

**NOTES OF A CRANLEIGH IN BLOOM MEETING HELD AT THE PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICES
ON THURSDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2014 BETWEEN 2.00PM and 3.40PM**

Those Present: Sue Dewhurst - Summerlands Estate Residents Association
Diane Page – Summerlands Estate Residents Association
Michael Miller – History Society (left early and extended apologies)
Brian Arendell – Rotary Club
Angela Jenkins - Owner of Natural Health High Street
Brenda Bowles

The Cranleigh in Bloom Steering Committee:-
Jane Bowden – Waverley Borough Council, Countryside Manager
Gill Ford – U3A Gardening Club
Shirley Illsley – St Joseph’s Specialist School
Jane O’Leary – Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce
Pauline Whitehead – Parish Clerk

Guest speaker and mentor
Peter Holman – South and South East in Bloom

Introduction

Jane O’Leary welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief introduction to how the project had started as an initiative led by the Chamber of Trade in partnership with Waverley Borough Council, and how it had grown to the stage whereby Cranleigh was preparing to enter into South and South East in Bloom.

Guest speaker and mentor.

Peter Holman, the Chairman of South and South East in Bloom gave a presentation which outlined what the judges of South and South East in Bloom would be looking for in a good entry. (A copy of the presentation is available on the website <https://www.cranleighvillage.net>)

This year’s theme was ‘Growing for Gold’ and as part of the scheme free sunflower seeds were available from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). A good entry would have evidence of community input from residents, businesses and local authorities running throughout the application. The range of areas that can be entered includes front gardens, pubs, schools and conservation areas. It is not all about floral display, but about demonstrating that the community are working together and are engaged in a project that is sustainable, encompasses environmental considerations, conservation, inclusive of all sectors of the community, especially young people, and involves the business sector.

Judging briefing notes will be required. These should be around 30 pages of A4 with limited words but lots of images of the activities that have been undertaken.

On judging day a 15 minute presentation will be given to the judges which will give some idea of what has happened so far, what it has resulted in and thoughts for the future, running very much on the lines of the presentation that was given at this meeting (The presentation is available at <https://www.cranleighvillage.net>).

Business involvement is very important and that sector can participate in many ways from financial contributions, either individually or as part of a collective group, practical involvement with others who are involved with Cranleigh in Bloom and by displaying certificates or posters to acknowledge that they are part of the community project. It is important that the experience should be fun and there could be fun things for businesses to do on judging day. For example, the butchers could spell out a welcome in sausages, or the baker in cakes.

Evidence of conservation could be by getting the local beekeepers involved or other local conservation organisations.

To demonstrate that the community takes a pride in their environment there should be no litter, graffiti or evidence of vandalism. Evidence could be included in the judges briefing notes about how Waverley Borough Council performs in its recycling of local green waste and whether there are home composting schemes or other initiatives to conserve local flora and fauna.

Community participation accounts for 25% of the marks therefore it is important to include as many people as possible. The judges also look for sustainability and year round effort. This has a knock on benefit as it has been proven that people will travel further to shop in a place that is attractive.

The most important thing is to engage with people, meet new people and to have fun. In a project like this everyone is a winner as the environment is improved, people engage and the community is strengthened.

There was an opportunity for people to ask questions.

Further information was required on 'It's Your Neighbourhood' entries and how they fit in with the main Cranleigh in Bloom. 'It's Your Neighbourhood' schemes can be within the contiguous square mile category, or they can be stand alone. They are judged separately and a RHS certificate is awarded. There needs to be a separate contact for each 'It's Your Neighbourhood' entry which is different to the main Cranleigh in Bloom contact. Judging of the 'It's your Neighbourhood' categories may not be on the same day as the contiguous square mile, but every effort is made by the judges to co-ordinate as much as possible.

School entries are judged earlier than the main competition, between 8th – 20th June to fit in with the school summer holidays.

St Joseph's Specialist School and College

Shirley Illsley gave a presentation to demonstrate the involvement that St Joseph's Specialist School and College has with Cranleigh in Bloom. She explained that the children at the school were engaged in the Food for Life programme which aims to help young people to understand where their food comes from. As part of the initiative the children are encouraged to grow and eat their own vegetables and to learn about composting the waste. Cranleigh in Bloom fits in well with this ethos and the school has a member of staff with RHS specialist training so there is an opportunity to spread expertise. St Joseph's would like to become a horticultural hub. They have been successful in gaining just under £10,000 in grant funding to purchase poly tunnels, make raised beds to enable the students to get involved in the gardening process, purchase tools and plants, but most of all to enable the students to have an opportunity to enjoy the horticultural experience and to have fun whilst they are learning.

This year there will be the opportunity for St Joseph's along with other local schools to make Hanging baskets which will be sold at Spring into Cranleigh on May 3rd and through local schools.

Peter suggested that all of this information should be encompassed in the judges briefing notes and that it would be positive if Shirley could speak with the judges on the day. He felt that as this is such a special project it would be worthy of entering into the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' category in its own right as well as the Schools category.

Next year it was hoped that all of the plants for the hanging baskets on the High Street could be supplied through the schools.

War Memorial

Jane Bowden explained that in 2006 the War Memorial was replanted as part of a Commons Management scheme which opened up the views across the Common. As part of the current replanting, large plants have been removed and they will be replaced with a band of red

Flower Carpet Roses with fragrant, white Winchester Cathedral Roses at the four corners, all edged by Munstead Wood Lavender.

Winter colour will be provided by two of the outer beds being planted with dwarf Cornus that has red stems as well as white flowers in the summer.

Pauline Whitehead explained the Parish Councils efforts in gaining grant funding to have the War Memorial cleaned. An application had been put forward to the War Memorials Trust to supplement money held in a bank account for the maintenance of the War Memorial and local donations. If the funding was successful, the work would be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. Three quotations had been given for the work and Roger Coupe Estate Agent had offered the water and electricity supplies for the work to be undertaken, for which the Parish Council is very appreciative.

Woodland Trust

The Parish Council had been awarded 420 saplings and tree protection from the Woodland Trust. The trees which included native oaks, field maple and silver birch would be planted on the Bruce McKenzie Memorial Field as hedging.

Snoxhall Play Park

The Parish Council hoped that the Play Park could be included in Cranleigh In Bloom next year and would explore funding opportunities to allow this to be realised.

Litter pick

The Parish Council had agreed to organise a litter pick prior to judging day.

Parish Council High Street Flower Beds.

The Parish Council plans for the flowerbeds from outside Cromwell's Coffee House to the Post Office were explained. The High Street flowerbeds are challenging to maintain due to issues with root-bound soil from old plantings, trees a weed membrane and electrical cabling. The situation is exacerbated by the water hungry trees that sap the moisture within the beds during drought, and pollution from the traffic.

Large areas of the flowerbeds have been cleared and bulbs planted. When conditions allow, ornamental grasses, phormiums and maybe red fire cornus will be planted along with other suitable drought resistant plants which are low maintenance but which give some long lasting colour. Mulch will be used to reduce weeding and watering requirements. It is hoped to minimise maintenance as much as possible whilst being effective and sustainable in the longer term.

A mix of poppies and cornflowers to commemorate World War 1 will be sown in the flower bed outside Cromwell's Coffee Shop, but the results of this cannot be guaranteed.

Peter suggested a compact species of phormium that would not take over the beds and explained that the poppy and cornflower mix may need to have a longer germination time in the British climate.

Village Hall Flower Bed

Oakwood Business Consultants and the Chamber of Commerce had generously offered to sponsor the Village Hall Flower Bed and the Chamber and Rotary Club will water and maintain the bed, for which the Parish Council is very appreciative.

It was queried if vandalism had been a problem. Whilst it had not been a particular problem for the Parish Council or Waverley Borough Council, the owner of the Health Shop on the Common had been the victim of both vandalism and theft of her floral displays. It was suggested that PCSO Steve Baldwin should be involved with the group and that the Youth Club and young people should be greatly encouraged too. Gill regretted that as yet those between 20 and 30 years old had not been engaged with the project and hoped that would be rectified in the future. She felt that a greater use of social networking may help.

High Street displays

Two thousand bulbs have been planted and are starting to bloom. Fourteen troughs will be installed outside businesses, in Fountain Square and around the Obelisk and the Millennium sculpture. Thirty two hanging baskets have been ordered and the Rotary and Chamber have adopted the flowerbeds near to the War memorial and the Millennium bed. The U3A Garden Club has adopted the raised beds in Fountain Square and will sow Flanders poppies along the High Street. Generous donations have been received from the Lions, Rotary, Chamber and other businesses. Some business have bought and donated hanging baskets to charity shops and the Library. Handyman has offered to sell the hanging brackets, watering systems and liquid feed at a discounted price to those taking part in the initiative.

'It's Your Neighbourhood' Schemes

The Summerlands Estate Residents Association has launched a competition to design a feature to enhance the entrance to Summerlands Estate to be designed and built by the residents. The residents are maintaining and developing the pond and wildlife corridor which links the Summerlands and Glebelands Estates and sowing Flanders poppies within the estate.

There will be a thorough litter pick just before judging.

Peter advised taking lots of photographs of all of the events for the judges briefing notes.

Seventeen houses on Mead Road were working to beautify their front gardens, helping those who were not able to work on their gardens and plant lavender and Flanders poppies to attract bees and other insects. They would sow Flanders poppies in the grass verges. Jane Bowden undertook to inform the contractors employed to cut the verges and suggested notices were put into the verges as well.

The Mead Road residents wanted to hold a tea party for those involved, possibly on judging day so the judges could be included, but if not at another suitable occasion.

Update on Events

- March 2014 - Rotary, Co-op and U3A Garden Club volunteers to plant roses and lavenders in War Memorial beds
- End of March 2014 - Flanders poppy seeds to be sown in all the flower beds along the High Street, in schools and in residents gardens
- 25th April 2014 - Rotary Club Quiz – profit donated to CiB
- 3rd May 2014 - St Joseph's hanging baskets at Spring into Cranleigh
- 3rd May 2014 - Spring into Cranleigh miniature garden competition
- Mid May 2014 - Flanders poppies to be planted in War Memorial
- 17th May 2014 - Cantilena Flower Concert at St Nicolas Church
- 24th May 2014 - Lunch time and evening concerts at St Nicolas Church
- 21st June 2014 - Garden Festival at the Arts Centre when famous horticulturalist Tom Hart Dyke will be the guest speaker.
- 28th June 2014 - Cranleigh Carnival to include Cranleigh in Bloom theme
- July 2014 - Judging Day to have flower arrangements by U3A Flower Arranging Group and possibly a Tea Party in Mead Road

Finance

£4,800 promised income from the purchase of hanging baskets, sponsorship, donations and Portus Pilot grant money will be spent on , flower troughs around the Obelisk, Fountain and Millennium Sculpture and refurbishing the beds around the War Memorial, Diana Memorial, Village Hall and High Street. The project has to be self financing.

Plans for 2015

After the summer display it is hoped to replant the troughs in the public areas with winter flowering plants.

The Arts and Crafts Society and U3A flower arranging group are having an exhibition in June 2015 at the Arts Centre.

Approaches have been made to Brownies and Guides to design a logo for Cranleigh in Bloom. It is hoped that this can be extended to the Scouts and Cubs.

It is hoped that cranes can be built for the High Street in association with the schools.

It is hoped that Summerlands Estate will undertake some willow weaving and that may be able to be linked to the schools.

St Nicolas Church would like to do a concert and flower festival when the judging is undertaken in 2015.

There are plans to reinvigorate the planting in Stocklund Square and to get more people involved in displaying hanging baskets. Peter suggested having an 'in house' competition within the business community to try to get increased involvement.

There could be signs indicating that Cranleigh is part of the In Bloom competition and Peter acknowledged that whilst this was a possibility it needs to be relevant and current as many signs commemorate past glory.

Recognition of involvement is moving up the agenda for South and South East in Bloom with more outwardly visible markers such as plaques to be displayed in public places, flags etc. and we will be kept informed of this.

Questions.

Volunteers were reassured that anyone involved with Cranleigh in Bloom was covered by insurance held by the Chamber of Commerce, but were advised to get the permission of the land owners before undertaking any work.

Those in attendance were informed that publicity would be through the Challenger, Cranleigh People and Surrey Advertiser. Peter advised that Archant, the publishers of Surrey Life, were always looking for stories to include in their magazines. There will be a board outside Sainsbury's acknowledging those who have sponsored the initiative and a list in the central notice board.

Gill Ford requested two more interested people to come forward to be co-opted onto the Steering Committee to spread the work load.

Gill thanked everyone for coming and their contributions to the project and closed the meeting at 3.40p.m.