



Marvellous Meadows Progress Update June 2022

Overview

- The schedule for the meadows project has been delayed by a combination of contractor availability (illness) and adverse weather conditions. Sowing postponed from Autumn 2021 to late Spring 2022.
- The main groundworks have been completed.
- Hose installed for limited emergency watering. (Primary function is for proposed raised beds/vegetable plot in phase 2).

Scrape

- Scrape area is landscaped and planted with appropriate tree species.
- Some successful seed germination around the scrape with wetland wildflower species.
- Scrape has successfully retained water and will not require lining.
- Early colonisation of invertebrate species is apparent in the scrape.
- Extensive use of the scrape by birds for drinking/bathing.

Meadow

- Harrowing completed and enabled a late sowing of wildflower seed mix.
- Some limited germination of seeds but any that have escaped consumption may retain dormancy and germinate in the autumn.
- Some colonisation of invasive annuals.

Mindfulness area

- One early spring mowing.
- Composting frames constructed at north eastern corner and in use.
- Planting of selected tree saplings along boundaries including hawthorn to demarcate western edge.
- Autumn and Spring mowing has reduced number of annual flowering plant species in favour of perennial species.

Grassland fringe areas

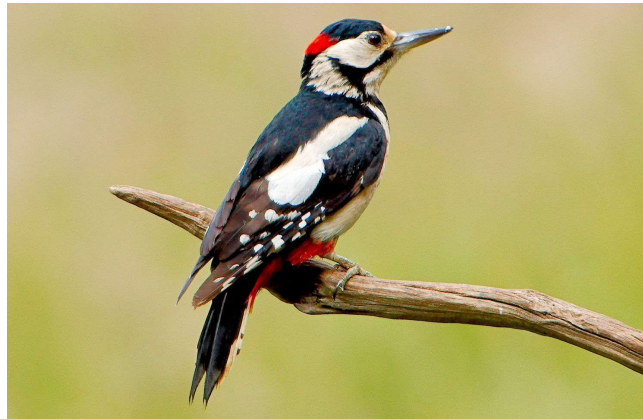
- Limited mowing has increased numbers of perennial plant species.
- Limited planting of tree saplings (crab apple) on southern side of all-weather pitch.
- Evidence (from initial sampling) of increased invertebrate populations.
- Grassland management plan submitted to estates manager.

Community

- @70 tree saplings taken home and planted by TGS students.
- 180 insect houses designed and constructed by Year 9 (DT project), taken home and located in gardens etc.
- Large wooden compost frames installed.
- Termly Meadows Project Newsletter and virtual assemblies issued to learning mentor groups.
- Message board installed in Library.
- Webpage updates in STEM area.
- Design projects for signage (tree information boards) and meadows project logo completed and design chosen.
- Bird surveys conducted from mid-March (min 2 per month) on a circuit around the edge of the meadow/all-weather pitch and fields, south of school site.

No of bird surveys completed (Mar- Jun)	9
Total number of species recorded in survey period	29
Mean number of species (species richness)	17.4
Range	16 - 20

Bird survey highlights: sparrowhawk, chiffchaff, blackcap, goldfinch, long-tailed tit, great spotted woodpecker



Adjusted project schedule

<p>Summer 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June-July mowing (if necessary) • Selective planting and niche reinforcement (plugs) • Signage/information board updates 	<p>Signage and information boards can be run as a House design project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of insect houses. • Boundary posts and temporary signage to be installed. • Initial design ideas received for mindfulness area (year 7) and bid for funding (application by wellbeing coordinator). • Agree grassland area management plan and submit to contractors. • Butterfly survey on grassland areas
<p>Autumn 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September mowing and composting 	<p>Installation of updated/new signage boards with new meadows logo.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late September/early October mowing and composting of mindfulness area. • Cutting and removal of vegetation on meadow site. • Autumn sowing of Wealden wildflower mix on meadow (to include yellow rattle). Wetland mix around scrape. • Start of DT Club project to design and build information stand for the meadow area.
<p>Annual cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late summer or autumn mowing (once per year) and cuttings removal • Selective weeding and niche reinforcement (plugs) • Pond maintenance: clearance of excess leaf litter; restoration of boundary topography and edge vegetation 	<p>Some meadow enhancement will be needed in the first five years to develop and reinforce niches for key meadow species.</p>	
<p>Bi-annual cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edge restoration – cutting of scrub margins to prevent succession to woodland. 		

Actions:

- Issue updated schedule.
- Update budget.
- Agree grassland areas management plan to include mowing times for meadow and mindfulness areas.
- Project group to be established to agree design for mindfulness area and work up proposal.
- Commission information stand and signage posts for meadow area.
- Agree ecological survey schedule for next 3-5 years (Science/Geography/ESS department reps).



Year 11 students walking-in the meadow seeds (May 2022)

Project Finances

If you have followed the story from the very beginning, you will know that the project was first proposed by a student who saw a positive and important opportunity for the school to engage with nature on the school site. The project has been funded from school fundraising. A budget of £13,000 was approved by our school Trustees and at the end of 21.22 there is £4,500 to carry forward to 22.23. The main costs to date have been ground works last Autumn and seeds. The saplings were kindly given to the project by Woodland Trust.

Marvellous Meadow Reporting Updates

Catch up on Meadows Reporting on the dedicated page of the school website: Beyond the Class Room/Marvellous Meadow. There is also a poster board in the Library.

<https://www.tgs.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Marvellous+Meadows&pid=172F>