

Agenda item no. 12	
Report to	Burwash Parish Council
Subject	Burwash in Bloom
Date	14th August 2018
From	The Clerk

1. Wild Flower Verges

1.1. On the 31st May a local resident contacted ESCC Highways with concerns about the wild flowers in the verges down Willingford Lane. She outlined the following (which has been summarised):

There are many reasons for it not to be cut until then (end of August):

- 1.1.1.** Councils have been told by the government that they shouldn't cut the verges until August because we're losing all our wild flowers in the verges. This was in the national press, radio and T.V.
- 1.1.2.** The lack of wild flowers is reducing the number of bees, without them there's nothing to pollinate our crops for our food.
- 1.1.3.** The tourists come from all over the world but mainly from Holland, France and Germany to see the wild flowers, if the flowers are destroyed and not allowed to live, the tourists will stop coming.
- 1.1.4.** We had a survey completed in 2017 identifying 63 flowers in this lane and Sarah Raven made an exciting discovery when she identified a very rare one. The lane will be seen on television at some point to show other people how they can look after the wild flowers in their lane. James Newmarch the Soft Environmental Engineer from Lewes is coming to inspect them in July. You may also have heard about the Wild About Burwash group.

1.2. An updated email was sent informing a Cllr the following:

- 1.2.1.** In spite of all my efforts to protect the wild flowers in my lane by emailing the Highway Dept in May, who made a promise in writing not to trim it, and the recent telephone call I made only a few days ago asking them to check that they had Willingford lane down to be left alone, I've just been down the lane and found all the verges have been totally destroyed. They've trimmed the whole lot including all the sensitive areas they aren't even supposed to touch.
- 1.2.2.** In May when I told them all the wild flower verge posts were knocked down by lorries they said it wouldn't matter as the wild flower areas that they have listed on their map wouldn't be touched as the strimmer men work from the map so they know what they can't touch. They told me which areas they had listed, but openly admitted that the survey was done over 20 years ago, and that probably the wild flower areas could have increased.
- 1.2.3.** My survey identifying 63 flowers was done in 2017 and James Marchment was coming to see them any time now. There's nothing left for him to see.

2. Flowers around the Lime Trees

2.1. The Clerk was contacted by a concerned residents who has had all of her flowers she had planted around her adopted lime tree strimmed. Understandably she was very upset.

2.2. On contacting ESCC Highways she was told:

“It would seem the plants were most likely strimmed by our contractors who are tasked with cutting the highway verges on our behalf. It is highly likely they were unaware of the Burwash Parish Council scheme to adopt the local lime trees.

To plant up a highway verge requires a cultivation licence and I have attached the form and guidance notes for you to look at. If you already have a cultivation licence please let us know so we can inform the contractors for the future.”

The cost of such a licence is £57.20

2.3. The Clerk received an email from James Newmarch on the 16/05/2017:

“I note also that all trees (except for those at the far eastern end of the village) have been adopted. I think this is a great idea ! Again as discussed, I would encourage the pruning of the basal growth and the growth on the main stems up to about 2.1m. I would also encourage watering unless we get very substantial rain as the tree pit soil surface is typically only small. Generous watering no more than weekly is much better than frequent smaller amounts as this encourages surface rooting. The introduction of small bedding plants should not adversely affect the trees. “

There was no mention of any license.

3. The council has been asked to follow up these two incidents in particular to resolve:

3.1. To request why the strimming of the wildflower verges took place when it had been highlighted so close to the date they were strimmed. What will now be done to reinstate the verge.

3.2. To challenge James Newmarch about the strimming of the flowers around the Lime Trees and ensure this is not repeated if people replant flowers considering his support and enthusiasm for the project and ensure people are not expected to pay a cultivation license.