

A Proposal. To restore a wild flower road verge along a section of the A 40.

The loss of our wildflower meadows and verges across the British Isles over the last 35 years has raised genuine concern that we are in danger of losing many plants and insect species through loss of habitat and consequent depletion of biodiversity on the planet.

We all have a role to play in reversing this unsustainable loss, so members of the local community would like to submit this proposal to restore a short section of road verge back to a more diverse and richer habitat for both plants and wildlife.

Verges across the British Isles through neglect or unsympathetic management have become overgrown with rampant nutrient loving plants, causing many of the native and more colourful nectar producing plants to disappear.

The local farmland is also less tolerant of supporting these plants.

This section of verge that has been identified for restoration is in a very visible part of the village used by many people as they drive, cycle or walk through the village or are waiting for a bus.

The surrounding land and hedgerow also offers potential that could enhance the overall appearance and biodiversity of this part of the village, be it a small but important part, in the Herefordshire landscape.

Plantlife charity is an organisation keen to see wild flower growing again along our road verges and has recently obtained the support of Herefordshire County Council (one of a number) to revise the way they manage the verges and to promote wild flowers

For the restoration to be successful a number of steps are required.

- First step: To obtain support and agreement from the Parish and the County Highways Department. Given the above commitment we hope this will be forthcoming.
- Recruit members of the local community to assist in this work and keep costs to a minimum
- To agree the method of removing vegetation and the top surface of the enriched soil approx 20 cms. Finding a suitable disposal site for the removed material.
- To prepare the ground by scarifying and compacting the soil to establish a good seed base.

Many wild plants will already be present but have become crowded out under more vigorous plants, so some time should be allowed the first spring and summer for plants to naturally regenerate or to seed naturally.

To assist in broadening the plant species that are found locally, spreading hay bales from a nearby species rich meadow can increase the number of plants being established early .

Cutting of the verge should be left late into the year in July and all material to be removed off site. Another late cut in September/October may be required.

The plants including fine grasses will take a few years to become well established and any weed species that do occur can be up rooted or cut off frequently, initially, to remove them permanently.