



NEWS RELEASE

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OTLEY SOWS THE SEED TO HELP WILDLIFE

Wildlife Friendly Otley and Otley in Bloom have joined forces to convert the BT Exchange garden on Charles Street in Otley into a wildflower garden and want the public to suggest more green spaces where wildflowers can be sown around the town.

Members of both groups conducted a socially distanced working party recently to seed the 80 sq metre area. First they turf-turned strips of grass, using a machine from Otley Hire Centre, then sowed many varieties of wildflower seeds.

Jane Smith of Wildlife Friendly Otley said, "We would like to thank BT for allowing us to convert this unused grass area into a wildflower garden. We would like more unused plots across Otley to re-wild like this. As well as looking colourful, they will be havens for insects and pollinators which are so vital for nature and wildlife. Just as there is a climate emergency, there is an equally serious wildlife and biodiversity emergency."

Bill Austin of Otley Bloom said: "It might look a bit messy now, but come the spring new shoots will emerge to flower throughout the season and then drop their seeds. The whole process will begin again, forming a wildlife-friendly area right in the centre of town. England has lost over 90 per cent of its wildflower meadows since the 1950s and there has been a devastating decline in bees and pollinators. Gardens and green spaces have enormous potential to help our wildlife."

Liz Needham, BT Group, North of England said: "We were really pleased to give our backing to Wildlife Friendly Otley and Otley in Bloom to convert the plot into a wildflower garden."

"We look forward to a colourful display next year and hope it will contribute to improving the natural environment in the town centre."

Both organisations appealed to Otley residents, businesses and landowners with an unused green space to come forward with suggestions. “If Otley residents would like to see more wildflower zones like this, please let us know, said Bill Austin. “ We need quiet areas of grass and the landowner's permission. Send suggestions to otleyinbloom@gmail.com or wildlifefriendlyotley@gmail.com .”

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Photo caption: Members of Wildlife Friendly Otley and Otley in Bloom in a socially distanced working party before lockdown at the BT exchange garden on Charles Street, Otley.

Press enquiries

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