

## PARISH NATURE RECOVERY PLANS

<b>Parish Name</b>	Peakirk
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**What have you been up to over the last few months? Let us know of any nature recovery highlights, surveys, planting sessions etc – and send us your photos too!**

Peakirk has had five projects underway during 2021. Despite the limitations this year has brought, we are seeing encouraging results in them all.

Our projects are:

**Community Orchard-** We are re-establishing this asset on an abandoned part of Peakirk Allotment site. Two allotments are involved. The areas have been cleared of perennial weeds and mulched with plastic sheeting and overgrown hedges have been cut back to reveal some old apple trees. Plants such as Ragwort, Buttercup, Borage, Hawkbit, Horseradish and Comfrey have been kept.







**Millennium Corner** – This prominent corner opposite the Village Green has been planted with low value shrubs for many years. It was previously maintained by our contractor. This Spring, he removed all the existing planting so we could establish a Pollinator corner, but unfortunately disturbed a live electric cable, so we had to wait several weeks for Western Power to re-bury it. This is a very prominent area of the village, so the choice of planting was important to capture the interest of local people. The area is very poor, dry soil, so perfect for growing what was needed, showy, semi-wild, semi-garden annuals that did not need much looking after. Initially we stood back and waited to see the results. Following some complaints about untidiness from local people and advice from Sarah Lambert, we sowed poppy and cornflower seeds directly into the ground and planted out some plugs and donated garden plants. We removed sowthistles and Fathen. The results are really encouraging and we have received some good feedback.









**Firdale Close wooded area.** To be known as David's Wood - This is an area of about 500sqm of trees and grass at the entrance to the 1960's development of chalet bungalows. All ten trees have TPOs on them (2011).



A 2m strip around the outside is alive with primroses, cowslips and buttercups in the spring and so this has been cut monthly by our contractor since May with the grass in the centre allowed to grow long. We carried out a rough survey on species present in July and identified 29 different wildflowers and 4 different grasses.



**Village Green** – Our Village Green is owned and maintained by the Parish Council, so we can adapt the maintenance regime to try different cutting times. Two areas were identified by Sarah Lambert as potentially having interesting wild flowers, an area on the south side of the slide mound and an area in heavy shade near the Deeping Road. Both areas have been left uncut since the spring and we are currently surveying them to see what is growing there, but it is looking disappointing!



March 2021





August 2021



March 2021



August 2021

We also have a colony of bees in the bank adjacent to the access point from Chestnut Close. We installed 2 wooden bird boxes and 2 woven robin boxes in Spring 2021, at least 1 of which was used this year.



**Village Hall Car Park** – This area, at the back of the Car Park, is partly shaded by large trees and was cleared of nettles and scrub in the Spring, by our contractor. Following advice from Sarah Lambert, a work party then planted Hazel whips, honeysuckle near the fence, English Bluebells, Wild Garlic, Aconites, Primroses, Violets, Musk Mallow and Marjoram. The area has become overgrown with goosegrass and bindweed and now needs more attention to prepare it for the spring flowering.





**Village Churchyard** - During 2021 we also supported a training session in our churchyard, run by George at The Beautiful Burial Grounds organisation and Sarah Lambert. We spent a very enjoyable morning learning about the history of churchyards and their importance as undisturbed areas to local wildlife. We learnt how to assess the variety of plants in different areas and looked at how these were affected by different maintenance regimes. Surprisingly, the area of grass left uncut had less species than areas regularly mown.



St Pega's church has a colony of protected bats and a popular event to take place is the Bat Watch evening, which unfortunately was not allowed this year.



**Tree and Hedge Planting** - We also have a tree planting team overseen by the Parish Council Tree Officer, who has planted many new trees and hedge plants over the past few years and maintained them in all weathers.

### **What are your plans during Autumn and Winter?**

*(Please include an approximate timeline of activities were appropriate)*

**Community Orchard** - We are aiming to replant heritage fruit tree in the Autumn, with the advice of the Stamford Community Orchard Group. We have drawn up plans for building a water collection unit and a compost area and are in the process of arranging a working party to build them over the winter. Twelve families in our community are growing on wildflower seeds to plant out in the Autumn. This will form the basis of a pollinator patch under the fruit trees, which will also feature soft fruit bushes, such as blackcurrants and garden plants such as Borage. We are looking at ways of defining the edge of the plots to support the idea of containment and answer some of the concerns of fellow allotment holders.

**Millennium Corner** – We aim to plant out the wildflower plugs and suitable garden plants such as Agapanthus, Allium, Caryopteris and Lavender (as recommended by the RHS pollinator guide) next spring. We will allow existing wildflowers to re-seed, whilst removing by hand plants such as Fat hen and Sowthistles, which threaten to overwhelm the area.

**Firdale Close (David's Wood)** - The area will be cut by us mid-August and the arisings removed to the Allotments where we are constructing compost heaps.

There were several complaints about untidiness from residents and these will be discussed as we try and find a solution for next year. One idea is to mow a path through the area and cut a sitting space to be used by residents. We are also thinking about information boards explaining what is growing there now and what we want to encourage in the future.

We are also looking at creating bare patches within the central area and planting plugs in the Spring.

**Village Green** – The areas will be surveyed and then cut by us in mid/late August, with the arisings moved to the Allotment site. We are discussing possible plug planting, using some of the wild flowers grown by members of our community, next Spring to supplement what is there already.

**Village Hall Car Park** – The big problem with this area is that it is not marked out as a natural area and can look untidy and uncared for. We need to work with the Village Hall Committee to decide how to define and badge the area. During recent events, it was used as parking by some visitors, which damaged the whips and broke off the growing herbaceous plants. We have more village grown plants to add in the spring, but need to clear some of the old growth to show off the spring bulbs at their best. We have bought new boards to erect once this has been done.







**Village Churchyard** – Peakirk Parish Council is talking to the Parochial Church Council about a change in maintenance for 2022. The PC support the church financially with their maintenance costs and we both use the same contractor, so it would seem to make sense to organise the work for the same time.

Going Forward we need to address the barriers to communication, to involve all members of our community and work with all the village groups to engage them in the plan. We are looking at a series of events and talks over the winter, to help do this.

**Do you need anything to support your activities i.e. labour, tools and equipment, materials or guidance?**

We have a small group of volunteers and the support of the Parish Council, but we need help to engage with and inspire more local people. Any guidance or help with this would be welcome. We also greatly value the excellent support given by Sarah Lambert, we would be lost without her! Thanks Sarah.

**If you have any ideas on costs, please let us know. Do you have any major projects that you will require funding for?**

We are currently looking at a major project promoting the ‘Fen Edge’ landscape, based around the Northern frontier of John Clare Countryside! This would be part of a larger Project promoting and protecting the whole JCC area whilst encouraging better access and understanding of the landscape and its history.

This will require some major funding for buying land and developing an information and community centre to serve our area and the adjacent urban areas of Deeping and Werrington.

**We are hoping to build a comprehensive programme of nature recovery events over the autumn and winter? Do you have any dates in the diary yet for nature recovery/planting events?**

No

**Is there anything else you need help with? Any questions or any ideas that you think we should take forward across the John Clare Countryside**

The Pesticide Free Towns Campaign. Peakirk Parish Council are considering a proposal to ask PCC to reduce and replace Pesticide use, especially in public areas.

<http://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free/>

Cambs CC already have a policy their website which says

We are restricting the use of herbicides in all the parks and open spaces that we manage. We plan to have completely switched to alternative arrangements by August 2019.

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/restricted-use-of-herbicides>

Would JCC support such a proposal for PCC and its rural villages?

Great Big Green Week is a national event to be held 18<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Many communities have already signed up to register their events, including Wicken Fen, Grantham, Newark and Bedford. None as yet in this area. Could we be the first to support this venture?

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>