporary twist.

Our Jubilee Orchard contains varieties of pear, cobnut and apple, specifically chosen for their heritage and educational value, varieties of apple include, 'Beauty of Kent' a popular 'cooker' in Victorian England, but now considered too unsightly for modern commercial use, and 'Gascoyne's Scarlet', originally developed as a dual purpose variety by Mr Gascoyne at Bapchild Court, Sittingbourne (the town's motto – "Known for their fruits") in the late nineteenth century. This apple is a reminder of the importance of Kent to as centre for innovative in horticultural development.

The site has been home to honeybees in the past, and a new hive was established during 2020, with the intent to add another. The hives will be used to train students and staff in beekeeping and making products from the honey and wax. Brewing has also been long associated with the Abbey site and the tradition continues today. Hops grown on the site contribute to the production of an annual celebratory ale in association with a local microbrewery, the Canterbury Brewers. In 2019 the ale 'Tradescant 400' was used to celebrate the famous gardeners John Tradescant the elder, who managed the gardens on our site in the early seventeenth century for Lord Wotton. This year's ale 'Hop Picker's Tipple' is a toast to all the students and staff who harvest the hops each year and contribute so much else to our stewardship of the grounds.

Environment

One of Christ Church's pocket habitats, the Johnson Garden, has been transformed into Community Wellbeing Garden, a quiet and relaxing space where students and staff can refresh mind and body. Organic and permaculture methods are used to protect and enhance the site and its wildlife value. The site includes a pond. There are weekly tea foraging sessions, opportunities to work on the garden, as individuals or teams, and other social and environmental wellbeing related activities. During COVID-19, as one of the few places not managed by our wonderful Grounds and Garden's team, nature is taking over and it is interesting to see just what manages to thrive during lock-down.

CCCU won a first-class award in the People and Planet Green/University League five times since 2011. In 2015 it was shortlisted for no less than three Green Gown Awards, going on to win both the national (2017) and then the international (2018), 'Green Gown award for 'Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change'.

Community

The essence of Christ Church is its community of learning to which all staff and students contribute. Sadly, COVID-19 has restricted access to the University campus this spring and summer, but the Grounds and Gardens staff have continued their magnificent work, to ensure that on return to more normal conditions our campus is both beautiful and a site dedicated to use for outdoor education.

Christ Church provides opportunities for staff and students to grow their own fruit, vegetables and herbs in on campus allotments, as well as practicing beekeeping and hop-growing. All facets of these projects are intended to act as educational resources to integrate with curriculum outcomes. Many of the pocket habitats on campus or nearby (including Christ Church's St Gregory's Centre, set in an old graveyard) are used in formal teaching, from heritage tree surveying training, to the study of 'mural ecology', the life-styles of plants that manage to grow on the walls of the abbey site.

Bioblitz and other events are held on site and are open to our students and staff, and on some occasions to the local community and the public; each year, for example, a walk designed to explain the value of ivy as a late provider of nectar and berries is held in the autumn, and includes a visit to the site of an aggregation of ivy bees (*Colletes hederæ*) that inhabit a well-drained grassy bank on site. In 2019 a three-day open community event was held in St Martin's churchyard which abuts Christ Church and forms a green steppingstone between our main site and The Priory with its extensive gardens. Staff from archaeology, history, geography and ecology were on hand to help people to understand the heritage and natural history of the site, and to provide training in grave survey and plant and animal identification.

More detail concerning some of our key sites can be viewed on our sustainability webpages:
<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/about-us/sustainability/docs/The-Biodiversity-Project.pdf>

A5. Dane John Gardens



Dane John new tree planted.



Dane John.

with care from the park gardener and the Friends. The Friends have also been involved in choosing new replacement trees as a few damaged and diseased trees have needed to be removed. (C1)

Background

Dane John Gardens is one of Canterbury's most prized city parks. Visited widely by local people and visitors alike, it is a multi-functional formally laid-out park providing a place for people to walk, rest and picnic, and play. The park is a popular walking route providing a pleasant green corridor from the city centre to the railway station and other parts of the city. As well as a beautiful setting for leisure and low-key recreation, the gardens host a number of very popular events throughout the year. The gardens have a long interesting history dating as far back as 1st/2nd Century AD. Dane John Gardens is a Grade II listed Historic Park and Garden and a Scheduled Monument.

Horticulture and environment

The Council launched a public consultation on ideas for a new play area which will be installed in 2020. The aim is to create an imaginative and innovative space for children up to the age of 12 to enjoy. It will be designed in keeping with the park's heritage setting and history, and in a way that minimises anti-social behaviour. (B3)

Community

A Friends group for Dane John Gardens was started in late 2018, aiming to replicate other successful Friends groups in Canterbury which are working in partnership with the Council. The Friends of Dane John Garden have been working with the council and helping to revamp some very tired overgrown shrub beds, with the Friends selecting plants and shrubs from an appropriate list. These newly planted beds are now looking lovely and a huge improvement on previous planting. We look forward to seeing them blossom further over the years

St John's Primary School Gardening project

In 2019, the Friends of Dane John were approached by teachers from St John's Primary School in Canterbury, with a desire to get their children involved in an outdoor gardening project in the Dane John Gardens.

The Friends Group set up meetings with the school, and together, the Friends, St John's and Canterbury City Council agreed on the school children and teachers being offered a dedicated flower/shrub bed in the gardens for term-time gardening for the pupils across all primary year groups, with the Friends and park gardener providing help to tend the bed during school holidays.

The council prepared the bed, removing old planting and digging over, ready for the children to commence their gardening and take stewardship of the bed. The children were due to make a start earlier this year but unfortunately COVID-19 has temporarily paused the project. But the children and teachers are still very enthusiastic to be involved in the park and with the local community, and as soon as able, the project will commence. In the meantime the council have planted up the bed for some summer interest. We all look forward to seeing the children hopefully after the summer holidays and watching their progress throughout the next year, and beyond. (C1)

A6. Franciscan Gardens

Background

The Franciscan Gardens are at the rear of Eastbridge and are a haven of peace in an otherwise busy city. They are the grounds of the first Franciscan settlement in the UK and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. (B1)

Environment

Each year, a part of the Franciscan Gardens is allowed to grow as a wildflower meadow which attracts significant wildlife and is unique within the City of Canterbury and this is managed by Jeremy Foad. (B2)

Covid has inevitably had an impact on activity this year. However some activities have taken place to help plan for next year and beyond. Digging out the new riverside border in the wildflower meadow is now complete and the cleared area is prepared and ready to have meadow turf laid, although this will be done later in the season, once the hottest weather has passed. The small bed beneath the pear trees outside Assisi Cottage was cleared of grass and brambles and has been dug over and sowed with valerian seed. The combination of blue borage, white achillea and pink valerian should make a good show through next spring and summer.

Volunteers went into the river between the chapel and the bridges to remove brambles and bindweed from the walls and the two borders beside the grass path along the wisteria wall have been weeded and tidied.

A7. Kingsmead Field

Background

Kingsmead Field is an area of public open space on the northern branch of the River Stour which is owned, managed and maintained by Canterbury City Council. In 2012 it was allocated for housing, but members of the local community fought a long campaign to protect it as public open space. In 2015, the Friends of Kingsmead Field was established, and in 2017, a compromise was reached with the Council in which it was agreed that only 20% of the field would be developed for housing, while the remaining 80% would be protected, enhanced and designated as a Village Green.

Since 2015, a strong relationship has formed between the Council and the Friends group, and they are working together on a programme of improvements to the field which were agreed in the light of a public consultation.

The improvements that have been implemented since 2016 include the installation of a footpath around the field, football goals, a play area for young children, an amenity picnic area, an outdoor table tennis table, riverside interpretation signage and knee-rail fencing around the carpark.



Kingsmead Field pond dipping event.



Kingsmead field fun day.

Village Green status: The big news for Kingsmead Field over the last 10 months has been the voluntary designation by Canterbury City Council of 80% of the field as a Village Green (December 2019). The remaining 20% has been allocated for housing and is currently being developed by a local building company, Coombs. This arrangement was the result of many years of hard work, negotiation and compromise between the Council and the Friends of Kingsmead Field. The Friends were planning to hold a community event to celebrate Village Green designation in May 2020, but this has now been postponed. When it takes place, a new bench with the inscription 'Our Village Green' will be installed.

Horticulture, Heritage & Environment

Since 2012, the Friends have planted thousands of bulbs around the fringes of the field. In autumn 2018, they planted 1000 crocus bulbs on the western side of the field and 1000 daffodil bulbs on the verge of Kingsmead Road in front of the field. The Friends created a large meadow of cornfield annuals in 2016 and have sown another area of wildflowers.

In autumn 2017, the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership created a two-stage channel in the river next to the field to provide a deeper channel for fish passage and a wider, shallower channel for fish spawning and wildlife. In the spring of 2018, the Friends planted out the wetland area with a variety of aquatic plants (flag iris, lesser pond sedge, purple loosestrife, common club-rush, marsh marigold, soft rush, water forget-me-not and water plantain). The resulting density and diversity of plants has provided a perfect haven for insects, birds and small mammals. (B2)

In February 2018, the Council planted 11 trees on the field (8 small-leaved limes, 1 maple and 3 oaks) to help compensate for the loss of trees on the 20% that is allocated for development. The Friends played a critical role in watering the young trees. (B2)

New trees: In order to create a buffer zone between the Village Green and the housing development at the back of the field, Coombs (the developer) agreed with Canterbury City Council to plant 10 new trees and a number of shrubs along the boundary line. The trees and shrubs are largely native species and have been chosen to be both visually attractive and to provide pollen and fruit for insects and birds. An event in February 2020 to celebrate the planting of the trees was attended by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Councillors, Council officers, employees from Coombs, and members of the Friends of Kingsmead Field. The trees are being watered both by Coombs and the Friends group who have set up an 'Adopt a Tree' scheme for new trees on the field in which over 20 individuals / families are involved. (B2)

Bulb planting: In November 2019, the Friends organised a community bulb-planting event to create an arc of early flowering daffodils (February Gold) around the turning circle in the car park next to the field. The results looked stunning this spring. The Friends also held an event in early March 2020 to plant several hundred bluebell, snowdrop and winter aconite bulbs beneath the new trees at the back of the field. The group is fortunate to benefit from a lot of community involvement in the events which it organises.



Community Dig in Kingmead Field.



Kingsmead Field Volunteers.



Kingsmead Daffodil planting.

New Bench for play area: The Council and the Friends group work together to maintain and improve the field on an on-going basis. When it became clear that one single bench was not enough for the large number of parents and children using the play area on the field, they approached the local KCC councillor Graham Gibbens to see if he would be able to fund an additional bench from his member's grant, with Canterbury City Council paying for the delivery and installation. He was delighted to be involved in a partnership of this nature, and a second bench was installed in the beginning of 2020.

Signage: Over the last few months, the Council and the Friends have been working together to develop new entrance signage which will highlight the field's status as Canterbury's first Village Green and provide a brief overview of the history and key features of the field. The Council is paying for the design, manufacturing and installation of the signage. It is hoped that two of the four new signs will be put in the ground later this summer.

Community & Communication

The Friends of Kingsmead Field holds a number of events throughout the year in order to maintain public interest in the field. The group also provides frequent opportunities for volunteering, such as sowing seeds, planting bulbs and watering. (C1) Water is obtained by hand from the River Stour using watering cans.

The Friends group communicates with its members and supporters by email (200+ members on email list), Facebook (600+ members), Twitter (450+ followers) and its website (www.kingsmeadfield.org.uk). The group uses photography to illustrate the diversity of flora and fauna on the field in all seasons of the year. It also regularly submits press releases to the local paper. (C2)

The Friends group raises funds for enhancements to the field by means of its 200 Club, Easyfundraising and support from the local KCC councillor. It also works together with other groups in shared projects. (C3)

Litter-picking: The Friends have always taken a pro-active approach to keeping the field clean and have held frequent community litter-picks since the inception of the group. While lockdown forced the cancellation of the Kingsmead litter-pick which was due to take place during the Great British Spring-Clean in March, members of the group have continued to litter-pick the field on an individual basis. The group also works hard to keep the river clean of litter and debris. (C1)

Cooperation with the Our Stour Project: The Friends work very closely with the Our Stour project to raise awareness of the importance of the River Stour as one of only 200 chalk streams in the world, with its own specialised flora and fauna. In September 2019, a River Stour Fun day was held on the field and a large number of local families came along to try their hand at river-dipping and take part in creative activities focusing on the theme of river life. Several members of the Friends group have also become river wardens and riverfly monitors. The first riverfly survey of the Stour in Kingsmead took place in November 2019 to monitor the health of the river. Subsequent surveys had to be cancelled due to the height of the river and Covid restrictions, but it is hoped that they will start again soon on a monthly basis. In this way, it will be possible to build up a picture of the health of the river in Kingsmead.

Co-operation with Sainsbury's: As part of their 150th anniversary celebrations, the Sainsbury's store in Kingsmead teamed up with Canterbury in Bloom to undertake a number of initiatives to help improve the Kingsmead area. In September 2019, a joint litter-pick was held with the Friends of Kingsmead Field in which members of Sainsbury's staff took part. In October 2020, the store worked together with the Friends group to clean up a seating area close to their store and subsequently to plant out over 1000 daffodil and crocus bulbs. It is hoped that further joint projects can take place when lockdown is over.

Co-operation with other Friends Groups: In the spring of 2020, several meetings took place to facilitate cooperation between the three main Friends groups in Canterbury - the Friends of Kingsmead Field, the Friends of Westgate Gardens and the newly formed Friends of Dane John and St Mary De Castro. Once lockdown is over, the three groups hope to work together to update tree trails for each of the three open spaces and to organise a series of events for National Tree Week in November. The three groups also plan to do a joint project on pollinators.

Field life during lockdown: Kingsmead Field has really come into its own during lockdown as it has provided an invaluable outdoor space for exercise and appreciation of the natural world. As lockdown eases, facilities like the table-tennis table are providing important opportunities for recreation at a time when very few other sporting options are available. The Friends communicate by means of email updates, Facebook, Twitter and their website. While it has not been possible to hold community events on the field during lockdown, the group has put up daily social media posts to promote an interest in the flora & fauna of the field and to create a sense of community cohesion.

A8. Linden Grove Community Garden

New for this year is a team who has been busy creating Linden Grove Community Garden. The team of volunteers have removed 25 tons of rubble, plastic and rubbish and have landscaped and nurtured the space. Raised beds, hedges, climbing plants are in place and with a bit of luck (and local support) more will follow next year.



Linden Grove new beds.



Linden Grove skip.

A9. Miller's Field

Background

Miller's Field is owned by CCC and is Canterbury's first eco-park. The planting and mowing regimes have been changed to be more environmentally friendly. (A2)

Horticulture

Early flowering is provided by snowdrops along the river border and daffodils below the row of hazel trees. Ornamental flower beds are planted with a mix of pollinator-friendly bulbs and perennials including *Polygonatum multiflorum* (Solomon's seal), *Alchemilla xanthochlora* (lady's mantle), an important early food source for emerging bees, and *Echinacea*, with the addition of a few annuals. (A3)

Environment

An interpretation panel has been installed to explain the aims of the project. Miller's Field is enhanced by a sculptural seat designed by Tim Norris and inspired by the giant cogs used in watermills, the surrounding architecture such as the remnants of the city walls and the flowing River Stour. This innovative seat received an award in the Canterbury Society Design Awards and was shortlisted for a National Civic Voice award. (B1)

Bat, bird and insect boxes have been added, as well as a variety of pollinator-friendly plants. A mixed native hedge, planted by volunteers with Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership and maintained by the King's school has now matured along the boundary of Miller's Field and the carpark, providing food and shelter for birds, small mammals and insects. Hedgerows, as with other urban trees, have many benefits for people too, as they improve air quality, add to the attractiveness of an area and improve people's general wellbeing. (B2)

A10. Oaten Hill Area



Verge previously used to park cars.



Odeon cinema planters.



Oaten Hill flowers.

The Oaten Hill & South Canterbury Association (OHSCA) continues to plant up and maintain corners of our city. They entered the Bloom campaign in 2012 as part of the City entry and have entered three areas for It's Your Neighbourhood since 2016 and have planted another two small areas as well. In all of their plots, the aim is to provide interest 365 days a year with bulbs, winter flowering plants and coloured foliage supplementing the summer planting. They are very active in planting trees to green up their local streets and have planted 36 altogether.

For example, their work in Milton Road since 2015 has transformed a neglected unadopted road full of litter, weeds and potholes into a real neighbourhood amenity. This is an unmade road near to the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, which was previously blighted by hospital staff parking cars on its muddy banks, paving and grassy areas. During Aug 19-March 20 they worked hard to promote a good show of flowers for the summer, and also added new bulb-planting - essential to provide flowers from February to May 2020. Lots of their bulbs were donated by the congregation at Harvest Festival in September and planted a few days later. OHSCA also organises three litter-picks a year.

A11. Pound Lane Car Park



Greenery in Pound Lane Car Park.

In the Autumn of 2019, residents of the St Peter's area of Canterbury city centre cleared the entrance to Pound Lane car park in preparation for a new planting to green-up the car park. Plants were selected for all year interest, with pollinators in mind and for their hardiness in dry



Roses in Pound Lane.

conditions. Sanguisorba 'Tanna' (a burnet), tall grass Calamagrostis acutiflora 'Karl Foerster', Knautia macedonica, and a metre or so of the low-growing Orange Hawkweed (Fox-and-cubs) Hieracium aurantiacum were planted in the early spring before lockdown, and we are pleased to report that they are thriving. (B1) (C1)

A12. St Martin's Churchyard

St Martin's Church is part of the triple World Heritage Site, together with the Cathedral and St Augustine's Abbey. As it is closed for burying, Canterbury City Council are responsible for its maintenance, with the assistance of the Friends of St Martin's. It was entered in the Churchyards category in 2017 and 2018, winning Silver Gilt in 2018. The Friends group works hard to keep the country churchyard atmosphere and



Snowdrops St Martins, February 2020.



Crocuses St Martins, February 2020.

has added more summer flowering plants and a big planting of daffodils to boost the established flowers.

There is a long list of wildflowers which flourish there. Major tree work took place between October 2019 and March 2020, thanks

to Christ Church University. A big yew was felled to open the ancient view of the cathedral and part of St Augustine's Abbey. Some overgrown hollies were cut back and two diseased conifers, which were leaning on each other, were removed. An overgrown privet was cut to base. The Friends have started the replanting with a small katsura, the gift of a Friend who had grown it from seed, which is taking the place of the conifers. Christ Church kindly planted this a week before lockdown. In the autumn the Friends hope to plant one or two more trees.



St Mary de Castro vandalism.



Gardens after the clean up.



St Mary de Castro poppies.



St Mary de Castro after clean up.



St Mary de Castro garden.

A13. St Mary de Castro

Background

St Mary De Castro is a small closed churchyard just a short walk from Dane John Gardens. It was an area that had struggled with numerous reports of antisocial behaviour Including rough sleeping, street drinking, drug dealing etc. Residents and the public had raised this as a concern through the newly formed Friends of Dane John and St Mary De Castro. The desire was to transform the area by designing out the antisocial behaviour. (C1)

Horticulture

The first step was to remove the large volume of shrubbery and bushes along the back edge by the White Hart pub that hid a lot of the antisocial behaviour. All shrubbery and bushes were removed and just the trees were left. This really opened up the park to allow better visibility. The second phase of the project was consulting with the Residents and Friends group to begin to form a design of planting they would like

to see in the area. The designs were approved by Canterbury City Council and planting commenced in 2019.

The new designs have purples and orange as the theme. Along the back edge of the fence is Pyracantha saphyr orange. There will then be 5 bands of planting in front of this. The first row will be Primroses and snowdrops, the second row will feature Verbena Bonariensis belt and occasional sarcococca humilis, the



St Mary de Castro garden poppy.

third row will feature *stipa gigantea* alternated with *camassia*. Spring bulbs will be sewn amongst all rows. The front row will feature a belt of occasional *sarcococca humilis* behind *salvia purple rain* and *achillea terracotta*. In the back left hand corner the trees form a small glade. The theme here will include *selenium*, *wallichianum*, *hellebores*, *foxglove*, *nicotiana* and ferns. (A3)

Temporary planting was put in last winter to discourage people from walking in the area. The area has improved significantly since the start of this project with incidences of anti social behaviour reducing due to the more open nature of the area. The White Hart pub has also replaced the fencing which looks fantastic! This has not been vandalised this year, we believe this is due to the clever design and planting in the area.

The border is now all planted up and looking fantastic, and has really improved the area, all thanks to the hard work of the Friends Group,

council and contractors. A great example of community partnership working! (C1)

A14. Solly's Orchard

Background

In 1236, the Dominican order of friars established a priory on this site and by 1260 several buildings, including a church, had been built. By 1650, most of the priory buildings, including the gatehouse which stood on the orchard, had been demolished. However, the guesthouse and refectory of the medieval priory remain to the south of the orchard.

Horticulture

In 2007, fourteen three-year-old apple trees were planted to re-establish the old orchard. The apple varieties chosen have a religious theme: Chorister boy, Christmas Pearmain, Easter orange, Eden, Harvest festival and Ten commandments. The trees are managed by artisan cidery Rough Old Wife Cider through a licence with the Council which is the first of its kind in the country. The initiative ensures that the fruit is collected and used for the production of natural cider from unsprayed trees. In return, the trees are pruned on an annual basis and a percentage of the profits derived from the cider is returned to the Council's environmental funds. Since the initiative started in 2014, a number of other councils have contacted the partnership with a view to establishing a similar scheme. The partnership has also provided advice on the appropriate choices of fruit tree for different locations.

Volunteers from the St Peter's Residents' Association help with planting and maintenance of planted areas in Solly's Orchard. A perennial border was planted along the wall in Solly's Orchard. In preparation, the soil was enriched with compost, the climbing roses (planted by the St Peter's Residents' Association) were well-pruned and an edging for the border was laid by the Council's contractor. (A2)

To maximise year-round interest and a planting scheme that is appropriate to the location and growing conditions, the aim has been to use the wall to support scented climbing roses, *abutilon*, *solanum*, *Abelia floribunda* etc. along with evergreen wall shrubs such as *choisya*, *osmanthus* and *euphorbia*. (A1)

The remainder of the planting is mainly of herbaceous perennials chosen with pollinators in mind, including tall varieties like *phlox*, *Digitalis grandiflora*, *Thalictrum splendide*, perennial wallflower, *penstemon*, *Iris sibirica* and a lower growing level provided by hardy geraniums, *Verbena 'Homestead Purple'* and 'Sissinghurst', *Diascias* etc. Later seasonal interest is provided by asters, *salvias* and *dahlias*. The aim has been to provide contrast in leaf shapes, colour and flower form. (A3)

Early seasonal interest is provided by daffodils planted in the border at the back of the orchard below the hazel trees. A dry shaded area has been planted with sweet woodruff, perennial violas and ferns. A few annual varieties have been added in autumn and spring to lengthen the display. (A3)

A leaf-mould container has been constructed from natural material, and leaves are raked from Solly's by volunteers. The border still needs watering once a week in hot spells by volunteers, but the amount of watering required will reduce when the leaf-mould has been applied for a few years. (B3)

A15. The Butterfly Garden

Background

The Butterfly Garden is a walled garden, on the edge of the River Stour, occupying a building gap in Pound Lane which was created in 1983 by the demolition of two 19th century cottages. The garden was planted in memory of local publisher Kenneth Pinnock, who received the John Hayes Award for his book 'A Canterbury Childhood' published after his death in 2009. As he was one of the founders of the Canterbury Society, it was decided that the award should go to the Canterbury Society, who used the money to help with the costs of planting in the Butterfly Garden (C4).

Horticulture

Special planting along the top of the riverside wall leads the visitor into the seclusion of the garden. A mixture of dwarf rockery tulips was planted: 'Red Riding Hood', 'Pinocchio', 'First Love', 'Albion Star' and 'Calypso'. Tuberous begonia 'Apricot Shades' were planted out as the tulips died down. Evergreen, hardy Geranium pyrenaicum 'Bill Wallis' (a deep blue) was also planted at intervals. (A1)

The earliest display in the central sunny bed comes with crocus and snowdrops, while winter aconites appear in the shaded area. These are followed by tulips and daffodils. In the autumn, alliums were planted amongst the dahlias in the sunny bed to provide interest while the dahlias are getting underway. Two varieties of single dahlia were chosen for their generous display of golden pistils containing pollen: 'Waltzing Matilda' (water-melon pink) and 'Clair de Lune' (pale lemon). Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna' was used for contrast and white Cosmos bipinnatus gave extra height. Other pollinator friendly herbaceous perennials, such as phlox and penstemon, provide extra colour in this bed, along with other nectar producers, such as wallflower, verbena, thyme and marjoram. Lavender and jasmine, on the west-facing wall, provide perfume in the summer. (A3, B2)

Before replanting, the moisture retention of the light soil was improved using copious amounts of compost, followed up with a good layer of old semi-rotted woodchip when the planting was complete. (A2)

In the shady bed, height is provided by Thalictrum aquilegifolium (meadow rue) and Aruncus 'Horatio', an improved goat's beard. Anisodonte 'El Ryo', of the Malva family, is backed by the white flowered potato vine, Solanum laxum 'album' on the wall, where there is a little more sun. In the shade of another wall are a group of Sarcococca for early perfume. Several ferns have been planted in this bed, some of which will become quite tall with time, with foxgloves planted in-between them. More unusual Veronicastrum album and Kirengeshoma have also been planted in this section. Meanwhile, hardy geraniums 'Biokovo' and 'Rozanne' help to cover the ground. (A3) Many plants have been donated by members of the Kent Branch of The Hardy Plant Society; for example, a Dregea sinensis, a choice climber, for the north wall, which has a white flower with good perfume and a very generous donation of blue camassia from Swallowfields Nursery, Elmsted. (A3, A4)

Tall grasses Hakonechloa macra 'albovariegata' were kindly donated by the head gardener at the Cathedral, who holds the National Collection of this species. (A3, A4)

Plants were chosen with consideration for creating long, varied seasonal blooming and included the selection of some unusual hardy plants. Clematis urophylla 'Winter Beauty' provides good evergreen foliage and white flowers in winter. The plants were chosen with the aim of encouraging pollinators such as butterflies and bees to this peaceful, secluded riverside walled garden. (A3)

Environment and Community

The Canterbury Society volunteers work weekly in the garden; planting spring bulbs in the autumn, watering, weeding, dead-heading flowering plants in the dry summer months, as well as pruning and

attending to the creepers. Canterbury Society also organises seasonal litter picks - for the Great British Spring Clean as well as an annual River Stour clean and an autumn litter pick of the river pathways. (C1)

The Canterbury Society is an active member of the Riverside Group and a founder member of Canterbury's Litter Roundtable. It communicates with its members and supporters by email (246 members), Facebook (262 members) and its website (<https://www.canterburysociety.org.uk>). It also regularly submits press releases to the local paper. (C2)

A16. The Kent Community Oasis Garden (Kent COG)

In 2018, a new community garden opened on the campus of the University of Kent. It is designed to become an outdoor space which can promote wellbeing and environmental awareness among staff, students and members of the local community.

In October 2019, volunteers at the Kent Community Oasis Garden planted over 1000 daffodil and tulip bulbs to enhance the visual appearance of the garden in springtime. The event was attended by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Terry Westgate, who has actively supported many events of the organisations involved in Canterbury in Bloom. Since then, the garden has entered into a new partnership with East Kent Mind focusing the garden's activities on wellbeing, with sessions on coping with anxiety and improving low mood alongside the usual garden activities. Since Covid-19 disrupted work on-site, the KentCOG coordinator has been running a weekly eco-therapy session for students, staff and community members who can register through East Kent Mind services. Sessions have included how to bring your garden inside, making pots out of recyclables and creating teas and other drinks from easy to grow plants. The coordinator is currently planning for the gradual re-opening of the garden and the resumption of normal gardening sessions. (C1)(C2)



Vauxhall Field volunteers.

A17. Vauxhall Field

Vauxhall Field is a large open space next to the river Stour serving a local community in an area of high deprivation. The open space has suffered from long-term problems of littering, fly-tipping, metal-stripping and the burning of household waste. In order to help tackle these problems, a project was launched in 2017 involving members of the local community, All Saints Church, East Kent Housing, local councillors and Canterbury City Council. The project involved a poster competition on the theme of 'Keep Vauxhall Tidy' in which many local children took part. The

project helped to establish a strong partnership and led to the creation of a multi-stakeholder group under the leadership of Canterbury City Council. The aims of the group are to tackle problems as they emerge and to improve Vauxhall Field as a valuable amenity space.



Vauxhall Field sea cadets.



Vauxhall Field crocus bulb planting.

Initiatives that have been organised by members of the multi-stakeholder group have included community litter-picks, tea-parties, a river-dipping event, a wildlife workshop for families and a daffodil-planting event. Members of the local community have often turned out in large numbers.

Canterbury Sea Cadets have also taken part in many of events as their headquarters is located close by. (C1)

One of the main long-term goals of the multi-stakeholder group is to create play facilities for local children. Canterbury City Council has managed to secure some funding to provide a play area, and consultation on this will start in July 2020. The local KCC Councillor Graham Gibbens has also agreed to use part of his member's grant to provide two benches for the field so that it can be used for relaxation and socialising by young and old alike.

A18. Webb's Garden at St Martin's Hospital



Webb's dahlia.



Webb's Garden.

Webb's Garden is a beautiful walled garden within the grounds of St Martin's hospital. The garden is run by the hospital's Friends for Mental Health with the help of a dedicated group of volunteers. A wide range of vegetables, fruit and cut flowers are grown in the garden. These are sold to

staff within the hospital and to members of the local community. Although the Friends group had to suspend all volunteering by outside groups during lockdown, a small number of dedicated individuals have managed to keep the garden going and make sure that none of the produce has been lost. The Friends group is currently in the process of preparing the way for volunteer activity to begin again.

A19. Westgate Parks

Background

Westgate Parks are identified as Canterbury City's premier open space and an important gateway to the city and the Stour Valley. Westgate Parks consist of Westgate Gardens, Toddler's Cove, Tannery Field and Bingley Island. Situated next to the Westgate Towers, the Westgate Gardens are ornamental formal gardens created by the Williamson family who lived in Tower House. Tower House was given to the City of Canterbury in 1936 by the Williamson family.

Horticulture

Westgate Parks first gained Green Flag status in 2016 and have maintained it since. Green Flag assessment was a condition of the substantial HLF funding from 2013-18. Westgate Parks are managed by the Council and the new Parks and Community Development Officer, with support from Our Stour, Kent County Council, and the Friends of Westgate Parks. Our Stour continue to help maintain Toddler's Cove riverbank and Bingley Island pond. The wildflower meadow, the native hedge in Toddler's Cove and the physic garden are maintained by the Friends of Westgate Gardens. (A2)

Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership have added a further four river planters or 'window boxes' at Westgate Gardens with their volunteer group. All have been back filled and planted with wetland plants. These planters provide some limited riverbank vegetation in areas where hard revetments largely prevent colonisation by plants. (A3)

Planting in Westgate Gardens is a combination of perennial and annual plants, which has been well received by local residents, who complimented the team on this. This is now delivered on 25% of the beds as it is more environmentally friendly and has proved very popular. (A3)

Heritage and Environment

The gardens are steeped in history. Tower House incorporates one of the ancient city wall bastions and, hidden beneath the lawns and borders, lie part of the Roman city wall, a section of Roman Watling Street and London gate. The parkland is also strategically important as a gateway to the riverside walk that connects to other green spaces within the city and countryside beyond. The park is included in the Great Stour Local Wildlife Site and the river provides typical chalk stream habitats supporting a range of wildlife including invertebrates, bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians and riverside plants. Bingley Island is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). (B1)

A variety of different methods of signage, such as welcome signage, directional signs and interpretation panels, are used within the parks and open spaces to enhance the public's engagement with area.

Notice boards at the entrances by Westgate Towers and Toddlers' Cove display maps of the park to help users to plan their route. The notice boards are also used to display any upcoming events within the parks, including the educational workshops. The interpretation panels make the history, wildlife and plant life more accessible for visitors. They also help people to notice and appreciate wildlife which might not be immediately obvious. Seven different panels have been introduced, each with their own educational elements about the history or natural heritage of the parks. (B1)

The improved conditions in the parks have also led to an increase in their biodiversity, as the physical works have created new habitats such as the pond and coppiced willow on Bingley Island. The wildflower meadow on Tannery Field was identified as one of the most beneficial additions for biodiversity due to the range of wildlife relying on meadow habitats. The Physic Garden has also provided food sources for pollinators and other species. (B2)

Species monitoring schemes have been introduced as a part of the project, including the Riverfly Partnership monitoring scheme, volunteer butterfly monitoring, an invertebrate project in partnership with the University of Kent, bird monitoring and regular bat walks. Through this monitoring, it has become evident that careful management has had a very positive impact on the Parks' wildlife, with 28 new species of bird having been identified since the start of the project, and 70 new beetle species identified on Bingley Island.

As of 2020, a total of 83 different bird species have been identified within the Parks. (B2)

Community and Communication

Canterbury City Council works with the Friends of Westgate Parks to provide opportunities for active participation in the site and projects. The Friends of Westgate park have been key partners in the completion of the HLF project which ran from 2013 to 2018. The aim was to develop an interconnected network of diverse, high quality open spaces in Canterbury which met the needs of local people and contributed to significantly improving the quality of life for Canterbury residents.

The Friends of Westgate Park continue to help maintain and manage the park through a formal agreement with CCC. The group now operates with a formal memorandum of understanding. It sets out the group's aims, how it will work together and areas CCC and group will maintain such as the community murals, physics garden and Wildflower meadow.



Westgate Gardens view.



Westgate Gardens view.

The number of community groups that help maintain the park has grown over the last year to include Canterbury Umbrella Centre, who with the support of the Friends of Westgate Park, have begun to manage the wildflower bed located in the Physic garden area. Members of the Umbrella Centre assist weekly with planting, weeding and tending the area. The sessions are designed to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. The emphasis is on the therapeutic value of gardening for those living with mental health issues and by breaking the stigma surrounding it. (C1)

The volunteering opportunities have enabled participants to gain a range of practical skills whilst also growing in confidence and providing opportunities to make new friends.

The project had significant impacts for wellbeing, both on volunteers and other members of the community through opportunities to get involved in outdoor projects and encouraging integration with the local community. The Parks generally contribute to bettering the wellbeing of people in Canterbury through their availability as a free, green area of the city, offering people the chance for relaxation in a space which is now cleaner, safer, and better-maintained.

Westgate parks communicates with its users through a Facebook group (530+ members). (C2)

The Friends group has continued to provide opportunities for volunteering, e.g. litter picks. (C1)

CCC Proposed Gardening Project for 2020/21

To maintain and manage a flower bed within the Westgate Parks. Specifically, in Westgate Gardens on the outer wall in direct view of the Canterbury Umbrella Centre, a community Hub that specialises in support for those with mental health and physical illness. This will provide a space that members can take ownership of. The proposed plan is to have a weekly gardening group on a Wednesday morning for 2 hours. This will be managed by a retired landscape gardener who has attended the centre for 4+ years, under the supervision of centre management.

It is hoped that the garden will be an expressive canvas with the aim of bright and colourful flowers and plants, in order to be a creative space of positivity. Benefits for the centre users and wider city users will mean:

- The garden will embrace the concepts of permaculture – an ecological design system that renews natural resources and enriches local ecosystems. Permaculture requires that we think before we act.
- It will create a garden that promotes wildlife and biodiversity.
- It will create a garden that is enjoyable and attractive to visit for the purposes of work, rest and contemplation and that contributes positively to the environmental quality of the area.
- It will minimise inputs to the garden from outside and minimise the waste we produce by reusing and recycling and growing a range of useful non-food plants alongside fruit and vegetables. We will recycle all organic waste within the garden, composting and reusing where possible. Renewable resources will be relied upon wherever possible.
- The group will attempt to source from sustainable materials, donations, second hand or recycled goods and from local independent nurseries and farms and using local professionals and craftspeople.
- It will engage with the local community and seek their involvement in all stages of the garden's progress.
- It will seek to use the garden to improve the quality of life, confidence, skills and knowledge of as wide a range of our community as possible including those who are most vulnerable or often excluded for whatever reason.
- It will seek to use the garden to promote the key messages of the Transition movement. The above principles and the way in which the garden is managed will be the vehicle by which the community can be encouraged to learn about and rise to the challenges that are being posed by the stigma surrounding mental health. The garden will provide the opportunity for all those involved to learn

about the importance of, and take an active part in, local food production, healthy eating and community action.

- Good practice in soil and water management, and so provides an opportunity to demonstrate sound horticultural understanding.

A20. Whitefriars Shopping Centre

Whitefriars Shopping Centre contributes around 24% of Canterbury's city centre shopping space. This year has proven to be a very challenging period in all respects, with the shops completely closed between mid-March and the middle of June.

Environment

About 1000 years ago, the 'white' friars that lived on the site kept bees. They ate the honey, used it to brew honey-wine (mead) and made candles for their church with the beeswax. Now, 700 years later, Whitefriars continues to work closely with the Canterbury Beekeeper Association. Whitefriars currently have two beehives on the roofs of the shopping centre to help to pollinate the city's flowers. Each generates in excess of 50lbs of honey annually, which is sold to fund educational activities for aspiring beekeepers on the site (B1, B2).

All of the shopping centre's waste (around half a million tonnes annually) is now either recycled or transported to the nearby Hersden 'Refuse Derived Fuel' facility by their waste contractor Veolia (B3).

Whitefriars has installed 240 solar panels on the roofs of the shops and car park. They have also fitted low energy light fittings in their service areas and corridors, that switch off when no one is around. These photo voltaic cells supply around 15% of the energy needs of the car park and service areas.

Environment

B1. Local Identity

Heritage, Signage and Interpretation

The Council and the Canterbury Riverside Group identified six sites for riverside signage in 2016. Interpretation panels focusing on heritage and wildlife have now been installed in four of those locations (Abbott's Mill, Kingsmead Field, Miller's Field and Solly's Orchard).

The city has an extensive array of public art, commissioned since 1977, and ranging from benches to a giant face, Bulwark, at the Marlowe Theatre. The Council has developed a 3.2 mile sculpture trail across the city, taking in all 14 pieces of public art, including awarding-winning riverside benches and the statue of Chaucer in the High Street.

Art in the Landscape

A number of initiatives have taken place over the last few years to use art to improve unloved areas of the city.

Wincheap Underpass

This was inspired by one of the local councillors for Wincheap ward and involved a photographic competition to depict the landscape and wildlife of Hambrook Marshes on the banks of the River Stour. The refurbishment is now complete and was funded by section 106 contributions from the nearby university development. Initially the improvement intended just deep clean, paint and tile the subway however it was found that the colourful vinyl wrapping solution was preferable and long lasting.

It was decided to showcase images of the city. One wall has pictures of Canterbury's built environment, which includes striking images of the UNESCO sites - The Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's church, as well as more modern architecture like The Marlowe Theatre. The wall was a collaboration with Love Hambrook Marshes, to display some images of Canterbury's natural environment. All of the photos on this wall were taken by local people and a panel was dedicated to give a brief overview of the marshes including a map showing where people can find it. (C3)



Wincheap underpass wayfinding.



Wincheap underpass heron.



Wincheap underpass kingfisher.

The Kingsmead Riverside Mural



Kingsmead Field hoardings painted.



Kingsmead Field fox painting with artists.

There have been a growing number of initiatives to use art to improve unloved or graffiti-prone areas in the city. Another recent initiative is a project to paint a 40m mural along a hoarding to one side of the construction site for the housing development on the rear of Kingsmead Field. The project involves Canterbury City Council, Coombs, the Friends of Kingsmead Field and two local street artists. It was hoped that a number of young people from the Prince of Wales Community Centre could also be involved, but unfortunately this is no longer possible due to social distancing requirements. As the hoarding runs parallel to the riverside walk along the Stour, the river will form a central feature of the mural, together with other well known landmarks from the city and the Kingsmead area. The mural will also feature the 'Love Where We Live' strapline of the Council's media campaign to combat litter and graffiti.



Kingsmead hoardings offer a splash of colour.

The Colourful Canterbury Project

Supported by Brewers Decorator Centres, was a recent effort to add positivity and decorative colour to the communities in and around Canterbury. Local groups and individuals were invited to apply with decorating ideas for community spaces, for a chance to win paint and decorating materials for their project. Five projects were shortlisted. The winning project was Bench Trails, submitted by Kent College. The project sets out to install new or recycled benches across the city, decorated with painted designs by local schools and community groups, creating a trail for people to follow and take in the city sights. The judges felt that this project would really in-bed itself into the local community. Plus the project is spread across the city, adding colour and interest in multiple locations. Kent College are currently working on the finer details, which has inevitably been somewhat delayed by Covid, but watch this space !

St Dunstan's Underpass

Local residents have raised the money to transform the pedestrian underpass which goes under the railway line in St Dunstan's Street. This has been an eyesore for years, dark and grubby and plagued with graffiti, but till now nothing was done about it.

Over £5000 came from members of the community through crowd funding, and was increased by local developer, Network Rail, Canterbury Cathedral and city and county council funding.

There are three reasons why this is a very special project. First, the project will create a bright and pleasant public space in what is now a dingy subway. The walls will be cleaned and painted and covered with special coating so that new graffiti can be easily washed off.

Secondly, the underpass will be decorated with original works by a young local artist. Henry Cockburn's paintings of Canterbury are much admired for their vivid and attractive portrayal of life in our city. Selected



St Dunstan's Underpass.

paintings will be photographed and embedded in a special wrap. The result will add to the public art available for the enjoyment of both local people and visitors: this could be the first ever 'Art Gallery in an Underpass'.



Henry Cockburn painting.

Thirdly, the project will commemorate an important historical event. In 1170 King Henry II walked barefoot down St Dunstan's Street to do penance for his part in the murder of Thomas Becket. The year 2020 marks the 850th anniversary of the death of Becket. Henry Cockburn has produced a special painting for the underpass, which will commemorate the event and will ensure that this part of the Becket story is not forgotten.

This has been a real community project. Local people have come together to raise the money to renovate this neglected subway, add to the public art which residents and visitors can enjoy and commemorate an important event in the history of Canterbury.

B2. Natural Environment

Enhancing Biodiversity

A large number of initiatives have been undertaken over the last two years by partner organisations to protect and enhance the natural environment and to improve provision for wildlife. Many of these have been mentioned in section A. A couple of others are listed below.

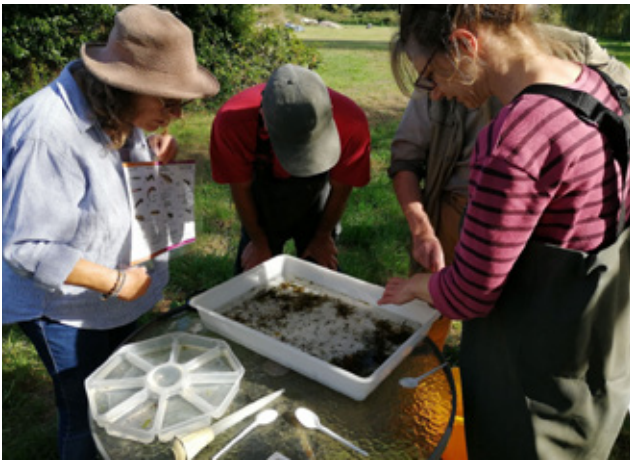
Canterbury Christ Church University has adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) which now guides all greenspace developments on site. The BAP also set out the decision-making structure for landscape aspects of the university Master Planning process over the next 10-20 years. It is based on three priorities:

- To protect and enhance biodiversity across the site;
- To raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity amongst staff and students;
- To ensure a consistent approach to biodiversity management.

The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) has planted trees in Greyfriars' Garden, created wood piles at Solly's Orchard, installed bat boxes on suitable trees along the riverside path from Toddlers' Cove to Barton Mill and planted a native hedge around the carpark at Miller's Field.

Improving the Aquatic Environment

The Council's draft Heritage Strategy (January 2019) recognises that the River Stour has been '*the lifeblood of Canterbury from its earliest days*' and that the Stour has played a critical role in shaping Canterbury's heritage. This recognition of the importance of the Stour is also reflected in the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (adopted in November 2018):



Stour fly study.



Stour cleaning.



Stour River clean volunteers.

'The Great Stour River is undoubtedly one of the most significant green infrastructure assets of the city of Canterbury. Not only is it of outstanding nature conservation value, it forms an important linking corridor for recreation and wildlife through the centre of the city, and links with the countryside and other Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. Improving the river corridor for both wildlife and access has been a long-term ambition for the Council, with many improvements already implemented and others being taken forward through the Riverside Strategy and the Local Plan.'

Many recent improvements to the River Stour have been implemented by the Canterbury Riverside Group, which brings together the Council, the Environment Agency, the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) and local community groups.

KSCP has undertaken additional work, such as the installation of riverside planters throughout Westgate Gardens and the creation of a wetland area at Kingsmead Field. It has also launched a three-year 'Our Stour' project which consists of six distinct components:

- Rivers in Focus (using photography to highlight the value of the Stour);
- River Wardens (to help protect and monitor the river);
- Aqualab (a mobile classroom to bring the flora and fauna of the river to life);
- Flowfilm (using film-making to highlight environmental issues on the river);
- River conservation tasks for volunteers;
- Landowner workshops (to promote river-friendly land management).

The Our Stour project has been very well received. There are now 12 river wardens in the city of Canterbury and 19 in the district as a whole. Over 1000 children have taken part in river-dipping and Aqualab sessions.

Over the last ten months, an arrangement has been made with the Council to facilitate community river-cleans. This is an important development as river-cleaning has been a problematic area for a number of years due to insurance concerns. A number of river-cleans have taken place since last summer organised by the Our Stour project, Canterbury Society and the Friends of Kingsmead Field. Following lobbying by river wardens for better bin infrastructure along the riverside path, over 20 new bins were installed earlier this year with lids to prevent their contents being pulled out by gulls etc and strewn all over the path. They are a significant improvement on the open-top bins that were there before.

In November 2019 Canterbury Society members planted 1500 wild daffodils along the riverside pathway at St Radigund's to enhance the riverside during the spring.

In addition, Canterbury City Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and appointed a Climate Change Officer in April 2020 and is in the process of setting up a Climate Change Partnership – all to help achieve the goal of a zero carbon Canterbury district by 2030. The community also set up an independent Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP) in June 2019, on which many of the Bloom partners, including the Business Improvement District sit. CCAP is a partnership between the Canterbury Society and the Canterbury Sustainable Development Goals Forum. It has now grown to include representatives from other local civic society groups, the three universities, business, residents' associations, faith groups, youth groups, Greenpeace and many others.

A Plastic Free Canterbury initiative has been formed during the lockdown process to complement the successful Plastic Free Town campaigns on the coast. The group has been set up under the umbrella of the Canterbury Climate Change Partnership and involves councillors from the three main political parties, the BID and members of the local community. It has held several Zoom meetings, set up its own Facebook group and hopes to launch properly in the autumn with a questionnaire to shop keepers about single use packaging.

B3. Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas Canterbury City Council

Litter & fly-tipping: On Valentines' Day 2018, the Council launched its 'Love Where We Live' campaign which aims to keep the district clean and tidy, and encourages residents to have pride in their neighbourhood. In 2018 and 2019, a deep clean of the verges of the entire stretch of the A2 through the district took place and was publicised by social media. The Council has also employed a 'man in the van' to investigate reports of litter and fly-tipping on a rapid-response basis. This has enabled the Council to carry out enforcement and clean-ups swiftly without needing to wait for clearance from its contractor. Over the last two years, the Council has also increased its number of enforcement officers.

Graffiti: Over the last year, the Council has stepped up its action against graffiti by:

- Installing cameras in graffiti hotspots;
- Appointing a second officer dedicated to tackling graffiti;
- Identifying tagging hotspots which will benefit from anti-graffiti paint.

Single-use plastics: The Council is aiming to lead by example in reducing the amount of single-use plastics in its offices, venues and events. The Council offices, are moving back to using traditional cups and glasses. Where single-use items cannot be avoided, plastic is being replaced by Vegware low carbon products.

The Council has also become one of the first organisations in Kent to sign up to the national Refill Scheme, so it is now possible to fill up one's reusable water bottle for free at a number of venues in the district, including the Marlowe Theatre, the Beaney and the Guildhall. Businesses throughout the district can also get involved in the Refill scheme. The Council is also encouraging event organisers on its land to adopt similar initiatives.



Volunteer Litter Pickers.



Sainsbury's litter pick volunteer.



Mayor joins the litter pick.

Dog-fouling: Action to tackle dog-fouling has featured prominently in the 'Love Where We Live Campaign' and free dog poo bags have been given away in a number of the city's open spaces. The Council has also introduced a Public Space Protection Order (Control of Dogs) to ensure that dog owners understand people's expectations of them when they are with their dog in a public area.

Anti-social behaviour: The Council is working together with other agencies in the Canterbury Community Safety Partnership to reduce anti-social behaviour, including littering, fly-tipping and graffiti. The Council has also secured a 1-year emergency injunction in the High Court to prevent unauthorised encampments on its land. This is an important move to prevent large-scale littering and fly-tipping on public land.

Canterbury Business Improvement District

Canterbury BID completed a new round of deep-street cleaning in May 2020, to aid local businesses as the Covid lockdown began to ease. Graffiti removal and deep-street cleaning have been identified as key areas for improvement by traders. The BID's graffiti removal in November 2018 meant that four grot-spots in the city were cleaned and painted with anti-graffiti coating which means any re-tagging can be more easily removed with soap and water plus they are continuing to research how they can help more with graffiti cleaning in the future. Anti-graffiti wipes are now handed out, free of charge to BID businesses. Based on feedback and consultation with traders, going forward the BID will commission a regular programme of deep street cleaning and a rapid response cleaning service.

The Local Community

The local community has played a dynamic and catalytic role in promoting action to tackle the problems of litter, fly-tipping and graffiti. Residents' associations and community groups have worked collaboratively with the Council and the BID and have set up a Litter Roundtable to provide a forum to discuss ways of addressing the problems with councillors and council officers.

The Litter Roundtable (a community initiative bringing together councillors, council officers, the BID and representatives of residents' associations and community groups) has met on two occasions over the last ten months - 16 September 2019 and 5 March 2020 and is planning a Zoom call in the near future to consider their response to the increased littering that is emerging as lockdown eases. The Roundtable's discussions over the last ten months have included the creation of the Council's new Local Authority Trading Company for street cleaning and refuse collection, the state of the city's underpasses, litter in the river, the Council's 'Love Where We Live Campaign', action to deal with graffiti and plans for the Great British Spring Clean.

Volunteer litter-picks continue to be held on a frequent basis throughout the city. There are now two regular 1st Sunday of the Month community litter-picks. Many community litter-picks were planned for the Great British Spring Clean but had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. They will be rescheduled for later this year. A lot of individuals have been litter-picking on their own in recent weeks to help tackle the new wave of litter that has emerged in the city's parks and open spaces as lockdown eases.

The 'Canterbury grot-spots' Facebook group continues to be very active. Members use the group to flag up areas of the city that have particular problems with litter, fly-tipping and graffiti, and also to highlight positive community initiatives to improve the streetscape of the city. The group is jointly administered by Councillors and members of the community, and has 1090 members.

River tour companies have also litter-picked in the river as part of their routine operations. In fact in July 2020, the Westgate Punts company filled 12 boat loads and removed approximately 2 tonnes of excess weed. With special permission from the Environment Agency and Canterbury City Council, they spent 3 days cleaning up the river and also removed several bin bags of rubbish.



Westgate punts rubbish removal.

Community

C1. Year-Round Activity and Future Commitment

Canterbury in Bloom's partners all deliver extensive programmes throughout the year. The Covid pandemic has been challenging and led to many planned projects being curtailed or postponed. However, we have been cheered by the amount of activity which has been able to survive the restrictions, from litter pickers to volunteer gardeners, continuing to improve and invest in their city's green spaces, for the benefit of all. Now that lockdown is easing, groups and organisations are coming together again to pick up these projects once again.

Green Heritage

In 2018 the Bloom partners held a ground-breaking conference in the autumn, entitled 'Growing Canterbury's Green Heritage: Inspiring the Future'. Speakers included BBC Gardeners' World presenter, Nick Bailey, and Canterbury's poet laureate, Lemn Sissay, as well as contributions from Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent. The conference was designed to generate debate concerning Canterbury's green heritage and to identify ways of enhancing and expanding it.

The conference had a range of positive outcomes. It enabled Bloom partners to work together in an imaginative way and directly influenced the green heritage component of the City Council's Heritage Strategy.

The conference raised the profile of the River Stour as one of the most important features of the city's green heritage. The latter was triggered by Lemn Sissay's participation in the conference and the recital of his poem 'Cantuarian', celebrating the river. This has laid the seeds for a project which Bloom partners are hoping to initiate - the Festival of the Stour.

Since the conference Bloom partners have continued to develop Green Heritage as a key concept in our celebration of place and as an approach to managing and nurturing green sites with a strong heritage element, for example part of the Canterbury UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS). A Green Heritage workshop has been held and a Green Heritage Manifesto is now at draft stage. Example of practical Green Heritage activity was a three-day churchyard heritage and nature community engagement project (Canterbury Christ Church University) at St Martin's churchyard as part of the thirtieth anniversary celebrations of the WHS in the summer of 2019.

C2. Communication and Awareness

Partners each develop their own communication and press programmes. Below are some examples of coverage throughout the year.

C3. Funding and Support

Individual partners each fund their own activities through their own fundraising.

Whitefriars provide support to Canterbury Bee Keepers Association which has hives on the centre's roof.

The BID funds the city-wide hanging basket programme and also provides campaign coordination, entry fees and the portfolio from BID resources. Hanging baskets on business premises has increased from 245 in 2015, 340 in 2017, 370 in 2018, 400 in 2019 and now stands at 354 for 2020. The planting is selected

to maximise the floral impact for the longest period whilst still retaining both the ability to be a source of nectar to bees and other pollinating insects and absorb pollutants to help improve air quality. It's been more important than ever for 2020 to provide a citywide, colourful hanging basket display to enhance the city businesses re-opening gradually after the period of lockdown.



Lord Mayor planting bulbs.



Ditch clearing volunteers.



Stour Pond Cleaning.



Westgate Parks.



St Radigunds area volunteer dig.

Conclusion

This is the seventh time that Canterbury has entered the South & South East in Bloom competition. The breadth and variety of partners has been our strength from the very beginning. Our 'strength in diversity' continues to flourish as our existing groups continue to grow and new groups join us.

2020 has been uniquely challenging to our efforts for 'Canterbury in Bloom'. There has been no operator, volunteer, employee or business that has not been impacted by the global pandemic locally. The timing of the outbreak, in Spring, has meant that many of the regular and much anticipated horticultural and environmental projects have had to be postponed. This will inevitably have an impact on Canterbury this summer. However, we are already aware that local groups, the city council, shops, organisations and other businesses are keen to get stuck in once more! We have been encouraged by how much HAS been able to take place, and to hear of plans to pick up these postponed projects. The beautiful hanging baskets installed by the Business Improvement District at the end of May 2020 and all the work done in the parks and gardens by Canterbury City Council and volunteers from Friends and resident groups led the way, as the city reopens for trading and activity.

The challenges raised by the Covid pandemic has certainly brought groups together, to ensure the preservation of Canterbury's green spaces and has enhanced the community's participation in a way we might not have expected. There has been a shared interest in helping Canterbury to recover, both economically from a local perspective, to ensure we continue to attract visitors and students, and to make the city a welcoming and beautiful space to enjoy. Many residents will not be travelling abroad this year – their city will take on a special significance, and contributing to an ongoing community-led recovery as they spend more time here.

Photos: © Ralph Lombart



Tulips in Westgate Gardens.



Tower House.



Westgate Towers plus blooms.



Lady Woottons Green.

Appendix 1:

A selection of the press coverage from this year:

Canterbury Community Ad Magazine

Village Green status for Kingsmead Field

The majority of Kingsmead Field has now officially been designated a Village Green after Canterbury City Council's application for the status was agreed by Kent County Council (KCC) at a meeting at the beginning of December.

The city council made the application in February 2019, in line with a commitment it made to the Friends of Kingsmead Field that it would voluntarily apply for Village Green status in return for a small area of the field being developed for housing near to Kingsbrook Park.

Around 80 per cent of the field is included in the Village Green area. Along with the part being used for housing, a strip of land on the riverside corridor and riverside slope is also excluded in case the council or Environment Agency need to carry out maintenance to the river in the future.

Village Green status protects the land from being developed and is one of the highest protections available in the country.

Canterbury City Council's Chief Executive, Colin Carmichael, said: "This is a very happy ending to what has been a long running story stretching back several years.

"We all know there have been some difficult days along the way, but I would like to pay tribute to the Friends of Kingsmead Field for all they have done to look after this cherished piece of open space in the city. We have an excellent relationship with the group and their passion and love for the field is clear for all to see.

"Our officers will continue working closely with the Friends on further improvements over the coming years to ensure the field retains its place at the heart of the community."

Sian Pettman, from the Friends of Kingsmead Field, said: "The attainment of Village Green status has been a long-standing ambition for the Friends of Kingsmead Field. We are absolutely thrilled that this ambition has now been fulfilled and would like to express our thanks to everyone in the city and county councils who have worked so hard to make this possible.

"We are excited about continuing our partnership with officers and councillors to make further improvements to the field for the benefit of wildlife and the local community. It's so important to have green space in the middle of such a busy urban area."

The decision to grant Village Green status was made by county councillors at a meeting of KCC's Regulation Committee Member Panel at County Hall in Maidstone. KCC is the registration authority for Village Greens.



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THURSDAY, 1



Canterbury Cathedral features on the mural



The Rheims Way underpass mural, featuring the King Ethelbert statue

The underpass was still blighted by graffiti last week

City underpass brightened up by landmark mural

A dingy underpass has been brightened up with pictures of iconic city landmarks.

The mural in the passage in Rheims Way, next to Canterbury Castle in Wincheap, features photos of the Cathedral and the King Ethelbert statue.

The city council hopes the project will also help tackle graffiti.

Anti-tagging campaigner Cllr Nick Eden-Gren (Lib Dem) said: "My hope is that it will make the underpass feel more like a subway that you would want to walk through, rather than one you have to walk through."

He is also pleased with the positive responses he has received from residents.

But Kristina Howard, 31, is not so impressed, arguing taxpayers' cash would be better spent tackling crime or homelessness.

"It feels like the council could be spending their money on better things, rather than pretty murals," she said.

Former Medway resident Jordan Wheatley, 18, has a mixed view of street art in the city.

"If it's artistic it doesn't bother me, but nobody likes to see ugly tag," he says.

The project will also include the tidying of the ramp walls leading down to the underpass, which will make it easier to clean graffiti.

More work is planned at underpasses across the city, including at St Dunstan's and St George's, to improve their lighting and create a safer atmosphere.

Spectacular display after years of work

Behind the scenes, a small army of community-spirited volunteers is at work to keep Canterbury looking its best.

One such effort has now resulted in a spectacular display in a public garden, which has been drawing compliments from passers-by.

It follows work on a 60-metre stretch of flower bed in Solly's Orchard, which was started three years ago and is now flourishing.

The project is led by Geraldine Fish, an experienced gardener and member of the

St Peter's Residents' Association, which has helped fund it.

She and other volunteers, including young people from Poland, Romania, Nigeria, Australia and South Africa, have turned the neglected border into a blaze of beautiful colour where planting, especially of herbaceous species, has now matured.

Geraldine, who is retired and lives in St Peter's Lane, says it has been a labour of love and quite challenging.

"It had been unattended for some time before we started

work so there was a lot to do in clearing out nettles and weeds," she said.

The work has involved trips to the tip with garden waste, but the effort has paid off.

"It's been a very sociable thing to do and gives us a great sense of satisfaction.

"The route through the garden is a well-used thoroughfare and we have had many compliments from passers-by, which is nice."

The residents' association is now appealing for the donation of a secure tool store.



Geraldine Fish with the flower beds in Solly's Orchard, Canterbury

January 16, 2020 Kentish Gazette (KG) 21

New £40k role for climate change officer

The city council is advertising for a climate change officer who will pick up a near £40,000-a-year salary, plus benefits.

The authority says the move shows it is serious about tackling the issue across the district and meeting its target of being a zero CO2 emissions organisation by 2030.

It wants a "knowledgeable" climate change officer at a time of heightened environmental awareness.

A spokesman said: "As soon as an organisation advertises a job like this, some seem to get exercised about whether applicants drive a car. We're simply looking for the best person for the job, regardless of their favoured mode of transport.

"But we're pleased to say that if the successful applicant cycles to meetings as part of their job, they would get the same mileage payment as they would for driving."

The main objective of the new officer will be to co-ordinate the development, delivery and monitoring of the council's climate change strategy, adaptation strategy for climate change and energy planning policies.

Applications for the post

New green at Kingsmead

Canterbury City Council has dedicated three acres of Kingsmead Field in Kent as a village green.

We exhort local authorities to dedicate their open spaces as town or village greens, to protect them from development and give local people rights of recreation there. Canterbury City Council has done so, setting an excellent example.

The dedication was in return for part of the land being used for housing.

Campaigned

Our member, the Friends of Kingsmead Field, campaigned for years to save this city-centre open space and was delighted when the council agreed voluntarily to dedicate 80 per cent of it as a green. Its application was granted by Kent County Council last December.

Says Sue Langdown of the Friends: "This helps to guarantee the long-term protection of an important public open space which was threatened with development.

"This change of heart reflects the hard work

and commitment of local campaigners and the council to achieve a compromise whereby most of the field could be saved and enhanced, while enabling a small residential development on the remaining land."

Meanwhile, in Middlesbrough, a new green is to be voluntarily registered after 4.4 acres were saved from development. The site at Newfield Crescent in Trimdon was threatened with housing, and local people formed a group, Greenstuff, to fight the plans. Middlesbrough Council capitulated, removing the housing allocation and registering the land as a green.

Encourage

We urge members to encourage their local authorities, including parish and community councils, to register their open spaces as greens. Please tell us of any voluntary registrations as we are keen to publicise good practice. □



Crocus planting on Kingsmead Field.



The mural features wildlife from the area

VIBRANT MURAL TRANSFORMS DRAB HOARDING



Artists Liam Dowd and Sam Sure

By Gerry Warren
gwarren@thekmgroun.co.uk

There's graffiti tagging and beautiful street art - and this stunning mural definitely falls into the latter category.

The work has been completed on the riverside stretch of hoarding which surrounds the development at the back of Kingsmead Field.

It is a joint project between Canterbury City Council, developer Coombs, the Friends of Kingsmead Field and local street artists Liam Dowd and Sam Sure.

It stretches for 40 yards, bringing a welcome splash of colour and vibrancy to otherwise drab hoarding.

It was the idea of the Friends, whose spokesman Sian Pettman says: "It reflects the rich diversity of the natural world living on the doorstep of this site and shows how we can create something spectacular when we all work together."

"I am really grateful for the efforts of the council and Coombs for helping to make this transformation happen."



Artist Sam says the artwork is already turning heads.

"Attitudes to street art have really changed," he said. "Fifteen years ago, we would have got strange looks from passers-by and we would have been quite nervous about what they were going to say to us. These days everyone is so excited to see murals like this going up. We have had so many people stopping to chat with us and thank us, from the youngest to the oldest."

The hoarding screens the development of 16 homes on a former section of Kingsmead Field, close to the existing Kingsbrook Park development.

Originally, the council had plans to build on the whole field, which led to a campaign by residents to prevent any development at all.

However, following discussions with the Friends, a compromise was reached that involves only 20% of the

field being built on, with the remaining 80% classified as a Village Green.

Cllr Rachel Carnac, vice chairman of the city councils' Covid-19 Emergency Committee, said: "I think the work of a very talented artist combined with the passion of both the Friends and Coombs has created something very special especially as it reflects our long-running and very popular Love Where We Live campaign."

2 Thursday, September 19, 2019 Kentis



Sainsbury's staff with the litter they collected

Litter pick fills 30 bags with rubbish

Volunteers have collected more than 30 sacks of litter from an area of the city.

The event was organised by the Sainsbury's store in Kingsmead, in celebration of the supermarket giant's 150th anniversary.

Staff from the shop joined forces with the Friends of Kingsmead Field community group to clear rubbish - including a TV monitor and an abandoned shopping trolley - from the area.

Group spokesman Beverley Paton said: "We were delighted to have the support of Sainsbury's staff on our litter-pick today and look forward to other joint initiatives over the coming months."

Georgina Cooper from Sainsbury's added: "The staff who took part in the litter-pick really enjoyed it and would like to get involved like this more often, along with other members of staff who were unable to attend."

Staff also hope to help with initiatives that will see daffodils grown in the Kingsmead area, and 1,000 crocus bulbs planted with the Oaten Hill Society.



Residents have long-campaigned to protect Kingsmead Field from housing development

Council grants city site village green status 'Happy ending' to long-running bid to protect field

By Joe Wright

jwright@thekmggroup.co.uk

Kingsmead Field has been granted one of the highest protection statuses in the land - safeguarding the open space for decades to come.

Hailed as a "very happy ending" to a long-running saga, about 80% of the three-acre site is now officially designated as a village green.

In 2012, Canterbury residents launched a campaign to protect the field from being turned into housing development after it was seen as a defining remnant of the water meadows in the city.

The Friends of Kingsmead Field was formed in March 2015 to act as a lobby group to put pressure on authorities to protect the whole field after a village green application was rejected by KCC in 2014.

In October 2016, Canterbury City Council (CCC) agreed to strengthen the field's status by designating the site as a village green in support of the campaigners.

But village greens can only be granted their full status by the county authority, KCC, whose elected members agreed to do



Campaigner Sian Pettman

so last week.

A turning point was the decision of the city council in February this year to voluntarily put forward an application to KCC to convert the area into a village green.

The much-sought-after status means the land - which is owned by the council - cannot be built on and will be solely used by the community for sports and pastimes, such as tea parties and picnics.

Council chief executive Colin Carmichael said: "This is a very happy ending to what has been a long-running story stretching back several years.

"We all know there have been

some difficult days along the way, but I would like to pay tribute to the Friends of Kingsmead Field for all they have done to look after this cherished piece of open space in the city. We have an excellent relationship with the group and their passion and love for the field is clear for all to see.

"Our officers will continue working closely with the Friends on further improvements over the coming years to ensure the field retains its place at the heart of the community."

The decision to grant village green status was made by Kent County Council's regulation committee member panel.

It protects four-fifths of the field, with 16 houses set to be built on the remaining 20%.

Sian Pettman, from the Friends of Kingsmead Field, says the group is "absolutely thrilled" the site now has top protection.

"We would like to express our thanks to everyone in the city and county councils who have worked so hard to make this possible," she said.

"It's so important to have green space in the middle of such a busy urban area."

■ What do you think? Email kentgazette@thekmggroup.co.uk

Debbie takes on the taggers

"We are using the frontlines to need a"



Tackling the taggers is at the heart of Debbie Heath's new role as a community safety officer.

Debbie, who joins Canterbury City Council's Community Safety Unit from Westminster City Council, has been tasked with grappling with graffiti and is developing a programme of potential projects to reduce the amount of spray paint the council needs to clean off.

She said: "There are a whole host of ways we can work with property owners to design out graffiti hotspots, including the use of murals, anti-graffiti paint and spiky plants, as well as installing green walls made up of climbing and trailing plants to put off the vandals."

"We can also give property owners advice on preventing access to high points on buildings where it is difficult to remove tags and encourage developers to use patterned vinyls on hoardings to make them less of a blank canvas."

Part of Debbie's job will be to work with the police to encourage teachers and youth workers to report the tags they see on school books as well as creating an education programme to explain to youngsters the costs of tagging to the wider community. Debbie's work is on top of the extensive efforts already being made by the council to get on top of the problem, including:

- The offer of a £500 reward for information leading to the conviction of graffiti vandals

• An email cleaning off easy-to-reach tags and reporting those that need expertise to tackle. He has cleaned hundreds of tags since April and is liaising with the utilities, Network Rail and Kent County Council to persuade them to do the same.

- Extra cleaning by the council's contractor Serco, including a number of blitzes
- Issuing 11 Community Protection Warnings since April to residents and businesses who do not take their responsibility to remove graffiti seriously, despite the offer of support. Eight of those notices have been effective with the remaining three being turned into Community Protection Notices which can result in court action or a £100 fine
- Improved online reporting of graffiti with more than 500 tags highlighted by people visiting canterbury.gov.uk/graffiti
- Helping to establish a graffiti partnership which shares intelligence among the council, the police, the Canterbury Connected Business Improvement District (BID) and wide range of other organisations
- Using government money to supply the BID with graffiti wipes

To report graffiti, visit canterbury.gov.uk/graffiti.

If you have any information that could lead to the arrest and conviction of a tagger, you could be in line for a £500 reward. Email graffiti@canterbury.gov.uk in the strictest confidence.