

REWILDING WHITSTABLE

LABOUR'S PLAN TO IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY
IN OUR TOWN

JUNE 2022

A detailed line drawing of a coastal town, likely Whitstable, showing a row of multi-story houses with gabled roofs and balconies along the waterfront. Several boats are docked in the harbor in the foreground. The drawing is rendered in white lines on a teal background.

Foreword

Effective management of our environment is a responsibility we all share and something which is deeply embedded in the community of Whitstable.

Our town is packed full of environmental groups and citizens actively trying to green their local environment. From the bustling Stream Walk Community Garden to the eco-groups at our primary schools, beach litter pickers and emerging Tree Warden programme. We have so many environmental advocates in our town and a renewed sense of partnership working under Natural Whitstable and the CT5 Eco Forum.

Our town is a patchwork of community managed green spaces incorporating Fields in Trust (Cornwallis Circle, Mariners View, Prospect Fields; Village Greens (Grassmere Pastures); Special Sites of Conservation (Tankerton Slopes and Long Rock) and local Nature Re-serves (Seasalter Levels and Duncan Downs) The number is growing through applications at West Cliff Bank, Preston Parade and Whitstable Beach.

Aware that many of the urban oases in our town (Whitstable Castle, Whitstable Umbrella Centre Garden) have been tended by the same local residents for almost thirty years, we present Labour's ideas to encourage biodiversity in our town. We welcome feedback to help generate a conservation conversation and a blueprint for change which groups can gather around.

It is clear that the council cannot and could never claim to be the only group caring for our open spaces. However we stand ready to ensure they play their part and learn from the community along the way.

Thank you to local residents Matthew, Helen S and Helen E for their comments that have fed into this report.

This paper is available for public comment and discussion. We welcome practical ideas about how we can improve our local environment via email to:

Cllr Chris Cornell
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val.kenny@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk

PHOTO: Whitstable Castle Volunteers



Introduction

Whilst four in five people in the UK support rewilding initiatives in their town only [one in four councils](#) have a dedicated rewilding plan.

Rewilding is the large scale-restoration of ecosystems to the point in wherenature is enabled to take care of itself. It seeks to actively reinstate natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species, allowing them to shape the landscape and the habitats within it.

By its very nature rewilding requires an understanding of the particular species and ecosystems which are important to protect in any one space.

In Whitstable, the [Kent County Council BioDiversity Strategy](#) has done much to clarify our priorities. It highlights the need to protect priority habitats including the:

- Coastal floodplains at Long Rock, Seasalter Marshes and 'the Bends'
- Grazing marshlands on Seasalter Levels
- Vegetated shingle where specialist plants adapt to live in the harsh conditions

It highlights the need to protect the

- [The Shrill Carder Bee](#)
- Nightingale
- Adders and Grass Snakes
- [The Heath Fritillary Butterfly](#)
- Lapwings
- [Fisher's Estuarine Moth](#)
- Water Vole

And it is this focus and subsequently the management plans surrounding some of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Designated Sites of Conservation and Nature Reserves which have resulted in:

- The creation of new wetland habitats by the [RSPB](#) on [Seasalter Levels](#)
- Cutting back of bramble by the [Butterfly Conservation Trust](#) and [Kent Stour Partnership](#) across the coast to expose hog's fennel and support the Estuarine Moth
- Tree planting at Victory Wood by the [Butterfly Conservation Trust](#)
- The introduction of a [roadside nature reserve](#) along the Thanet Way working with the [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) and Kent Wildlife Trust
- The building of hibernacula (which supports winter hibernating reptiles) and addition of extra wildflower meadows by the [Friends of Duncan Downs](#)

and plans submitted by [East Kent Birdwise](#) to reroute existing paths to protect nesting birds and voles on Long Rock.

Unfortunately, to date, much of the work in Whitstable has focused on designated nature sites and not in the centre of town. This is despite growing evidence from Southern Water that lack of non-porous surfaces and the lack of vegetation in our town is having a direct effect on stormwater retention and the overflowing of our sewage system into the sea.

Whilst COVID has caused Canterbury City Council to delay work on its Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Plan, local residents have taken it upon themselves to rewild - guerilla gardening on Tankerton High Street, forming of our first Tree Warden scheme and installing new insect pathways' (bee-lines) in Island Wall and Stream Walk.

This document aims to explore practical means by which Canterbury City Council could actively promote rewilding in the centre of Whitstable. It lists a number of sites and alternative management approaches which Labour councillors have submitted to the Council's new Biodiversity Working Group.

It also aims to encourage a conversation as to how the council's proposed new Local Plan can encourage rewilding through the granting of planning consent.

PHOTO: Vegetated shingle on Whitstable Beach



Improving Land Management

Canterbury City Council has a diverse range of open space enjoyed by residents and visitors to the district equally. Its Open Spaces team works directly with local residents to designate, facilitate and manage a wide range of areas including Duncan Downs, Prospect Field, Church Lane Fields and the new village green at West Cliff Bank.

It also directly oversees the management and landscaping of our parks, allotments and cemeteries all of which can play an important part in improving biodiversity, even if this is not their main purpose. It advises on the maintenance of our car parks and land adjacent to social housing.

In spaces where the space may be in direct or perceived conflict with rewilding it is important to:

- a) explain to local communities the purpose and value of changing an area's management plan
- b) let nature lead, often leaving land to fallow in such a way, that the range of natural biodiversity in an area, and the impact on other users, can be assessed
- c) reflect. Any work should not be geared to reach any human-defined optimal point - it goes where nature takes it.

In order to better use its existing land we would recommend that the council:

1. Update its mowing strategies for our parks - introducing wildflower meadows

Presently the council mows its parklands in Whitstable (Cornwallis Circle, Seeshill Close, Westmeads Rec, Plough Lane, Mariners View) approximately every ten working days between March and October. It mows less frequently on meadow grass areas (four times a year) and wildflower grasslands (once a year).

In 2019 the council relaunched Millers Fields in Canterbury as an [Eco Park](#), specifically changing its maintenance to improve wildflower growth. However since then it has been slow to roll this initiative out, leaving largely to volunteers such as the [Friends of Kingsmead Field](#) who introduced wildflower areas in 2021.

We believe the council should expand this approach significantly and identify a series of rewilding trials of lesser used areas within our parks to encourage wildflower growth. In the short term this might not mean a reduction in the total number of mows as the most effective way to encourage wildflowers is to reduce soil fertility, best done by repeated cutting and removal of the cuttings over successive seasons.

However in the long term these areas would be moved as meadow grass areas.

Suitable sites (listed in Appendix 1) include:

- The sites directly adjacent to the playground at Cornwallis Circle outside of the fencing
- Salt Marsh Lane
- A strip along the back of Station Road on Westmeads Rec
- The green in front of Seashill Close
- The land behind the play area at Plough Lane
- Long Rock Fields off Swalecliffe Court Drive
- A strip along the back of Favourite Lane on Mariners View

Consideration could also be given to rewilding sections of Tankerton Slopes including the green on Marine Crescent and around the adult play equipment near Whitstable Castle.

Evidence from [Glasgow Council](#) shows clear signage explaining the change in mowing is key to public support.

In 2021 a trial across 12 parks in [Reading](#) successfully saw a 5% reduction in mowed area bring almost 2 hectares of land into conservation grassland. By 2025 we believe we should have an eco park in each of the three urban areas across the district to raise awareness and knowledge.

If successful we would encourage social housing like St Andrews Close, Windsor House and the Lucerne Drive Estate sites to also look at the same.

PHOTO: Rewilded parkland at Yorkers Park. Glasgow



2. Introduce Bee Lines by reseeding its car parks and replanting existing beds

Bee Lines aim to improve pollination in an area by effectively creating a series of insect pathways which run through towns. They are wildflower- rich habitats which act as stepping stones which insects can use to pollinate when there is limited access to residential gardens.

In Whitstable , local residents have already planted bee lines around the edge of the West Beach Tennis Courts & Shaftesbury Road Car Park - correctly identifying how unutilised verges on the edge of council properties provide a perfect location for insect and pollinator highways.

We believe that council could encourage insects more by replanting car parks with small verges (Middle Wall, Regent Street, Albert Street, Whitstable Swimming Pool, Beach Walk, Bisons' Car Park on Cromwell Road, Essex Street) or actively planting a wider range of plants which flower throughout the year. This has recently been done, with some success, in the Gorrell Tank Car Park.

Other areas of the town could also be improved by replanting of existing seasonal beds and street planters with perennial pollinators such as Yarrow, Field Scabious, Lady's mantle, Solomon's Seal, Birds-Foot trefoil, Geum, Heather and Lavender.

At the moment seasonal planters by the Harbour, Starvation Point, Oxford Street and on Cromwell Road often consist of crocuses or daffodils but they could deliver colour all year round. A good precedent for this are the beds around Whitstable Library which were actively replanted by Transition Town Whitstable several years ago to firstly include vegetables and latterly wildflowers and all year round colour.

Untended beds on the Corner of Oxford Street/Cromwell Road, Knights Alley, Fountain Street and by the social housing on Middle Wall should also be replanted. New wildflower beds could be dug into existing grassed verges on Belton Close, Marine Crescent, Station Road and Old Bridge Road.

Residents should be provided with a means by which they can identify unplanted assets to the council in advance of spring and a performance indicator added on the number of unplanted resources. The council's map which identifies open space assets should also include KCC assets to provide a full picture.

3. Reduce the use of pesticides in Open Spaces and lobby Kent County Council to do the same

Canterbury City Council weeds in gardens, parks and council housing areas three times a year. Weeds on our highways and public rights of way are treated twice a year (mid May-mid June and Sept-mid October). Currently Canterbury City Council doesn't disclose what pesticide it uses, [Kent uses glyphosate](#) diluted with water.

Recent studies have suggested glyphosate poses a health risk for marine life and has been linked to intestinal problems in insects. It also often removes nearby plants which are relied upon by birds, insects and other wildlife.

We would like to see the council follow over [40 other local authorities](#) including Lewes, Trafford, Frome, and Colchester by agreeing to phase out the use of glyphosates over three years and encouraging Kent County Council to also do so.

Alternatives to herbicides include the use of vinegar based weed killers and the use of hot foam which can also help in cleaning gutters and the street scene.

PHOTO: Perennial planting in Sidmouth, East Devon



4. Make Whitstable a Green Port

The council's current [Climate Change Action Plan](#) includes very little reference to how it can improve biodiversity despite the obvious opportunities to review use of council assets as part of the installation of solar arrays on council roofs (2025) and the introduction of low carbon heating solutions at swimming baths (2025).

Whitstable Harbour Board has long shown a commitment to its environment, opening the South Quay Shed this year in a way which is both plastic free and solar panelled. We could thus encourage the Harbour Board to offer itself as an environmental test site for the council - preparing an environmental and biodiversity strategy for the site as part of the Harbour Plan Refresh.

The Harbour could pave the way to become England's first 'Green Port' putting carbon neutrality at the heart of its development (similar to [Aberdeen Harbour](#)).

Ideas to be considered in this plan could include:

- Regular testing of dredged material to identify industrial contaminants
- Improved water quality monitoring with the Environment Agency and Southern Water following the discovery of raw sewage discharging into the harbour from missed connections (residential properties further up the Gorrell Stream releasing sewage into the watercourse and not the sewage network).
- Provision of short solar powered berths to reduce CO2 emissions of berthed ships
- Onshore wind turbines on the West Quay
- Creation of bat nesting sites in industrial sheds
- Introduction of green roofs, green walls and rooftop beekeeping on the estate (Whitstable Bowling Alley, Harbour Offices, Oyster Bowling Site)
- Establishment of rain gardens (shallow areas of ground designed to receive run-off from roofs and other hard surfaces to improve surface water retention) around Oyster Bowls Club and Harbour Office. Alternatively surface run off could be redirected into the sea and not sewage system.
- Selective planting of wild carrot, hog's fennel and marshmallow in partnership with Butterfly Conservation to encourage the Estuarine Moth and create a corridor along the Thames Estuary
- Removal of concrete (where possible) to encourage vegetated shingle
- Addition of submerged seed bags to buoys to encourage aquatic vegetation

As the Harbour looks to develop a marine classroom specifically designed to support school children to learn about coastal conservation, so its own activities could become a site for study and fieldwork.

5. Depave

[DePaving](#) is the process of replacing pavement or asphalt with more permeable surfaces designed to retain or slow the flow of surface water. Depaving is a street-by-street approach in which a local authority looks at how much pavement it actually needs for vehicles and parking before incorporating planting, rainwater or infiltration tanks.

In Whitstable, potential depaving projects could include:

- Partial removal of the asphalt on the sides of the intersection of Gladstone Road/Regent Street, Regent Street/Warwick Road and Victoria Street/Regent Street - to allow for planting or shingle beds. These cut throughs are designed to provide access for fire appliances in an emergency but could be rewilded and retain access, as long as the middle sections remain clear.
- The creation of small gardens or strips of greenery by removing flagged paving in corners of the Lucerne Drive Estate
- Replanting of depaved car parks - particularly hatched areas where parking is not allowed in Gorrell Tank and Middle Wall. Extension of vegetated or pea shingle borders to Tankerton Coach Park & Gladstone Road Car Park
- A commitment to permeable gravel car parks in low traffic sites where repair work will be needed in the next five years (Oyster Bowls overflow and Shaftesbury Road). This type of surface is in the car park behind Whitstable Swimming Pool and sections of Keams Yard.
- Ingravelled alleyways off the high street (particularly where water regularly pools i.e. Bonners Alley and Evelings Alley).

We believe DePaving is a more pragmatic alternative to the sighting of [parklets](#) on non permeable surfaces. Parklets see parking spaces transformed in community

PHOTO: Depaving in the London Borough of Merton



trials of parklets by Kent County Council were not universally appreciated by [local residents](#) and in the centre of Whitstable we can ill afford to lose parking. As local councillors we think parklets would only work off road and in places lacking seating already (i.e. the junction of Sydenham/Harbour Street). We would do however think these projects might have some merit in Tankerton & Joy Lane where they might also beneficially reduce speeding in cars.

Evidence from Wandsworth also shows that depaving can be successfully done on a street by street with the council facilitating local residents to propose their own depaving initiatives and providing labour for free to substantially reduce costs.

6. Tree transition zones

Over the last two years local Labour councillors have found it hard to identify sustainable funding for new tree planting in the area. A project in Reservoir Road was successful in 2020 but one in Bellevue Road failed twelve months later. Both Kent County Council, in partnership with the Kentish Stour Partnership, are able to more easily find funding for sites directly adjacent to schools, doctors surgeries and recreational facilities such as parks. However, some of the people who manage these sites are cautious about taking on the management of new saplings.

As such, we would advocate that the council utilise its new management of the maintenance grounds contract to offer to maintain areas at the periphery of government owned sites, assuming that access from the highway is possible.

Sites offered by these statutory bodies such as schools, Active Life, the NHS, and social housing would not change ownership but be deemed tree transition zones under the maintenance of the council, if a bio-rich planting scheme was agreed. This would free up new tree planting sites including:

- Bellevue Road and Invicta Road (around Whitstable School)
- Reservoir Road (around Whitstable Health Centre)
- Boorman Way (around Estuary View Medical Centre)
- Tower Parade (around Whitstable Swimming Pool)
- Church Street (around the KCC owned Church Street Fields)
- Belmont Road (around Windsor House)

Labour councillors are already in conversation about repurposing Plot 10, part of the Whitstable School site, as a village green. This would be a perfect place for a community orchard or further planting.

PHOTO: Kentish Stour Partnership planting trees in Reservoir Road



Planning for biodiversity

A clear planning policy is key to securing our local biodiversity for years to come. The latest [National Planning Policy Framework\(NPPF\)](#) provides a framework by which local planning authorities can decide on applications and is far clearer about the expectation on tree planting and protecting. The National Model Design Code, which supports the NPPF, goes further to state that all major schemes should aim to achieve a [10% net gain in biodiversity](#).

The improved guidance on urban tree cover is evident in the substantially higher planting density in the second phase planning application on Whitstable Heights (agreed 2021) compared to that of phase one (agreed 2016).

Canterbury City Council is currently developing its new Local Plan for 2040 and as part of this could both identify areas where habitat destruction would be a reasonable reason to refuse development and also set standards for the future development of major projects. We call on the council to:

1. Make Biodiversity part of the Planning Process

We expect Canterbury City Council to publish a supplementary planning document (SPD) on BioDiversity which forces developers to establish preliminary ecological assessments and present their methodology for biodiversity net gain calculations.

This document should follow [Cambridge Council](#) and include demands for:

- The integration of bird, bat and insect boxes on new residential sites (50%+ on major housing developments)
- The introduction of new boxes on commercial applications equal to one box every 100sqm
- That new wildlife habitats will be incorporated into landscaping inc. hedgehog friendly fencing
- The retention of boundary hedgerows, trees and ponds on site - retaining vegetated buffers where possible
- The use of low nutrient status soils to promote pollinators
- A clear management plan for external planting or planters added as Section 106 conditions

Canterbury should follow other local authorities (such as [Lichfield](#)) in demanding a biodiversity net gain of 20% (double the national average).

2. Mandate the provision of biodiverse and living roofs

[Runnymede Borough Council](#) has recently published an SPD which actively encourages the use of green roofs and living walls to be used on existing buildings or new development. This follows new Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities advice as part of its [National Design Code](#) that 'nature' can be used as a design quality factor for deciding what good design for an area looks like.

[The Greater London authority](#) has an SPD which ask developers to calculate an urban greening score for all future developments, setting a baseline level which actively encourages planting and allocates section 106 monies for green roofs on transport infrastructure and community buildings.

We believe Canterbury should mandate green roofs on new developments where possible and provide evidence of why green roofs aren't suitable when refitting its own properties given how they can improve building performance, reduce energy consultation and sound attenuation.

Canterbury City Council should provide a planning guidance document highlighting the range and structural requirements of green roofs. This could be distributed through its website and as part of the pre-planning process to encourage applicants to install biodiverse roofs on smaller developments. These roofs help retain water, slowing surface runoff.

PHOTO: Bee friendly bus stops in Brighton & Hove



3. Demand a Sustainable Drainage Action Plan for every site over 20 homes

In October 2021 over [700 Whitstable residents](#) signed a Labour petition to ask Canterbury City Council to commit to not further development until suitable sewage infrastructure had been put in place. It requested the council specifically commit to a sustainable drainage plan.

A Sustainable Drainage Action Plan forces developers to design homes which reduce surface runoff and improves water retention. By setting an acceptable level of run-off rate (particularly in the Swalecliffe Catchment) the council could actively help reduce surface flow which overruns the sewage system and leads to sewage discharge into the sea.

Such a plan would actively encourage developments to include the use of green roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, permeable paving, wet pounds (retention basins) and portable rain gardens (public planters designed to hold water).

Southern Water is committed to reducing sewage discharges within the Swalecliffe catchment by 80% by 2030 and as such has already undergone in depth modelling of the surface run off rates highlight the need to improve water retention in and around Nelson Road and the Tankerton grid. This information has been shared with the [Swalecliffe Pathfinder Steering Group](#) led by Southern water and Coastal Waters Strategy group convened by Canterbury City Council. The former is exploring how Southern Water could financially incentivise the depaving of driveways with permeable alternatives.

The council should actively highlight the need for planning permission when replacing driveways which aren't permeable or porous. The biodiverse design features should be presented as a clear checklist to developers as done in [Stockport](#).

4. Review Whitstable's Green Gap Strategy

Policy OS7 in the current Local Plan seeks to reduce the material expansion of Herne Bay and Whitstable by restricting development on the Green Gap, known colloquially as 'The Bends'. However the benefit of this area as a coastal marshland is largely limited because of the lack of public access and or signage.

Labour successfully fought off a proposal to add a Jubilee Woodland on this site when environmental concerns were raised and instead persuaded the council to look for alternate sites in the district.

We believe that the green gap needs to become a publicly accessible site and form the basis of a wider green gap strategy for the town including Seasalter Levels to the west, Prospect Fields on Joy Lane and the Columbia Avenue Recreation Park.

[Rosie Duffield MP \(Canterbury\)](#) and [Helen Whateley \(Faversham\)](#) have both raised concerns about the loss of green space on the site of proposed Cleve Park Solar Farm to the west of Whitstable. Only last year the council rejected an expansion of the Alberta Caravan Park on environmental grounds.

We would welcome consideration of a new green corridor to the South of the Thanet Way between Whitstable and Blean which would restrict new development and link the protection already afforded to the Bends and Seasalter Levels.

Landscape character assessments currently identify the area South of the Thanet Way as not having a distinct [habitat worthy of protection](#). However, the scale of proposed development risks blurring the conurbations of Whitstable and Blean unless something is introduced.

PHOTO: Seasalter Levels near Alberta Caravan Park



Working in partnership

Whilst rewilding has high levels of public support, many people still remain unsure as to whether the failure to maintain an area is intentional rewilding or contract failure. Many public open spaces including allotments and cemeteries are special places which residents have strong opinions over and as such these groups should be involved in any decision over the use of the land.

We believe that Canterbury City Council has a key role in helping engage local residents in rewilding and should be far more proactive in disseminating good resources, ensuring that work in Kent County Council (i.e. [the Plan Bee Pollinator Plan](#)) is disseminated.

We think that the council should:

1. Publicly commit to No Mow May and support the citizen science that follows it.

Whilst Kent County Council has publicly supported [No Mow May](#) since 2020, the local city council (in contrast to [Maidstone](#) and [Folkestone](#)) has not.

In committing to support No Mow May we would like to see the council:

- Run a pilot on a number of its sites including clear signage to explain the rationale
- Encourage residents to take the 'No Mow May' pledge - hosting information on its website and social media about the project
- Use the contact details of those willing to take the pledge to begin a quarterly green pollinator newsletter
- Organise a series of roadshows throughout the month in which residents and local green groups are supported to take part in ['Every Flower Counts'](#) - a snapshot health check of our lawns which takes place at the end of the No Mow May between 9-17 of July.
- Print and distribute information on the programme and Plan Bee to local primary schools.

We believe the council should actively lobby Kent County Council to remove the advertising on the roundabouts along the Roadside Nature Reserve along the Thanet Way replacing the boards with wildflowers similar to the one outside the new Whitstable Heights Development.

2. Run a series of public workshops sharing best practice on cemetery management

Whitstable Cemetery is by far the largest ornamental grassed area supported by the council in town with mowing every five working days between March and October. Despite this, some of church yards and cemeteries elsewhere in town have a wide range of managed and wilder areas (All Saints Church, St Alphege Seasalter).

Several local authorities including [Weston-Super-Mare](#) and [Felixstowe](#) have pioneered this approach.

We would welcome the council actively running a series of workshops for communities in charge of cemeteries. These would explore rewilding strategies and how they have been successfully introduced elsewhere with the support and engagement of [people paying their respects](#).

Unobtrusive ways to encourage biodiversity in cemeteries can include:

- The introduction of bug hotels and nesting boxes
- The use of gravel rather than tarmac paths
- Creating use of longer grassed areas under trees and away from graves to encourage native plants
- Cutting access routes into hedges and fences for animals

Many of the churches across Whitstable, including All Saints Tankerton have recently registered as Eco Churches. This scheme is run by [Rocha UK](#) and actively advises on rewilding land.

PHOTO: All Saints Church, Tankerton



3. Support Allotments through new guidance and rules

Whilst the application for allotments is dealt with by the council much of the management of the sites is dealt with by small co-operatives of members. With this in mind we would like to see the council actively engage allotment owners by circulating information on how they can encourage biodiversity on their plots.

Companion planting is a system where two or more plants are grown in close proximity in order to provide some form of protection to one or all of them. On an allotment the planting of nasturtiums near beans, mint near squashes, tomatoes and strawberries and Summer Savory near Broad Beans can repel pests and also improve pollination.

Engaged growers such as allotment owners could play a role in citizen science projects like the [UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme](#) which sees groups adopt a 1km square where they work with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to carry out systematic surveys of insects and flowers.

Labour would welcome the introduction of an allotment service policy for tenants like that found in [Lewes](#). This policy could consider the introduction of eco-friendly practices including:

- The prohibition of harmful pesticides, non organic fertilisers and peat
- The discouraging of bonfires and encouraging of associations to create their own organic compost or allow for scheduled green waste collections
- The discouragement of plastics including netting, carpets with foam backing and tyres because of the long term risks to soil from the additives they contain

A more active engagement with allotment owners might have a social and environmental benefit if the council could identify places where additional produce could be donated in their community.

In Avon, the local authority encourage allotment owners to join the [Avon Gleaning Network](#) where volunteers harvest and then donate excess produce amongst charitable food projects. This project mimics the relationship between the Stream Walk Community Garden and the Umbrella Cafe CIC on a much larger scale.

4. Green Our High Street

High traffic areas in our high street are often difficult to green. However Tankerton High Street shows how local shopkeepers working together can both install hanging baskets and cleverly create movable planters which can subdivide the pavement, act as bollards and provide the base for street furniture.

In Whitstable High Street, we think the council should advise local shopkeepers on how they can actively plant hanging baskets to encourage pollinators by blooming the whole summer long and including species which open on a cloudy day. Sympathetic planting could also be advised when shopkeepers request the installation of planters as part of pavement licence applications.

By actively recommending plants (Bidens, Calibrochoa, Dacia, Petunia, Lobelia maritima and lobularia maritima) many [parish](#) and [city councils](#) encourage shopkeepers to plant hanging baskets, install planters on flat roof terraces and external courtyards which are consistent and environmentally sustainable.

We would also encourage community venues and local residents groups to install planters to prevent access to space or break up large paved areas. This can be paid for by match fund community collections (including funds allocated from member grants) for planting and materials as in [Truro](#), Cornwall.

This summer Labour councillors secured planters on the front of the Whitstable Umbrella Centre to replace their metal bollards.

By working with local communities, we believe the council could green space without some of the structural damage associated with vertical planting or green walls. There have been no new planters in the high street for over 10 years and broken ones have not

PHOTO: Pollinator friendly hanging baskets in Bristol



5. Invest in guerilla gardening

Kent County Council already has a means by which local residents can [plant bulbs](#) such as daffodils and crocuses in verges without the need for a costly cultivation licence which allows an individual to take over the planting of a public verge near their house for anything between £80 and £110 every five years.

In this case we believe the council could actively encourage local residents adopting spaces near them by:

- Giving out indigenous seeds to support pollination to local residents once a year. In 2021 [Broxbourne Council](#) gave out seeds on a first come first served basis to local residents
- Producing a list of KCC and CCC assets without any management plan and allowing local property owners to list roadside beds they would be willing to local community groups or schools to adopt or plant
- Encouraging residents or community groups to apply for an annual community planting award whereby evergreen, perennial pollinators are delivered to streets who applied to plant in their gardens, green roofs or hanging baskets. In [Mid Devon](#) local social housing Neighbourhood managers have been given a budget for supporting residents to take over the management of green areas or verges.
- Ensuring all requests are copied into local councillors to follow up and receive assurance that the verge maintenance plans have been changed.
- Widen the annual council tenant gardening competition to include public verges - providing a legal means by which leaseholders in flats can dig beds on verges outside their block. This seems common in Swalecliffe but not on the Lucerne Drive Estate.

The council should actively promote the Plan Bee education resources on this issue through its social media channels.

In winter 2023 Kent County Council is going to make available over 1000 tree bundles as part of the Trees Outside Woodlands project. Canterbury City Council should be actively encouraging residents to pre-register and working with its own tenants on plans for social housing.

6. Actively promote school engagement in the maintenance of our 10ft ways

The history of the Tankerton Estate means that there are approximately 35 miles of 10 ft walkways originally meant for drains which run behind people's houses. In most cases these walkways lie unclaimed and overgrown apart from areas where they include a right of way or have been sold through County Estates.

We would encourage the city council to promote bee-lines throughout the area by supporting local schools to adopt some of these walkways installing bug hotels, log piles or wet habitats which could encourage pollination.

These should also be submitted to Southern Water as a means of reducing surface run off by actively planting the 10ft ways with shrubs and trees which have larger root systems.

7. Facilitate community adopt of green space

There are many unloved public spaces whose owners would welcome are shown more care if a list of organisations and individuals willing to adopt green space were available.

Local youth organisations could play a key role in reinvigorating many of the green banks owned Network Rail or either side of the railway bridge on Oxford Street. Support from the council in watering and sourcing the right plants could be hugely beneficial.

It is clear that the council cannot and could never claim to be the only group caring for our open spaces. However we stand ready to ensure they play their part and learn from the community along the way.

PHOTO: Seed Swap Event, Whitstable



Appendix I: Rewilding sites



Belton Close
Digging of new beds



Bexley Street
Depaving



Cornwallis Circle
Changed mowing regime at edges of park



Fountain Street
DePaving



Gorrell Tank Car Park
Addition of rain gardens, changed mowing, green roofs



Gladstone Road/Regent Street
Depaving



Knights Alley
Replanting



Lucerne Drive
Depaving, beds for social housing tenants



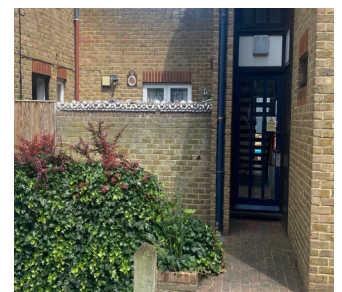
Marine Crescent
Change of moving regime near hedgerow



Marine Crescent
Planting new beds



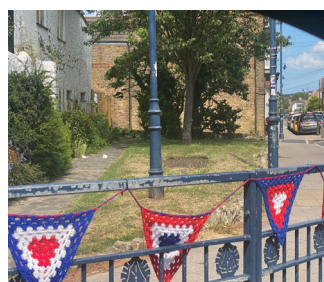
Middle Wall Car Park
Clearance and replanting of car park perimeter



Middle Wall
Replanting of beds



Old Bridge Road
Changed mowing regime near hedgerow



Oxford Street/Cromwell Road
Replanting



Oxford Street
Adoption of garden by community



Plough Lane
Changed mowing regime



Regent Street Car Park
Depaving, replanting of
beds on perimeter



Salt Marsh Close
Changed mowing re-
gime



Seeshill Close
Changed mowing be-
tween trees



Sea Wall
Replacement of removed
planters



Station Road
Changed mowing regime,
digging of new beds



Stream Walk
Replanting of beds



St Andrews Close
Planting New beds



Sydenham Street/Har-
bour Street
Parklet



Swalecliffe Court Drive
Changed mowing re-
gime near hedgerow



Tankerton Coach Park
Depaving



Victoria Street/Regent
Street
Replanting / Depaving



Victoria Street
Replanting/Depaving



Warwick Road/Regent
Street
Depaving



Waterloo Road
Depaving



Westmeads Recreation
Ground
Changed mowing near
hedgerow