

RESTORING SHROPSHIRE'S VERGES: Case Studies

Case Study for Verge adjacent to 6 Laburnum Close, St Martins, SY11 3HU
Project started March 1st 2021

Grid Reference SJ 32634 36685

Establishment of a wildflower verge

Partners/Funders: Sole volunteer Sue Napper

Costs: £100 plus lots of Volunteer time



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RESTORING SHROPSHIRE'S VERGES PROJECT:

The small area of verge concerned is roughly shaped like a cheese spread triangle. When we first moved to Laburnum Close 34 years ago it formed part of a beautiful wild flower meadow that belonged to the neighbouring small holding and that was grazed intermittently by horses. This and a neighbouring meadow were then sold off for house building and our close was extended. The land was stripped of top soil and replaced with sub soil and an island verge of seeded grass was created between our property and a small cul-de-sac. My aim in restoring this verge was to try and reinstate some of the perennial native wildflowers that were within the original meadow.

During the spring, summer and autumn, the verge was mown weekly by the local authority and the edges adjacent to the pavement sprayed with herbicides several times a year. This meant that only the toughest of grasses and dandelions survived and there were no obvious pollinators.



I consulted with a local authority councillor and was eventually granted permission to create a wildflower patch. I was also put in touch with the Restoring Shropshire Verges Project.

My first task was to clear the land of rubbish.

The second to contact the local authority again to request a cessation of the weekly mowing as those carrying out the task insisted, they had not been informed that this was now being managed as part of the RSV project.



As I was waiting for a hip replacement operation, I could not strip the entire plot of grass so instead I removed some of the toughest grasses, raked the surface and planted 150 perennial wildflower plugs suitable for clay soils and a selection of donated wildflower plants.

I also scattered some perennial wildflower seed and donated yellow rattle seed.

The cost of this was approximately £100. Species included Meadow Buttercup, Ragged Robin, Red Campion, Scabious, Knapweed, Jack by the hedge, Hawkweed, Foxgloves, Primroses, Cowslips and Ribwort Plantain.

I knew it would be a 4/5 year project to successfully establish perennial native wildflowers.



By the summer of that first year the verge was beginning to look a little better and there were a variety of insects visiting including damsel flies and small bumble bees. Some plants established more quickly than others, some such as the Ragged Robin failed and there were still far too many tough grasses.



Strimming and mowing was carried out in September 2021.

During the following year, I planted English Bluebell bulbs and sowed more mixed perennial seed. I also planted more Foxgloves to try to create continuity of self-seeding of these biennials. However, as my mobility was not great, I could not tackle the fact that there were still too many grasses and sadly the yellow rattle seed sown in the Autumn did not germinate.

During the next two years apart from Autumn mowing and a little selective thinning, the patch had to more or less take care of itself. Scabious, Greater Celandine, Oxeye Daisies and Knap weed had flourished but so had Dandelions, Nettles and Goose grass.

In January/February 2025 after recovering from my operation and with a fully functioning replacement hip I was finally able to remove many of the large clumps of tougher grass as well as a lot of the nettles and brambles. I scarified the bare patches of soil left by their removal and sowed more mixed perennial wildflower seed. I created a woven dead hedge along the back of the plot in front of the existing very sparse hawthorn hedge and a Damson tree. In front of this I left a line of nettles and added some donated Teasels. I also planted more donations of primroses and Red Campions. Birds foot trefoil seed (cost £3.50) was sown along the edge in front of the pavement and has germinated well. Now in late May it is finally flowering well and amazingly a few yellow rattle have appeared. It attracts speckled wood and orange tip butterflies as well as lots of bees and hoverflies. There is an excellent range of wildflowers including Hedge Bedstraw, Mallow, Great Burnet and several native Geranium. As well as being excellent for wildlife it is also attracting interest from people in the area. I knew establishing perennial native wildflowers would be far more of a challenge, take time and many volunteer hours on my part. However this year's result is more than worthwhile. To prevent certain flower species becoming dominant ongoing selective thinning will be required. On the opposite side of the cul de sac is a long strip of local authority mown grass which would make a wonderful extension to this small patch however it would need a small team of volunteers to create and maintain it.



Below is a list of wild flowers recorded on the plot in May 2025.

Comfrey, Allium Triquetum, Herb Bennet, Carex Pendula, Knapweed, Field Scabious, Red Veined Dock, Red Campion, White Campion, Alkanet, Herb Robert, Cowslip, Primrose, English Bluebell, Common Mallow, Cow Parsley, Yarrow, Great Burnet, Purple Toadflax, Yellow Toadflax, Goose Grass, Birds Foot Trefoil, Ribwort Plantain, Red Clover, Jack by the Hedge, Teasel, Ox Eye Daisy, Hedge Bedstraw, Ladies Bedstraw, Hawkweed, Dandelion, Sorrel, Spear Thistle, Speedwell, Nettles, Ragwort, Lesser Celandine, Greater Celandine, Ladies Smock, Hedgerow Cranesbill, Bush Vetch, Dog Violet, Lords and Ladies, Creeping Buttercup, Common Fumitory and various grasses.