



## Highnam Wildflower Project

Highnam Environmental Plan - Objective 1.i Wildflower project – wilding of green spaces via altered mowing regimes and selected planting including designated 'Pollinator Patches'

### Pollinator Patches (current of 2020 – map below):

- Patch 1 - Mary Grove
- Patch 2 - Oakridge opp. Poole Ground
- Patch 3 - Oakridge nr. Monkey Bank
- Patch 4 - Maidenhall
- Patch 5 - Wetherleigh Drive



## **Autumn 2020 Review**

### **The agreed 2020 Plan:**

1. To create 4 additional pollinator patches to add the first trial patch (patch 2)
2. To alter mowing regimes (via Ubico, TBC's current contractor) by reducing the **larger mower** to every **6-8 weeks** in all areas (with continuation of the **small mower**, mowing edges and paths following the usual **3-4 week** schedule).
3. Community involvement – to engage with local community to gain support and practical support and also resolve any issues raised quickly and effectively.

### **How did we do?**

#### **Pollinator Patches:**

##### **Patch 1 - Mary Grove**

Predominantly grass dominated this patch with a few flowers such as white dead nettle and ragwort. The area provided a good refuge for wildlife. During our late summer work party we created new seed bed areas and have sown a nursery mix (annuals and perennial seeds) which should provide some more species diversity, visual colour and increased nectar sources for 2021.



## Patch 2 - Oakridge opp. Poole Ground

Previously annual meadow style patch, then sown with a perennial mix and now developing well as a species rich perennial meadow patch. The best patch we have for floristic diversity and nectar provision. A good variety of pollinators and other wildlife recorded using this path such as common blue butterflies and white tailed bumblebees. During our community work party this late summer, we extended the patch to include a new nursery meadow section (as part of the patch will likely be lost when the new footpath is instated)



### **Patch 3 - Oakridge nr Monkey Bank**

This Natural regeneration patch has worked really well as the soil is naturally less fertile and there is already species rich flora is present in the open section. This natural flora has now, in 2020, been allowed to flower throughout the spring/summer season and now set seed. There is less species diversity under the shaded tree section, but both bee orchids and pyramidal orchids have grown, flowered and set seed, which has been a huge attraction for the local community. This patch would greatly benefit from extension into open area to provide more proportion of flower rich area in 2021.



#### **Patch 4 – Maidenhall**

This patch was dominated by grasses this year, but the few sown patches and planted plug plants produced a few nectar-rich flowers this summer. Foxgloves planted under the trees worked well. During our late summer work party we created a few seed bed sections upon which a nursery mix has been sown. This should provide a good burst of colour and nectar for 2021.



### **Patch 5 - Wetherleigh Drive**

This is a quite nutrient rich patch so grasses dominated, however care from the community by planting of larger plug plants, and the already established floral back edge, meant this patch is progressing well. A new seed bed sown with a nursery mix this autumn should add a quick visual and rich nectar source for one of the most 'public' patches in 2021.



Dates where we recorded mowing had occurred in 2020:

- 30<sup>th</sup> March (small mower)
- 7<sup>th</sup> April (big mower)
- 1<sup>st</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> May (big and small mower)
- 9<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> June (small and big mower)
- 8<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> July (big and small mower)
- 10<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> September (big mower)

### **Report from Ubico (via TBC):**

*"UBICO were happy with the signage in place and borders for the wildflowers. This has been easily managed while also reducing any customer concerns, both on site and to the office. Due to the location of the wildflowers (on wide verges/open space) it had minimal impact on mowing standards as the mower was still able to manoeuvre around the patches without difficulty. Topping off the areas at the end of the season is tied in with the final trim we complete at the end of grass cutting season, so this can be managed with no issues going forward".*

**Late Summer Work Parties: Cut, seed harvesting, branch removal, removal of vegetation, seed bed preparations, weeding and seeding.**



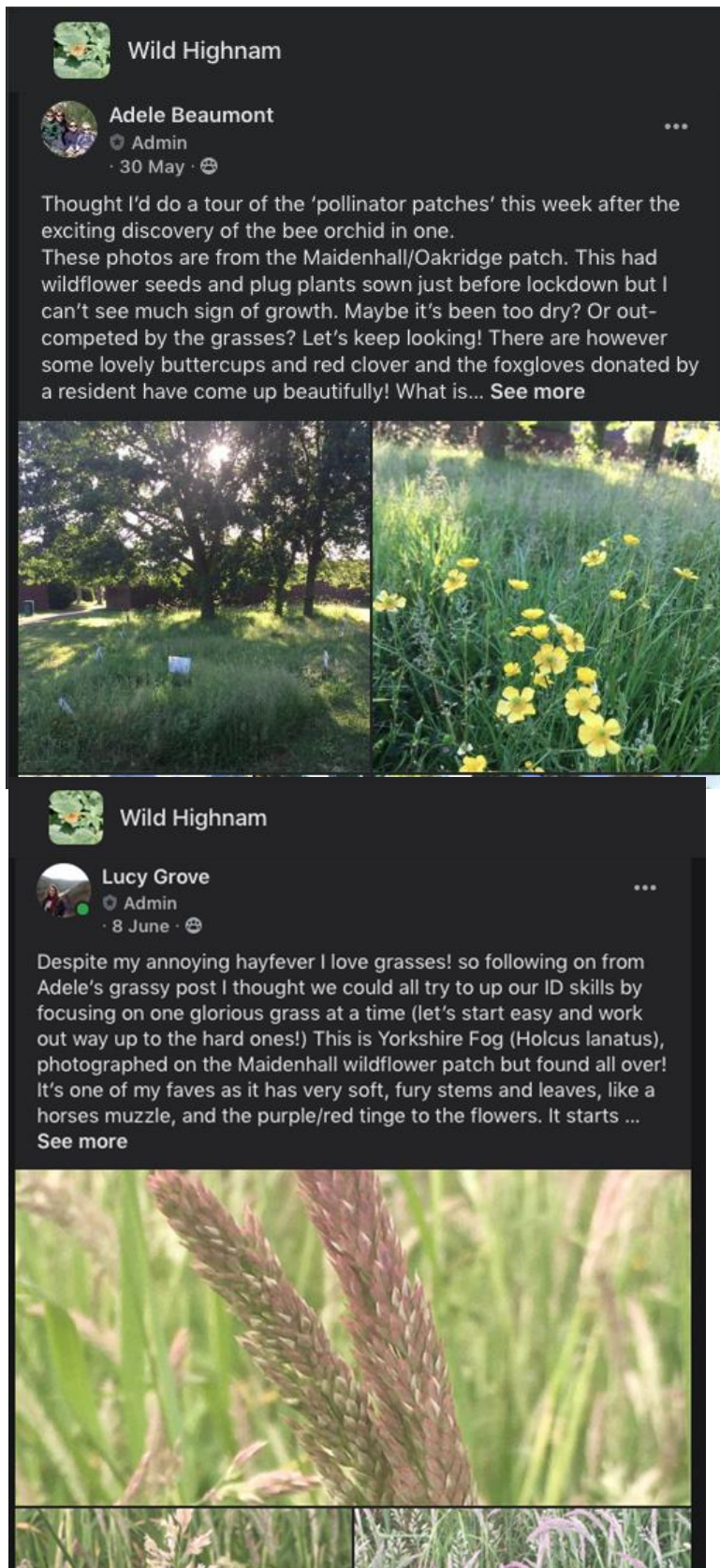
**Community involvement:**

- **Article** written and published in the 'Village Link' magazine explaining pollinator patch idea and altered mowing regime.
- **Meeting** with those who raised issues, to discuss plans.
- **Information signs:** In addition to main pollinator patch signs



Above & left:  
Information  
signs to help  
identify  
interesting  
species and  
highlight their  
importance for  
wildlife.

- **Facebook posts:**



Left & below: EWG members posting on 'Wild Highnam' community facebook page. Virtual tours during lockdown and identification help and challenges.



Wild Highnam

I finally found the bee orchid in the Pollinator Patch



Wild Highnam

Cornflower and Feverfew in Pollinator plot near shop.



Left & below:  
Community involvement  
on 'Wild Highnam'  
facebook page re the  
pollinator patches.

- **Community 'Pollinator Patch' August work party**



Patch 2 – Contractor assistance with vegetation removal, new seed bed preparation and harvesting on wildflower seeds to seed other patches in the village



Patch 4 – Removal of vegetation and creation of new seed beds.

## Community 'Seed and Weed' September work party



Patch 2 – hand weeding following the 'stale seedbed' technique, removing the need for herbicides.



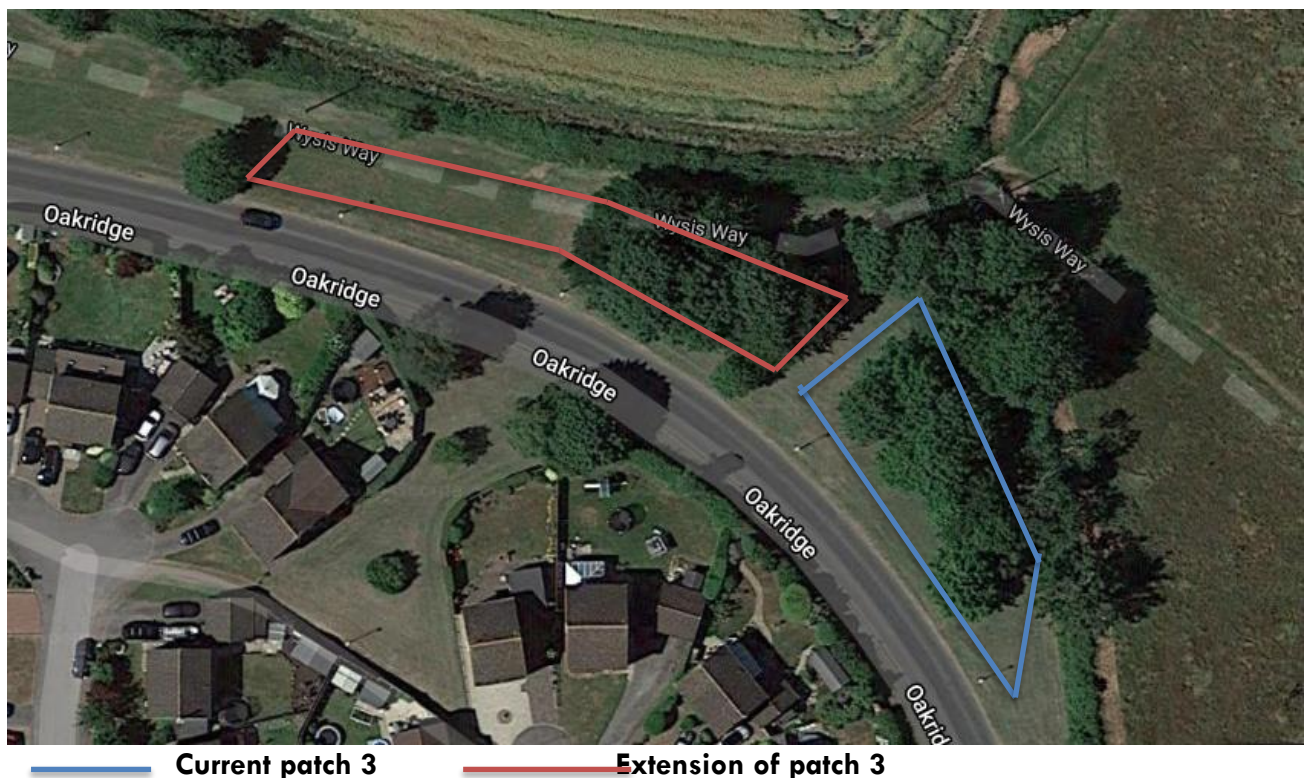
Patch 4 – hand sowing seeds across the patch. Shade loving species under the trees and the nursery meadow mix in the sunnier areas.

## Plan for 2021

### Pollinator Patches:

- TBC (via Ubico) to mow until March
- EWG + community will then remove cuttings and restake and sign pollinator patches and manage the patches until September 2021 (when stakes will be removed again for mowing to recommence).
- Increase in size of Pollinator **Patch 3 - Oakridge nr Monkey Bank**. This is a natural regeneration patch, so just entails the EWG staking out a larger area to not be mown.

### Map:



### Mowing regime

- TBC to reconfirm with Ubico the agreed plan of reducing the **larger mower** to every **6-8 weeks** in all areas (with continuation of the **small mower**, mowing edges and paths following the usual **3-4 week** schedule).
- EWG to monitor and record mowing.

## **Appendix 1: Management methods**

Four types of patches:

1. Natural regeneration patches (patch 3)
2. Annual Meadow patches (new future patches)
3. Perennial Meadow patches (patch 1)
4. Mixed patches (patches 2, 4 & 5)

NB: All suggested month dates have a degree of flexibility by a 2-3 of weeks depending on growth, setting seed, weather variable i.e. work scheduled for the 'End of July' may be undertaken in mid - late August.

### **Natural regeneration patches:**

1. **Exclude mowing** from **late March** to **late July** via staking off.
2. Creeping thistle (or other aggressive species to be allowed to flower if possible but **removed** before setting seed (**approx. July**))
3. **Stakes removed in August** and any saplings and large branches, twigs etc. to be removed to allow safe mowing. **\*\*Small section of each patch to remain staked over winter each year**, to provide a winter refuge for overwintering species. This area to be different each year to ensure one area doesn't become too grass/shrub dense). **\*\***
4. **Mowings to be collected** and heaped away from patch to form nearby hedgehog habitat.
5. Maintain **close mown** grass from **August** to the following **end of March**

+ works well on already species-rich patches  
- won't work on species-poor patches (aka Nitrogen rich) that will be dominated by grasses

### **Cornfield 'Annual Meadow' patches:**

1. **From Late July - Seedbed preparation:** remove top layer of turf (to approx. 5cm deep). Turn over and rake to make a crumbly seedbed.
2. 'Stale seedbed technique' - 3-4 weeks later (**from Late August**) **weed** the bed (hand pick or shallow cultivation) to remove/weaken 'weed' seedlings.
3. **Late August – October** broadcast **sow** cornfield annual seeds. Firm in.
4. Stake areas after sowing - no need to mow these patches (as will be bare soil), allow the annuals to grow, flower and set seed through to late August following year.
5. If re-sowing the patch (maintaining as a purely annual meadow patch) – **Late August cut back** vegetation and remove cuttings (if possible harvest and save seed if possible for next years sowings). **Recultivate** the seedbed and **sow** new cornfield annual seeds
6. If allowing the patch to progress naturally, add additional **perennial seeds** to the seedbed in **late August** the second year, to slowly progress the patch to a 'Perennial Meadow'. The patch should not need to be mown initially as annuals will die back naturally with the winter frosts. As the patch progresses to a more perennial mix, mowing from July – March may be required.

+ very nectar-rich  
+ very beautiful

+ annual flowers provide a burst of colour and nectar as the perennial plants are getting established

- Bare ground for a while (August – April)
- Time and resource heavy if wish to maintain as an Annual meadow (repeated annual bed preparation and annual seed sowing).

### **Perennial Meadow patches:**

1. **Late August – October - Close mow** areas and **scarify** the ground (or remove small patches of turf) and **sow perennial meadow seeds**, firm in.
2. Maintain close mown grass until end of March.
3. **Exclude mowing** from **late March** to **late July** via staking off.
4. Creeping thistle (or other aggressive species to be allowed to flower if possible but **removed** before setting seed (**approx. July**))
5. Any plug plants to be planted **April/May** to allow time to grow, flower and set seed.
6. **Stakes removed in August** and any saplings and large branches, twigs etc. to be removed to allow safe mowing. **\*\*Small section of each patch to remain staked over winter each year**, to provide a winter refuge for overwintering species. This area to be different each year to ensure one area doesn't become too grass/shrub dense). **\*\***
7. **Mowings to be collected** and heaped away from patch to form nearby hedgehog habitat.
8. Maintain **close mown** grass from **August** to the following **late March**

+ Less resources needed (seed and labour) than annual meadow.

+ Should be self-improving and sustaining with time if management undertaken appropriately (i.e. correct cutting times and removal of cuttings)

+ No drastic visual change such as bare ground.

- Grasses may dominate to begin with before Yellow rattle and other flowers take a hold.

### **Mixed patches:**

Mixed patches will have areas containing both perennial and annual meadow sections in. See above in each section for methods.