



## CUT FLOWER GARDEN

### NEW INITIATIVE IN OUR VILLAGE FOR 2021

Welcome to this additional supplement to the Gossip Tree this month to introduce the village to a new community project starting this year and to provide more information of its purpose and how villagers and the local community can get involved.

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The village hall team have been working for some time to find ways to use our facilities for the benefit and welfare of our own and the wider community.

We have been in contact with the practice manager of the Blackmore Vale Partnership for some time and more recently have had talks about a community cut flower garden with the social prescribing manager, Karen Rhys. The village hall linked up very recently with the social prescribing team in the Blackmore Vale Partnership to discuss the viability of a community cut flower garden, for the benefit of all, behind the surgery in Fontmell Magna. I am delighted to say that in mid November, the plan was authorised and I have been working with lots of businesses and groups and schools to bring the plan to fruition.

#### WHY A CUT FLOWER GARDEN?

We all recognise the benefits of being outdoors for our well being and general health and the aim of the cut flower garden is to bring people together and bring a bit of joy and colour to our days.

#### THE LINK WITH THE BLACKMORE VALE PARTNERSHIP?

The social prescribing team within our wonderful partnership are always looking for opportunities to support the health and well being of their patients in creative ways. Gardens provide opportunities for socialising, exercise, enjoyment etc which will help loneliness and isolation. It is crucial in these times that we establish these important links to look after ourselves and each other.

#### WHAT WILL THE GARDEN LOOK LIKE?

The plan is to have a manageable area with six raised beds measuring 10 foot by four foot behind the surgery, which will provide flowers to cut from May until the first frosts. The flowers are there to be enjoyed by the community and we are encouraging villagers to plant seeds, plant seedlings out, and to cut flowers for their own enjoyment.

I have chosen varieties which are easy to grow and easy to tend- which will be productive. We will have sweet peas, cerinthe, zinnia, salvia, scabious, rudbekia, cosmos, gypsophila and some perennial alchemilla, and gaura as fillers plus dahlia to extend the season.

#### WHO WILL IT INVOLVE?

The simple answer is anyone! It would be lovely to have as many villagers and the local community involved to help build and maintain an area to benefit all. At this stage, I have links with the following groups who are all happy and keen to help -The Social Prescribing team at the Blackmore Vale Partnership, The Mens Shed Sturminster, In Jolly Good Company ( a Group set up for people with dementia and also people feeling the effects of loneliness- [www.injollygoodcompany.com](http://www.injollygoodcompany.com)), Dorset MIND ( the mental health charity), Clayesmore School voluntary scheme for year 12s,

Springhead, St Andrew's School plus local businesses who are keen to get involved in workshops, work experience and demonstrations- Pamplemousse Shaftesbury, Kingston Maurward College, Pod and Pip, Salisbury. There are additional garden centres linking up- Cranborne Garden Centre, Oasis Garden Centre, Keyneston Mill and Orchard Park have provided the majority of the seeds and are donating flowers.

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### **THE FOLLOWING WONDERFUL GROUPS ARE GOING TO WORK WITH US**

#### **THE MENS SHED STURMINSTER NEWTON**

Men's sheds are similar to garden sheds- a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practice skills and enjoy making and mending. The difference is that garden sheds and their activities are often solitary in nature, while Men's Sheds are the opposite. They're about social connections and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and of course a lot of laughter. Activities in sheds vary greatly, with the Stur shed having a well equipped woodworking workshop. In normal times, the group meet every Tuesday and Thursday 10.00-15.00, though this has been somewhat disrupted by the current pandemic. To find out more about the Stur shed, please contact Andy Watson via his e mail [andy@friendsofstourconnect.org](mailto:andy@friendsofstourconnect.org) or by phone 01258 471359 Monday to Thursday 9-16.00.

#### **IN JOLLY GOOD COMPANY**

[www.injollygoodcompany.com](http://www.injollygoodcompany.com)

This is a wonderful local organisation who play an important role in the improvement of people's physical and mental health. Indoor and outdoor sessions encourage people to stay active and promote better health.

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### **HOW ARE WE FUNDING THE PROJECT?**

I have contacted lots of local businesses to request any help or support. The response has been incredible! We have pledges for raised beds for us, planters, water butts, an irrigation system, garden benches, extra perennial cut flowers, seeds, planters, a compost bin, a wheelbarrow and three benches.

I would like to thank at this stage all the local businesses who are helping us- Wessex Electricals, BV Dairy, Wessex Internet, Oasis Garden Centre, Gold Hill Farm Shop, Orchard Park Garden Centre, Cranbornes Garden Centre, Harts , Tesco Blandford, Homebase Blandford, Virginia Hayward, Farnfields , Kingston Maurward College, Springhead and I am confident of more help.

### **PUBLICITY?**

The publicity for the garden starts now. This supplement provides all the information at this stage and I will pop a short update every month in the Gossip Tree.

I have contacted all the big gardening magazines for their features sections . Thank you to Roger Hillman who has offered to take photographs at intervals, which will chart our progress .

We will have our own instagram page and face book page for the project to share pictures and link into associated projects across the UK.

### **WHAT NEXT AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

1. The garden club and some extra volunteers are already growing some seeds and will be continuing to grow seeds from the garden from March. If anyone will be able to spare Dahlia – that would be marvellous.

2. We will need volunteers to dead head the garden from time to time- this might be half an hour every two weeks on a rota during the peak growing season from June- September- or as often as you want. Please e mail me [sianhighnam@gmail.com](mailto:sianhighnam@gmail.com) or call me 07774647060 if you would be happy to join this little group. Thank you to those who have already offered.
3. Do you have any special cut flower arranging skills you might like to share with the group in an informal workshop?
4. Do you know any speakers with expertise on cut flowers in particular who might like to come and give some talks?
5. We are planning to open the village hall on specific and regular dates from April for a couple of hours until the end of the flowering season to sell teas, coffees, cake and also surplus plants – this will help fund the project for the next year and more importantly bring us together. We would be grateful for any volunteers who could help with teas or cake making etc

### **COMPETITION.....NAME THE GARDEN**

The Village hall and practice will consider names and decide by the end of January. The name should reflect the goal of the garden – joy, friends, colour etc. Please can all suggested garden names be emailed to me by January 17th . The village hall committee and social prescribing team will make a decision by the end of January

### **WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO? CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### **JANUARY 2021**

##### 1. NAME THE GARDEN COMPETITION

Choose a name for our new flower garden in conjunction with Blackmore Vale Partnership. Deadline for names – January 17 th. Please send ideas to [sianhighnam@gmail.com](mailto:sianhighnam@gmail.com) ( The entries will be judged by the Village Hall Committee and Karen Rhys, the social prescribing manager from the Blackmore Vale Partnership)

##### 2. JANUARY 30 th

MANPOWER NEEDED PLEASE to assemble the kit pack raised beds which will house our flowers  
Alternative date of FEBRUARY 6 th in the case of bad weather! Please contact [sianhighnam@gmail.com](mailto:sianhighnam@gmail.com) to volunteer.

#### **FEBRUARY 2021**

FEBRUARY 13 – Fill the beds with top soil, manure and compost – We have all the requirements pledged- just need help to fill the beds please. Contact [sianhighnam@gmail.com](mailto:sianhighnam@gmail.com) to volunteer

#### **MARCH 2021**

Start planting seeds – willing seed growers required for a selection of cut flower seeds to grow on windowsills / greenhouses. Members of the garden club are kindly growing for us. Please do contact [sianhighnam@gmail.com](mailto:sianhighnam@gmail.com) if you would be happy to grow seeds if you are not in the garden club and I can liaise with the garden club. All garden club members will have already received information from Mrs Sue East.

#### **APRIL 2021**

- 1.Continuation of seed growing.
- 2.Planting in the garden of some perennial cut flowers promised to us from Keyneston Mill
3. **APRIL 20 TH 1.30-4.30 pm.** Flower arranging demonstration by level 4 students from Kingston Maurward College in the Village Hall. Students from Kingston Maurward, under the direction of Mrs Tracey Nadin, Head of Floristry will complete 6 or 7 flower arrangement displays for us. Tracey is

fabulous and this will be a fun event. Tickets will cost £5.00 a head with refreshments. We will be raffling off the displays to help fund the garden in 2022.

#### **MAY 2021**

##### **1. MAY 22 nd**

MASS PLANT OUT 10- 4 pm – more details to follow.

We will have the hall open for refreshments – and will be aiming to plant out all the seeds grown, plant the containers made by The Men's Shed with plants from Cranborne Garden Centre and sell surplus plants grown – proceeds from the sale will fund the project for 2022

Entertainment provided by the musicians of Clayesmore Senior School – the Pipers, The horn group and The May Madrigal singers

#### **JUNE 2021**

Enjoy the flowers. Start cutting and enjoying

**GRAND OPENING OF THE GARDEN – SATURDAY JUNE 19 th 2-4 pm.**

Come and enjoy the garden at our opening tea party.

Entertainment from the musicians of Clayesmore Senior School

#### **JULY/ AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER 2021**

Enjoy the garden – cut flowers and enjoy

We will have some flower demonstration workshops during this time- dates to confirm and we will be aiming to use the flowers we have grown.

We are planning to have some wellness sessions – yoga and pilates in the garden with flowers to enjoy and a cuppa together

#### **AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2021**

Start growing seeds for next year and collect seeds from this year's plants for sale and use.

#### **OCTOBER – 2021- Date to confirm**

Make an Autumn wreath, using what we have left in the garden and supplemented by our own foliage.

Start growing seeds for next year

#### **NOVEMBER –2021**

Clear up – wave good bye to this years annuals, put our dahlias and perennials to bed

Continue to grow seeds for next year

#### **DECEMBER 2021**

Christmas wreath making workshop – date to confirm...Make a wreath over Christmas music and a cuppa.

***Thank you very much for any help offered and very much looking forward to working together in this community project.***

***Sian Highnam***