

From: Helen Gillingham via ttw ttw@lists.beasts.org
Subject: [ttw] Results of the survey for the new community garden, now called "Longacre Community Garden"
Date: 23 April 2019 at 17:21
To: ttw group ttw@lists.beasts.org

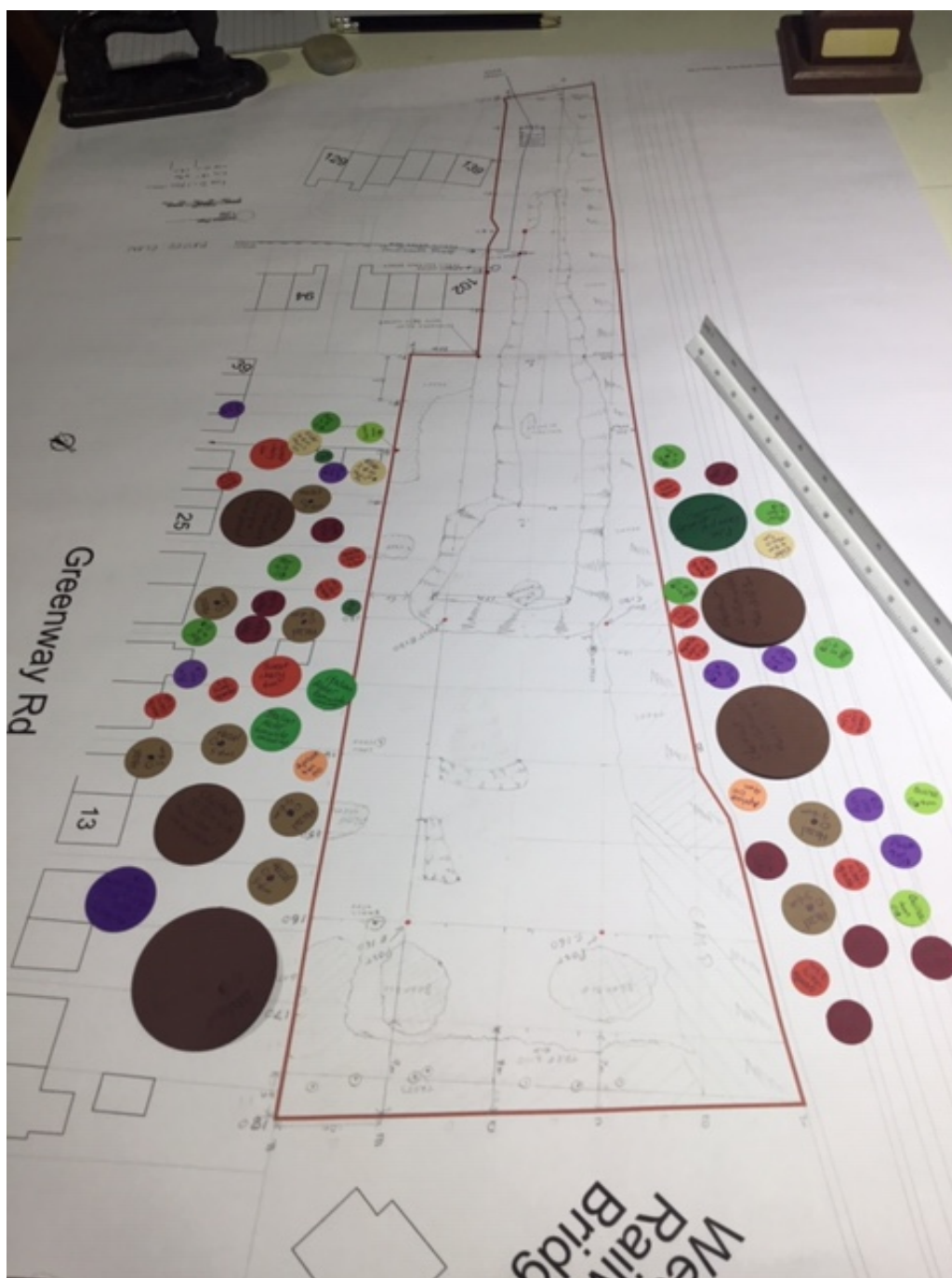


Hi everyone!

Here is a detailed analysis of the survey we created, which over 100 people answered, to help with the design of the new community garden in Rockwell Green, at the bottom of Dobree Park and along Greenway Road.

Thankyou to everyone who spared their time to give their input. We really value all your comments and will design the site according to the most popular votes in the survey.

The picture is of the plan being started! Detailed measurements have been taken of the field. We will post the design in the next couple of months.



Name

It was a close run contest re the name for the site, but "Longacre Community Garden" came out on top in the end.

Wildlife

Overall the most popular ideas were to give a lot of habitat for wildlife, which we would agree is really important. This won't be limited to a small space, but the whole site will be designed with wildlife in mind. The varied planting and microclimates we can create, due to the contours and soil types onsite, will lead in time to much more wildlife than is currently using the site. There were also suggestions to install a pond for wildlife, which after preliminary enquiries to the environment agency, may be allowed in the dip furthest away from the inlet pipe.

The site is surrounded by a bank of native trees, that offer a windbreak to the field, and also an important wildlife corridor. These wild areas take up around 1/3 of the acre. These have already been added to, and the intention is to keep all the edges as wild as possible, with only minimal trimming by the TTW group.

There are also two, large, dense patches of brambles. We are going to keep these in place, and site the larger trees of chestnut and walnut in this area. It will many years until the canopy of these trees shades these bramble patches.

Efforts are already underway to create a wildflower meadow and wildflower bog area. An estimated 30 people are growing seeds into plants across Wellington, to add to this site as well as others in the town. It will take time to develop, but with the right maintenance routine, we hope there will be many varieties of wildflowers and all their associated pollinators onsite in the future. We have already seen banks of celandine flowering that were previously hidden by brambles. There are also lots of nettles onsite, which we will keep (at least in part) for their value as a food plant for peacock butterflies, and which shows the fertility of the site. We hope to create a balance, so that many different species can have space, and one plant doesn't have total dominance.

Facilities

Annual and perennial vegetables were popular, with disabled access beds being twice as popular as ground level ones. One comment was to provide lighting for disabled access, which we felt was a good idea, and one we'd not thought of. The disabled access beds will be situated nearest the gate, with the path to it as level as the field will allow.

A shelter was popular, although a shed not-so-much, with worries about theft and vandalism. A shelter will enable us to collect rainwater to water annual vegetables, so we will aim to build one of these first, and see how things develop re a shed. A greenhouse was very unpopular, so the idea will be discarded. The most popular feature of all was picnic benches, so efforts will be made to instate some as soon as possible. An open, flat area was popular, as well as a suggestion for a focal point for the garden. If a picnic site was designed in the plan to overlook the beautiful view, then this would create a lovely place for families and groups to meet.

Residents of the site have showed concern for a campfire area, as it is a quiet place at the moment at night. We added this to the survey as a suggestion from the Somerset Rural Youth Project, however the TTW have no insurance for fires, and also the railway may not allow them. We will leave this off the plan for now, as it may create problems. If the SRY or other groups want to take this idea up in the future, then they can lead on this. It was reasonably popular with 36.3% voting for it.

Another very unpopular idea was a sandpit, scoring around the same as the greenhouse, with many people concerned about cats using it as a litter tray. As an idea from the Youth Centre, TTW will leave it off the plan for now, and if other groups still want to do this idea, then it will be up to them.

Around 3/4 of people voted for a dog poo bin, with some comments being that dogs could be kept on a lead or away from food producing areas. Organisers have already asked for a council dog poo bin, but are unlikely to see one specially for this site. We will look into a hygienic compost-type bin with decomposable bags instead. Owners may wish to keep smaller dogs on leads, due to the fence bordering the railway having dig holes made by foxes or badgers. These will be impossible to kept blocked up by volunteers, plus we wouldn't want to discourage any wildlife, so if your dog may fit through, we suggest you should keep them on a lead for their own safety. Disabled access beds may be high enough to keep off dogs, badgers and rabbits; if we do ground level vegetable beds we may need to fence this off. A fence could be hidden from sight by various vines or hedge plants. Details of ground level vegetable beds will develop in time with more discussions.

Trees

Cherry and apple came out top with around 3/4 of people voting for these. Pear, plum, damson, greengage and hazelnut came in close behind with over half of people voting for these. So expect to see quite a few of these planted, especially as they are all reasonably small trees and therefore take up less space and are easy to maintain.

The losers were Heartnut, Juneberry, Chinese hawthorn and Italian alder, all scoring under 15%, so we are unlikely to find room for these. This is a shame as Italian alder feeds the other trees with nitrogen, and heartnut are a sweeter, quicker cropping alternative to Walnut. 14 people did vote for a Juneberry tree, and there is a smaller, better fruiting bush in the same family that may be better instead, which is up for consideration.

Apricot, quince, pine and wild pear were also low scorers, with around 20%. Stone Pine and wild pear are both massive trees, the pine nuts being low yielding, and wild pear inedible to humans. Apricot and quince are much smaller trees with a useful crop, so it was thought that we may squeeze in one each of the smaller trees, but leave out the bigger ones as they would take up too much space. Wild pear can be used as a hedging plant and therefore pruned to not take up much space, so we can add this to any new or existing hedge.

Mulberry, chestnut, walnut, wild plum, and fig, scored a mid range between 26-36%, so we could add at least one each of these to the design.

Individuals suggestions of particular varieties of apple, such as bramley, a cider type and crabapple, will be included.

Bushes

Raspberries and blackberries scored the highest with around 3/4 of the votes. Blueberries were next with 61%.

Rododendrons, blackcurrants, whitecurrant, gooseberries, elderberries and loganberries all scored highly too, with roughly

Redcurrants, blackcurrants, whitecurrant, gooseberries, elderberries and loganberries all scored highly too, with roughly 40-55% voting for these. The lowest scoring were the more unusual ones, perhaps because they weren't well known - aronia, worcesterberry, josterberry and Japanese wineberry. Bushes don't take up much space, so all will be included somewhere, but the ratio will echo their score. There were concerns that some are rampant and hard to control. Organisers know that none are as vigorous as wild blackberries, so one idea is to create a habitat similar to a bramble patch, but made up of the raspberries, cultivated blackberries, loganberries, worcesterberries and Japanese wineberry. The edges could be trimmed by mowing, but could intermingle to create an interesting foraging area, and a habitat for wildlife too.

One person mentioned that fruit will attract wasps. We can not deny this is true, however wasps can be attracted by many things. Wasps are a fact of life and you will be hard pressed to avoid them altogether. Generally if they are interested in a fruit or flower, they are less likely to bother you. We will however deal with any nests we find, especially if they are felt to be a danger to the public. If there is a nest away from where anyone will disturb it, we may feel it is better left; after all they are pollinators too and we want to avoid using unnecessary chemicals onsite.

Herbs

These were all voted for heavily. Other varieties suggested were lavender, fennel, parsley, borage, salad burnet, sorrel, lemon verbena and chives. We feel all these are a good idea, so could be planted somewhere too.

Some concern was made to raspberries, mint, Jerusalem artichokes etc spreading rampantly. The people designing the site do have experience of these in their gardens and will take precaution that they don't spread too much, however, as many people are looking for a semi wild type garden, some spreading won't be a problem, if incorporated into limited areas and kept in check with maintenance. Many wild flowers will also spread by seed, and this in time will add to the charm of the place.

Coppicing

Coppiced trees were included in the survey after suggestion, with hazelnut and willow scoring 30% and chestnut 20%. These will be given space in ratio with the other trees based on popularity.

Other edibles

The more common foods such as rhubarb, strawberries, perennial leaves, asparagus and grapes scored higher than the more unusual ones such as Jerusalem or globe artichokes, probably again that more people eat them on a regular basis. If areas for perennial and annual vegetables are provided in the plan, it is likely that those who will be gardening them, can decide on what they want to grow.

Here are just some of the suggestions we had from people answering the survey.
(If you don't see yours on here don't worry, it's been listened to)

Lots of trees

Fruit trees/bushes/plants

Wildflower area. Bird feeder, boxes and water bath. Bug hotels. Hedgehog box

Doormice boxes, owl box, some nettles and brambles to be left

To leave some wild area's, nettle and bramble patches for wild life.

Wild areas left for flora and fauna to just be.

And anything to encourage wildlife,

Fruit trees, fruit bushes, access to some hazel and blackberry for foraging.

Holly for winter berries. Hawthorn. Sloe

Some water for wildlife.

Pond/wet area for frogs, toads, newts, dragon flies etc

Herb and pollinator patch

Some plants/grasses/areas for wildlife

Native plants to attract pollinators

Pollen and nectar for insects.

Perennial flowers, wild flower meadow

A dog free zone

A withy bed for weavers

Small version of the willow cathedral in long run meadow, Taunton or other live willow structure

And thank you for the lovely comments and encouragement!

Love the ideas

Good luck! Sounds great.

Always a great way for community interaction. With varied seasonal planting creating interest all year for children to learn from and insects to thrive.

It all sounds great!

Such a brilliant idea well done everyone

This is such a cool project.

ttw mailing list

ttw@lists.beasts.org

<http://lists.beasts.org/mailman/listinfo/ttw>