

## **Wild about Moulton 2024-25**

### **Annual Report to the Parish Council**

#### **Volunteers**

We started the group in 2021 and we have 12 active members for physical projects plus a number of interested villagers. However, it is tricky to progress with new projects since many members have other commitments. We hope to strengthen our links with the cubs/scouts and pre-school.

#### **Funds**

We currently have funds which are held on our behalf by Jill Goodwin. Last year we had a plant stall on the playing field whilst Ian Garmston was kind enough to busk for us. We also had a plant stall and plant tombola at the village fete. Our expenditure includes 2 small trees, 100 English bluebells and bird food for the village bird feeder. We've used seed for the wildflowers which we harvested last autumn plus some left from the previous year.

#### **Projects**

##### **The Playing Field**

In early spring we removed the tree guards from the hedging. We also removed some of the hemlock which has been invading the hedgerow. We've planted a small crab apple and a rowan tree to replace 2 trees which had died over winter.

##### **The Green**

We've planted more annual wildflowers and good pollinators. We've also had plants donated e.g. Ox eye daisies. In the copse we're trialling 100 native English bluebells which are already appearing.

##### **The Church Ford**

We're aiming to keep this a native wildflower area and have been using Landlife seeds which are used by the Wildlife Trusts. We are slowly extending the area seeded.

##### **The Churchyard**

Since the public footpath goes through the churchyard and we noticed a diversity of wildflower species, we asked the Parochial Council if we could experiment on a metre wide area. We cleared an area to the left of the path which had been invaded by nettles and knapweed and then seeded more wildflowers, taking the seeds from the prolific area behind the church. We did this on the advice of Cathy Smith who came from Suffolk Wildlife Trust to advise on the churchyard's upkeep. She found >45 species of wildflowers there last June and said that it was a gem. Since her visit both we and the Parochial Council have been approached by U3AC Cambridge botanic club to come and study it in July this year. Cathy has also advised us on cutting back and raking in autumn which is all important to sustain these species. This will be a challenge for any village volunteers who can be mustered nearer the time. We should all thank Bob Saltmarsh and his merry band for the upkeep of the churchyard in the past which enabled the increase in diversity and colour of the wild flowers there.

##### **Bird Feeder**

This is on the playing field and has been well used by a variety of birds. We have established a weekly rota of volunteers who top up the seed and fat balls.

##### **The Future**

At our meeting last autumn we had a number of suggestions, including planting more trees, creating an insect home, nest boxes for swifts on the church tower, notices identifying different wild flowers, and hedgehog runs. Of these, the insect home and encouraging the hedgehogs seem the most popular.

An insect home needs to face south and we'd be grateful for suggestions as to an appropriate area. We thought the cubs or beaver might be interested in helping with this and will be contacting them.

We are hoping to find out where hedgehogs are located in the village and encourage hedgehog corridors. Bev

Culloden wrote a piece for us in Moulton Matters to publicise the plight of the hedgehogs and how they can be helped.

We will continue to maintain, and where possible, expand the wildflower areas on our current sites in the village.

### **Thanks**

We'd particularly like to thank Douglas James, both for advising and helping us with our projects.