



1 Year Anniversary

Shipley Woodside Community Garden

We can't believe a year has passed already! We had hoped to hold a fete at the Garden for the community to come and celebrate with us but unfortunately for reasons we will all know, it has just not been possible to safely hold that type of event this year.

So instead, we thought we would put together this special edition newsletter to celebrate our achievements at the Garden over the past 12 months. Also to say thank you to our amazing volunteers, friends of the Garden and supporters.

We hope you enjoy and we look forward to seeing you over the next 12 months.

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend to the soil is to forget ourselves.

'Mahatma Gandhi'



www.seag.uk



ShipleyEcoActionGroup

How it all started in September 2019



Lease from Shipley Parish Council granted to SEAG for the 1.5 acre disused field on Hassock Lane South to be transformed into a Community Garden.

With such a large area, the first job had to be making the compost bins from donated pallets.



Kay feeling very relieved to have that job done!



We got to work straight away making valuable compost, using hay from the previously cut grass, woody materials and food waste.

Wildflower Meadow

The next priority was to get the wildflower meadow seeded before we missed the opportunity and Autumn was upon us.

Lots of research went into the types of seeds that would work with the soil type at the Garden and Naturescape in Nottingham were fantastic providing advice and discounted seeds. But oh did we massively underestimate the work involved in removing the turf and scarifying such a large area! We had to accept that the meadow will need to be completed in stages over time!

We had a great turn out of volunteers to help prepare the meadow for seeding. The grass sods were moved all the way from the meadow down to the entrance area, to create a turning circle for what would be the car park. Unbeknown to us at the time, this was the natural wet area of the garden and we caused ourselves more work, which you will read about later!

Thanks to advice from Jim Steele, Butterfly Conservation Officer for East Midlands, we have decided to add a Butterfly Bank in the meadow area. Work has started on building the Bank using sods removed from the paths and we hope to sow some seeds and do some planting before the end of the season.



Back
breaking
work!



Fran and Lynsey exhausted
from moving hay bales

"The Meadow appears to be in good heart, which is a little surprising after such a wet Winter and near-drought conditions in the Spring. The seeding last year has resulted in a good mix of meadow plants being visible over the Summer months, including Oxeye Daisy, Wild Carrot, Self-heal, Yarrow, Greater Burnet, and various grasses. It is intended to seed further specific flowers in mid-September as we have some patches where the grasses have become a little dominant. Meadows can take a few years to establish but we are hopeful that the final outcome will be an attractive and biodiverse feature of the Garden".



Jim Steele, Derbyshire Conservation Officer, Butterfly Conservation East Midlands



WOW!

Karl's brilliant mowing skills creating the Tree of Life and Yin and Yang, which looks even better now that the grass around the paths has been left to grow long



**Volunteers gathered for
the Garden's first Big
Butterfly Count**



"The creation of a Butterfly Bank should make a big contribution to butterfly conservation within the Garden, providing a specialised habitat that will be planted with specific, wild flower plants that are the caterpillar food of certain butterfly species, and it will also hold some nectar-rich flowers for various butterflies to feed upon. The Bank will be planted for its nectar provision.



A topping of small, limestone aggregate is now being sought that will act as a mulch and also provide an alkaline soil environment that suits most of the plants intended for the Bank. Plants will be planted through the aggregate into the up-turned turf below. The curved bank design means that various parts of the Bank will benefit from sunlight at different times during the day. The Bank will require maintenance and 'fine tuning' as we go along but it will surely be a worthwhile endeavour."

Jim Steele, Derbyshire Conservation Officer, Butterfly Conservation East Midlands

Drainage

We were all feeling rather impressed with ourselves for coming up with the idea of using the sods removed for the Meadow and hay bales scattered all around, to create the turning circle for the car parking. BUT very soon after we had lugged all the sods and hay bales to the other end of the Garden and formed the circle, we had all that heavy rain in Winter. We found that the turning circle was the naturally wettest area of the Garden and we had actually created a natural pond, which in this case was not a good thing!

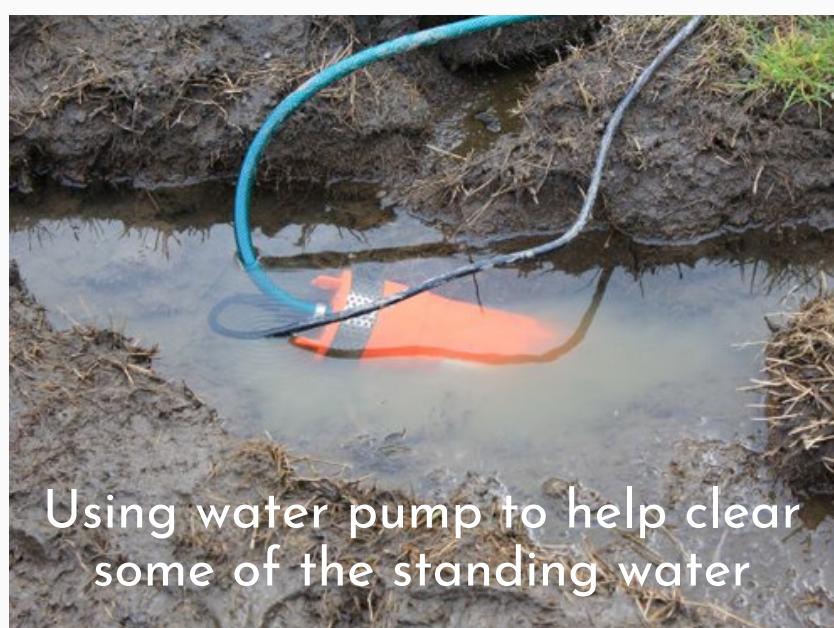
We worked on removing the turf and hay, investigated drainage options and decided we could harness the natural run off water from the field behind the Garden, if we could collect it somehow. So we made a well and use a ground water pump, powered by a solar charged battery, which pumps the water into the IBC's and means we can store the water. Ben was known to be at his happiest when digging, so this was naturally his job and by hand he dug an impressive well, which is 6ft deep holding approximately 300- 400 litres!

Ben, Graham and Pete also worked tirelessly on digging drainage ditches and pipework, which follow the natural slope of the land but divert the water away from that area.

The new system appears to be working and now we wait nervously for Winter!



Kay, Ben and Lynsey feeling pleased with themselves having finished moving the sods and hay bales from the Meadow with the help of Fran and Graham!



The end result

Who needs a turning circle anyway!

Hugelkultur Raised beds

We were lucky to have some old railway sleepers donated, which were perfect for making the raised beds but then we had limited funds and couldn't buy in top soil and compost to fill all the beds. A more sustainable and environmentally friendly option was to use the Hugelkultur technique, often used in Permaculture designs.

Hugelkultur uses woody materials, such as logs and twigs buried in the soil that you can grow plants on top of. It is a great way of recycling and using materials readily available in your space. The gradual decay of wood is a consistent source of long-term nutrients. The composting wood generates heat and the wood acts like a sponge, storing water and then releasing during drier times.

We used cardboard, newspapers, hay from the grass cutting, branches and twigs from around the garden as well as donations, topped with the upturned grass sods from the meadow and a small layer of top soil.

All the beds have been successful and produced fantastic produce!



Early on we marked out the location of the raised beds, using hay bales and pallets. A layer of cardboard was put down underneath the hay to prevent grass growing and the hay left in situ to rot down as this is an excellent natural organic medium.

Lynsey lining the raised beds to add some protection for the wood, using donated plastic wrapping, that would otherwise have been sent to landfill.



Shane, Pete, Graham and Ben hard at work putting the beds together.

Hugelkultur beds filled with newspaper, hay, woody material, compostable food waste and upturned grass sods, ready for thin layer of top soil and compost.





Team Work!

Early signs of life in the planted beds. Work started on removing turf between beds, laying cardboard and covering with donated wood chip to suppress grass and weeds.



Matt, Kerry and Kerry's dad enjoying nurturing their adopted raised bed.



Hugelkultur beds
have been a
huge success



Squash loving growing in the
donated tractor tyres



Natasha and Alex starting the
children's gardening beds and
making willow weaved edging.



Willow planting and weaving

We are very grateful to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Woodside Farm on the Nutbrook Trail for letting us harvest some of their Willow to use at the Garden. Also to Kate Lemon, Erewash Valley Regional Manager at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for giving us a masterclass on how to weave Willow to create structures.

We were joined by many of you to come and help plant the Willow and start the structures for the arch between the hedge leading into the Meadow, as well as a seated dome at the far right corner of the Meadow, looking out over the Garden and the fields to Eastwood beyond.

The Willow has grown really well and it is now long enough for us to weave into the arch shape. The dome needs a little longer to grow!

Children joined us and helped start the Bug Hotel made from pallets and collected twigs, toilet roll cardboard and pine cones etc.

We have also planted our own Willow coppice, so we have our own sustainable resource for making future structures, it is great for nature and it also looks good!



Starting the Bug Hotel



Kate giving us all a lesson on how to make the Willow structures



The start of the seating dome



Willow coming along nicely for the arch

Hedgerow planting

Creating hedgerows was an important project for us as it will act as a wildlife corridor. Providing food for animals in the shape of nuts, berries and flowers, as well as the perfect place for them to shelter and reproduce.

The Woodland Trust kindly donated 410 different whips for us to plant to establish the hedgerows. They are made up of Hazel, Blackthorn, Crab Apple, Dog Rose, Elder, Rowan, Silver Birch, Hazel, Downy Birch and Holly.

We welcomed children from Mapperley CofE Primary School who helped plant the whips and added to the Bug Hotel.

We were also joined by volunteers from Phoenix Futures, a fantastic charity helping anyone affected by drug and alcohol use and who run a Recovery Through Nature Project at Shipley Park



Ruth helping the children build the Bug Hotel



Volunteers from Phoenix Futures helped with tree planting and clearing the entrance ready for a rockery to be made and planted.

Sensory Garden

This was a key part of the initial vision for the Garden and once we had observed the land, we very quickly decided we needed to go bigger than our original plans!

We quickly got to work, marking out the different beds and paths and preparing the soil for planting. The first bed planted was for smell and we have filled this with many different herbs. They play an important role having both culinary and medicinal benefits but they are also great companion plants and so we also added specific herbs to our Forest Garden to support the fruit trees.

The other beds quickly followed for cool and hot colours, grasses for sound and touch, sound with a water feature and wind chimes and giant and smaller Sunflowers provide height and colour. Volunteers donated many plants and we were also fortunate to have plants donated from Shipley Garden Centre, Colliers Nursery and Rueben Shaws Nursery.

The paths were time consuming to complete, as the ground needing levelling, turf removing, weed suppressant laying and paths edged before we could lay the path material. Each path has a different edging and path material, so that each represents different sensory element, just like the beds. We have used broken patio slabs, bricks, ceramic rope edging, stepping stones, wine bottles, pea shingle, different coloured bark and woodchip.

We have upcycled broken trellis to make an entrance arbour and seated area which looks out over what will be the large pond.

The centre piece is a beautiful donated Weeping Silver Birch Tree which in time will present the opportunity to build a circular seat underneath to enjoy some shade and to just sit and enjoy the space.

Although we always try to source free materials or donations there were some things that just couldn't be done without funds. So we are very grateful to have received grants from Derbyshire County Council and Amber Valley Community Voluntary Service, which meant we could finish all the paths and also lay the main access path, which is wheelchair and pushchair friendly from the entrance gate up into the centre circle of the Sensory Garden. In time, this path will extend further into the rest of the Garden.

All the volunteers have felt a great deal of satisfaction seeing this come together, the hard work involved is not fully reflected in this newsletter but to each and every one of the volunteers and everyone that has helped realise the Sensory Garden, thank you.

A very special thanks also needs to go to Kay Kearton as her vision, passion and relentless enthusiasm has without a doubt encouraged all the other volunteers to work on having the Sensory Garden finished for this Summer.

We think it looks fantastic and are super excited to see what it will look like next year when all the plants have established! We hope to see you there!

Marking out for main path



Perimeter planted with goat willow, dogwood, wild cherry and downy birch.



Starting to come together with planting and paths.

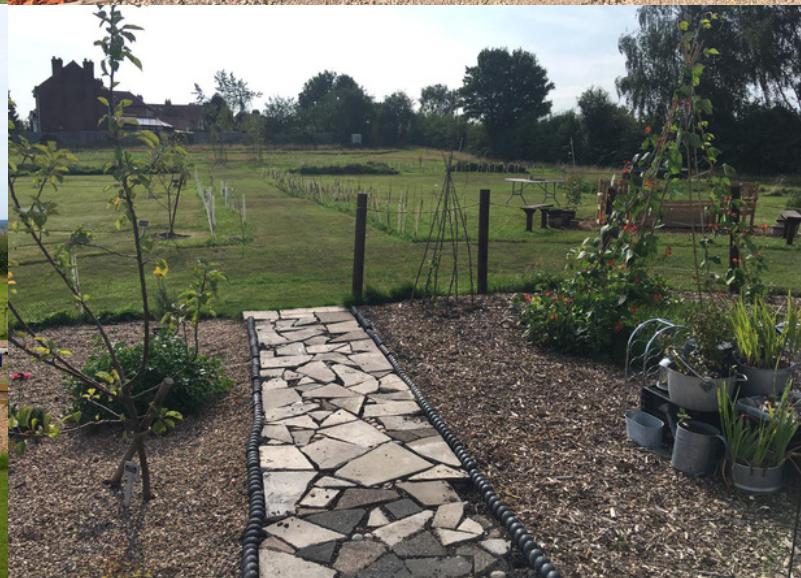


You want more mulch?!

Drone footage taken in July thanks to
Bridge Drone Photography.



The Sensory Garden as it looks at the end of our first year!



Forest Garden

Very early on we mapped out the Forest Garden and planted donated young fruit trees, which we have been pleased to see have established well, with blossoms and fruit appearing on some this year.

A Forest Garden, also called a Food Forest is diverse planting of edible plants and is often used in Permaculture design. It attempts to mimic the ecosystems and patterns found in nature and works using layers, which generally will be a canopy, shrub, herbaceous, root and ground cover, and sometimes a vine layer. Using these layers, we can fit more plants in an area without causing failure due to competition. Plants are chosen that would be seen together in the wild and compliment each other.

Currently we have the canopy layer planted with many different fruit trees, and some berry bushes and herbs. The next stage is to complete planting the shrub layer such as currant and berry bushes. Then will come a herbaceous layer which consists of perennials and annuals such as herbs and rhubarb. Next will be the ground cover such as strawberries and clover. Once the fruit trees become more established, we will also be able to plant vines and climbers such as runner beans.

Fruit trees planted in the first stage of the Forest Garden



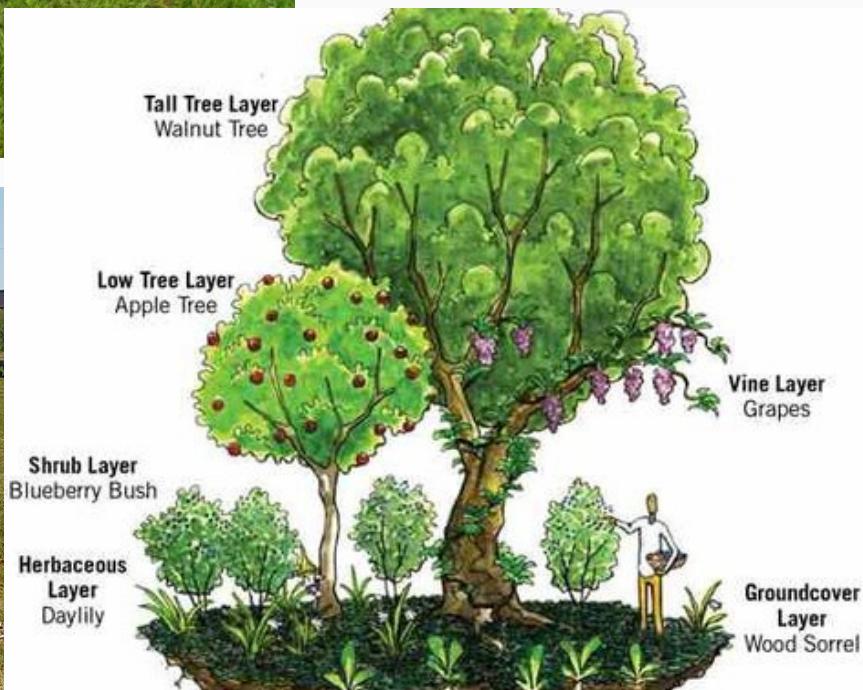
Young trees doing well



How the
Forest Garden
will evolve is
illustrated
below



Raspberry bed



Friendship Bench

In August 2020 we launched the Friendship Bench, an idea that came from volunteer Nicky Godridge having heard about a Friendship Bench on the local radio. Nicky was touched by the idea which aims to reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing, by people knowing there is a place they could go and always find somebody to chat with, whether or not you knew them. Nicky imagined that the Garden could be one of the places and when she shared her ideas with the rest of SEAG members, everyone loved the idea and what it stood for and so the work began!



We received generous donations of two wooden seats, plant pots and funds to purchase the plants. Ben and Graham made a planter to sit between the two seats to create the beautiful Friendship Bench. Volunteers worked hard to clear the area of turf, edge with wood and mulched with a thick layer of woodchip. to prevent weeds coming through.

The Friendship Bench is in a perfect spot overlooking the Sensory Garden and anyone is welcome on Wednesdays 1pm - 4pm and Saturdays 10am - 1pm. There will always be someone to greet you and show you around or to simply sit and chat.

Deciding on the location. We must have moved this about 10 times before coming to a final decision!



Kindness costs nothing but means everything



In situ and now just ready for the planter



The very first visitors to use the Friendship Bench on launch day

Polytunnel

Thanks to a successful grant from Amber Valley Community Voluntary Service earlier in the year, we have been able to purchase a 30 x 14ft polytunnel.

We haven't been able to erect this before now due to the difficulty with social distancing but at the time of publishing this newsletter, we have the frame up!

When we have a windy free day, we will be able to get the cover and doors on. We were able to source free paving slabs which are painstakingly having all the old mortar chipped off and will then be ready for laying as the base. Donated staging is all painted ready to be fitted inside.

A polytunnel will mean we can grow much more produce and plants, extend our growing season but also sell them to raise funds.



So much more has been achieved in the past 12 months but we ran out of space in this newsletter! As we look forward to the next 12 months we are excited to get started on the big projects - finishing the polytunnel, building the structure and making the large wildlife pond.

None of this could have been achieved without the hard work of our volunteers, the generosity and support of the community, local businesses and Shipley Parish Council. So from all of us at Shipley Eco-Action Group we would like to say a huge THANK YOU and we hope you will continue the journey with us and enjoy your Community Garden as much as we do!



www.seag.uk



ShipleyEcoActionGroup

THANK YOU!

Derbyshire County Council- grant for SEAG start up and main access path.



Pykett Tractors- donation of used tractor tyres, we used as planting beds.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust- donation of Willow for arch and dome, bird and bat boxes and tools. Special thanks to Kate Lemon for all her advice and support with bid writing and Willow arch making workshop.

Phoenix Futures- volunteer time planting hedgerow and clearing the entrance for a rockery.

Weleda- Provided wildflower seeds and advice.

Woodland Trust - 410 whip tree pack and advice.

Tarmac- donation of security gates.



Shipley Parish Council- lease of land and start up grant.

Severn Trent Water- grant for pond, seating and shelter.

Shipley Garden Centre - donation of pallets, fruit trees, plants and small prefabricated pond.

Rubens & Shaw Nursery- donation of climbing rose.

Collyers Nursery- donation and discounted fruit trees.

Amber Valley CVS- grant for polytunnel and seating.

Jim Steele, Butterfly Conservation Officer for East Midlands for advice, support and encouragement.

Naturescape- discounted wildflower seeds for meadow.

East Midlands Uniform- discounted banner for gates and advertising flags.

Mapperley School- volunteer time with children planting hedgerows and tree whips.

PLUS MANY MORE!