

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

West in Bloom Report

1. Overview

- 1.1 Following the presentation at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 23 April 18, there is an opportunity for the Parish Council to get involved in RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) 'In Bloom'
- 1.2 RHS hold two programmes
 - **Its Your Neighbourhood** - a scheme for volunteer-led community gardening. Peatmoor Copse and Greendown Copse groups are registered with the RHS for this scheme. This enables local activities to be supported and acknowledged. They can be undertaken independently of the Parish Council but can also link together to form an In Bloom project.
 - **Britain In Bloom** – an integrated approach to community improvement that uses horticulture as its foundation. In Bloom communities can tackle everything from litter, graffiti, anti social behaviour through to conservation, sustainability and positive impact on a place.
- 1.3 For *Its Your Neighbourhood*, projects register with the RHS. This enables participants to get free horticultural advice as well as an annual visit from an Assessor. This is not deemed to be a competitive process and annual visits from regional assessors aims to provide mentor support and constructive feedback.
- 1.4 For *Britain in Bloom*, this is a very competitive process. Communities are entered into a category that reflects the population/place and as part of a national competition, are judged annually on three categories:
 - Horticultural Achievement
 - Environmental Responsibility
 - Community ParticipationTo progress an entry in Britain in Bloom would require the Parish to have a small committee to agree an action plan for the area, funding or fundraising to help fund the cost of registration into the competition and develop and achieve the 'look' of the projects and community participation.

2. Detail - West In Bloom

- 2.1 *In Bloom* initiatives are aimed to bring residents together to improve where they live. It is a well known brand. There is widescale flexibility on the type and size of projects and the outcomes they achieve. There are many informal activities that residents are already participating in such as Westlea brook clearance, litter picking and For West Swindon, this could be a useful means to grow wider resident participation in looking after their street or open spaces. It could help

mobilise action against flytipping, litter and graffiti and would link effectively to the work to develop wildflower planting.

- 2.2 The Parish Council could promote *Its Your Neighbourhood* to residents and offer support and funding (e.g. small grants) to enable community projects to get started. These could be small environmental improvements in a street or neighbourhood, floral planting, maintaining natural habitats, wildflower planting or focus on one area or theme.
- 2.3 Alongside these projects are also the Parish funded planting including the planters on Wootton Bassett Road, and, Whitehill Way, spring bulb planting and wildflower meadows.
- 2.4 Depending on the success/popularity of these small community initiatives, these could be linked together as part of a West In Bloom programme. The Parish Council could then seek to register for Britain in Bloom in the near future.

3. Recommendations:

- 3.1 The Leisure and Amenities agrees that the Parish Council will create West In Bloom.
- 3.2 The Leisure and Amenities Committee agrees to promote RHS Its Your Neighbourhood Projects as part of West in Bloom.
- 3.3 The Leisure and Amenities Committee agrees the creation of a small grants scheme for Its Your Neighbourhood Projects.

Paula Harrison

Parish Manager