

Brogyntyn Park, Oswestry – Wildflower Meadow

RESTORING SHROPSHIRE'S VERGES: Case Studies

SITE NAME - Brogyntyn Park, grid reference SJ 28583 30082

Managing the space for wildlife and walkers

Partners/Funders: Friends of Brogyntyn Park Group, Oswestry Town Council, Woodland Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Costs:

- Volunteer time – In kind volunteer and resident time
- Free contribution of seeds from Friends of the Earth
- Free contribution of trees from Woodland Trust



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RESTORING SHROPSHIRE'S VERGES PROJECT:

Brogyntyn Park is held in trust by Oswestry Town Council for the benefit of the local residents in the community. A dedicated resident was keen to see the park enhanced for both the public and local wildlife. There was a section of the park that lacked identity and the grass in that area was frequently cut to the detriment of the local biodiversity. The area is approx. 6 acres and is not suitable for other amenities.

An initial discussion in the summer of 2014 was held with Oswestry Town Council in relation to the possibility of allowing an area in the centre of the field to develop into a wildflower meadow area within the park along with some native tree planting. The project stimulated further discussion about the possibilities for the park to be enhanced and some 280 residents joined a Brogyntyn Park Group and a Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/678911135546108/>) established in June 2015.

The group provided support for the enhancement of the space with the development of a wildflower meadow area within the park. This was expected to reduce the costs to the Town Council in grass cutting time and finance but more importantly would enhance the space for residents who enjoyed the space for walking with their dogs and would encourage further wildlife and fauna into the park.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust visited the area to give their advice on the project and developing a wildflower meadow appropriately. Volunteers donated Yellow Rattle which was planted to cultivate the meadow along with donated packs of seeds from Friends of the Earth. An open request was made to residents, and many came and contributed wildflower perennial meadow seed mixes. The project even inspired some residents to write poems about the parkland.

In 2016 resident lead Bob Beaman along with 2 other dedicated volunteers planted some 100 trees in the Park. This ensured that gaps in the hedge were filled in. The trees were secured via the Woodland Trust and consisted of Wild Cherry, Silver Birch, Dogwood, Oak and Rowan all in keeping with the parks general planting with key British varieties.

In 2023 the wildflower meadow area saw further Common spotted orchids flourishing and residents await to see what 2024 brings in the way of biodiversity on site. Common in the area now is self-seeded yellow rattle, birdsfoot trefoil, Ladies smock, clover, achillea, buttercups, field scabious, knapweed, daisies, ox-eye daisies to name a few. Lots of different grasses also flourish, brilliant for moths and butterflies looking to make the parkland their home.

The group are keen to see later grass cutting, with removal, in September. A cut currently takes place in August, but a later cut would allow for seeds to drop and set further. The appearance of orchids means delaying hay cuts to allow further seed set and dispersal more carefully. Later season cuts also provide a further valuable habitat for wildlife.

In relation to this, the group would love to see equipment for a yearly cut to be taken and placed in a corner out of the way for it to fully degrade of its own accord, further allowing opportunity for creatures like slow worms, grass snakes, hedgehogs and other insects to flourish naturally. Scrapes, or small ponds would also be welcome additions.

The group would also like to see the wildflower meadow formally designated and marked out, with double width cut paths in an outer and inner circle around the main meadow, to allow better access for dog walkers and visitors.

The group have suggested that bird and bat boxes should be placed in the area to encourage wildlife and that the nearest school is partnered with the area e.g. Woodside School and Our Ladies, further enabling early education, resident connection and guardianship to key green spaces in the town.

Photographs of the project: Orchids developing in 2024

