



Annual report - for the year ended 31st March 2020

The main focus remains creating and maintaining wildflower meadow habitat, and continues to be successful.

Site Management

- There have been regular work-parties, achieving everything planned.
- Increasing the workforce has been successful, with a several recruits, including some much younger ones.
- A contractor is now engaged to mow steep slopes with a tractor mounted flail.
- Biodiversity as always, remains significant.
 - New species continue to be recorded.
 - Monitoring of all species of wildlife continues.

Success

- Efforts to increase the profile and public awareness included information stands at several village events – this led to an increase of interest and support.
- In June a special event '*Verging-on-the-Wild Fun Day*' was organised in the Community Centre (there being nowhere suitable on site).
 - With a great input from several young people who are much involved in the village this was most successful.
 - Inspired by Plantlife's Road Verge campaign the afternoon was designed to attract younger people and children with a variety of activities and stalls.
- RHS South West in Bloom '*It's Your Neighbourhood*' scheme awarded us "*Outstanding*" for the third consecutive year.

'On the Verge of Success' (note the theme!)

In February Bob Buck and Giles Morris attended a conference organised by Suffolk Naturalists' Society on '*On the Verge of Success_- the importance of Roadside Verges*'.

Speakers included several conservation charities, local councils, the Highways Agency and wildlife trusts.

The message is that roadside verges are extraordinarily important for diversity of plants and wildlife generally, if managed sensitively. (A more detailed report can be available)

What is gratifying is that St. George's Flower Bank's management is very much in line with recommendations.

It is to be hoped that the message can be shared both locally and further afield.

continued

Committee/Local Authority involvement.

- The Committee's liaison with the Parish Council and Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Allotments remains at a high level.
- Unfortunately issues with North Somerset Council regarding Health and Safety and Traffic Management remain unresolved after more than a year.
 - Risk assessments and traffic management have now been deemed not compliant with modern requirements. This means that NSC insurance would not cover our work.
 - At the moment this has resulted in all voluntary work on site being suspended.
 - Some progress is being made but it is a very slow process.

Fundraising

- Having no official funding stream all monies have to be raised by the committee.
 - Monthly guided walks around the area provide a regular income.
 - There is a regular demand for film show/presentations which remain popular.
 - This generates sufficient for normal expenditure.
- This year it was necessary to make a special effort as two of the mowing machines need to be replaced (a cost of £2.5K).

Grant applications were made to several organisations, most of which were successful.

- Support from the following is gratefully acknowledged:-
 - The Owls of Pill
 - Wessex Watermark
 - Portishead Lions
 - Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Community Foundation

The Future

- Once the issues regarding Health and Safety and Traffic Management are resolved with North Somerset Council this important conservation work will continue.
- Plans are being considered to celebrate the 30 years that this site has been managed.
 - This will maintain the high profile but also, with luck, recruit more volunteers who have yet to qualify for bus-passes.

Bob Buck

**Chairman
March 2020**