

WE Actions 23 August 2021

Recurring zoom link for August:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82315094575?pwd=ZHdCWxVob3RuK0FkWnk5WDBNdWlpUT09>

Yellow Rattle

We have about enough seed for 40 square metres (40 individual metres, not 40 metres square!). May have some more, depending on what Mike Chadwick can make available – will deal with this ‘in due course’. As its hard to germinate, want to spread our eggs out into different baskets. Need sunny places and avoid places where it might get mown in the spring (even if by mistake. Rangers hasn’t got capacity to turn this into a big community project, so we will just do it ourselves, in pairs or so. Each site doing about 4-6 square metres (either together or in different areas – planters to decide). By end September (if at all possible). Instructions cut and pasted from this website at the end of this set of notes

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/how-to-grow-yellow-rattle-rhinanthus-minor>. We will prepare a leaflet for distribution in October to explain what we have done, for distribution to neighbours. Hazlemere also wants some seed. Places and pairs below – please make your own arrangement with your planting partner! Jean able to help later in September.

- **Sally** to do Booker Common, with some neighbours I hope!
- **John** to arrange for Tom Burt’s Hill (above ambulance station)
- **John** to arrange for Kingsmead Rec, with **Steve**, and possibly **Maddy**
- **Phil and Penelope** to do the bank of the Hughenden Stream by Hughenden Gardens Village
- **Arif** to find out about the patch of grass by St Francis Church at Arnison Avenue
- **Phil** to enquire about Hughenden Church Yard
- **Ellen** and **Ivan** please to send their seed, and **Sally** to send half her seed, in the post to John Shaw at Chiltern Rangers, Kingsmead Depot, 60 Fennels Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1SL
- **Penelope** to top up John’s supply, keep some for her special project, and pass the balance to Hazlemere.
- Other possible sites if we get Mike’s seed, or if any of these fall away:
 - The field between Pheasants Drive and the railway off Plomer Hill (Cllr Mel Smith would be the contact)
 - The un-mown bits of Tom Burt’s Hill (Alexandra Park side), and Hughenden Park

Verges

Sally on the case of preparing an agenda for the upcoming meeting on 7 September. And she's found that its Andy Sherwood who is cutting her orchid verge. So he's the next one on our list after the meeting with the highways team on 7th.

Bee Squared

Rough timeline for the project on a tab on the 'Action Log' spreadsheet – we'll need to start prep in October. Just to put on people's radar...

Bee School

Probably not going to get off the ground this year, so we'll stop adding it to our agendas.

Repair Café

Hugh confirmed the church is available – Thank you! And what's more, its pencilled in for every second Saturday (but other bookings may override). Hugh is also now able to be there on 11th. Maddy won't be, but Saf and Penelope will be. Arif and Fay accounted for elsewhere that morning! Ellen advised that the repair café was getting most attention on the Facebook page. Maddy has been in contact with all the previous and new volunteers. Planning a zoom meeting this week, to see who can sit at the registration table, volunteer in the kitchen as well as do the repairs. Agreed about 6 repairers tables max at the church, and one for registration. On funding liked Fay's suggestion that the first 3 events are 'pilots' so that funding is not retrospective, for the expenses already paid out...

- **Maddy** to agree who is doing what.
- **Arif** to put photos of last week on the WhatsApp group, for **Holly** to add to the Facebook page.
- **Penelope** to do a new notice for donations saying 'profits to go to the church, to allow any donations to be used for expenses

And a few actions from last week that may or may not be done:

- **Maddy** to drop the paperwork from Saturday off with **Jean** who has kindly offered to enter it into repair monitor
- **Saf** to stand in for Maddy for the 'front of house' roll, meet and greet and explain things – Maddy is away for 11 September
- **Hugh** to put Maddy and the refugee who is interested in volunteering in contact
- **Marten** to liaise with Nigel and then go shopping for the various 'stock' items of glue, tape, string etc that it would make sense to hold sensibly, and hold onto the receipt for subsequent refund when funding bid made/approved.
- **Marten** to put 11th Sept in his diary as our one confirmed repairer

Litter picking

This doesn't need to be an organised group, just people to go out and litter pick on their own. But if we pick a date and encourage people to litter pick on a certain day, we may get more take up. 18th Sept would tie in with big green week. Need to make arrangements to book litter picking equipment from the council, and work out how individuals come and borrow it. <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/Recycling-and-waste/Street-cleaning/Community-litter-pick.aspx>.

- **For next week** agree arrangements to book litter picking equipment from the council, and work out how individuals come and borrow it

Community Networks

Neighbourhood watch can't help. Penelope to meet up with Joe Bradshaw towards end September. Penelope also emailed schools, along with the newsletter and info on solar streets.

Future projects

Discussion about Resource Zone and a library of things – and possibly tying up with the repair café too. Arif has some ideas and will keep the group updated! Electric car club – Jenny pointed out we already have one through the zip car at BNU! So the project is to expand not establish! Lots to keep us busy.

AOB

Wycombe Sound has approached Holly through the facebook page. Agreed it would be good if they could help promote Solar Streets.

- **Holly** to put **Ellen** in touch with Wycombe Sound

See below for yellow rattle planting info

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/how-to-grow-yellow-rattle-rhinanthus-minor> - text cut and pasted below.

Top tips to establishing yellow rattle

Yellow rattle can be a little tricky to get established, but the tips below should help you get it going. The five golden rules to bear in mind, are highlighted in bold italics.

How to: source the seed

- Yellow rattle seeds are very short lived (1 year to 18 months) and ***must be sown as fresh as possible***. You can buy seed but make sure it comes from a specialist supplier who can guarantee it was harvested within the last 12 months.
- Even better, if you know someone that has yellow rattle in their meadow (maybe a local nature reserve or farmers' field) ask if you can collect some seed. Collect seed from June to August by picking a few stems on a dry day and shaking them into a paper bag.
- Allow a small handful of seed per square metre, but remember you only need a few plants to grow in the first year – they'll produce much more seed for you in following years.

How to: sow the seed

- Cut your grass as short as you can between July and September and remove the hay or clippings. Then ***remove the thatch (the layer of dead grass and moss that builds up on the soil surface) to expose some bare soil***, using a rake or harrow. This 'scarification' is really important; the seed must be able to reach the soil surface. Aim for at least 50% bare soil, preferably more.
- Sow by hand straight away, scattering the seeds on the soil surface. ***This must be done by November*** as the seeds need about 4 months of temperatures dipping below 5oC in order to germinate in spring. Seed sown after Christmas germinates poorly.
- If you're sowing an entirely new meadow in an area of specially prepared bare soil, sow the yellow rattle along with all the other seeds in the autumn.

How to: keep yellow rattle going

- Seedlings will begin to appear in spring, from late March through to May. Don't be worried if only a few plants germinate in the first year. They'll grow and shed their own seed and numbers should increase rapidly.
- From now on you don't need to scarify the soil each year, just ***cut the meadow really hard once the seed has been shed and remove the hay or clippings***. This can be any time from late July or preferably into August or early September, allowing late-blooming plants to provide food for pollinators and shed their seed.
- Aim to get the grass sward below ankle height. In agricultural settings, ***grazing the meadow hard now with cattle or sheep until New Year (if it's not too wet) is very beneficial. In a garden setting, cut the grass (and remove clippings) once or twice again before Christmas.***
- If your soil is very fertile you might struggle to keep yellow rattle going – it can slowly disappear. Always create meadows on poor, infertile soils.

Part of the joy of creating a wildflower meadow is seeing the gradual changes over time. As yellow rattle establishes, the grass will become thinner and plants like oxeye daisy, knapweeds and vetches will start to appear. Eventually, if you're lucky, even a few orchids might find a home.

It's a long journey, but it starts with yellow rattle.