

Developing a *Wild* Community in Market Drayton!

Background

The Market Drayton Community Partnership is a voluntary group in Market Drayton. They were formed as a result of the Town Plan and are now working together to help improve the town. This proposed project has come through the Environment and Climate Change sub group.

One of the big projects we have been working on is a wild area in Market Drayton called Walkmill Meadows. The group have been involved with habitat management and wildflower meadow management in this site over the last 12 months in partnership with Shropshire Council.

The group also planted 6 Shropshire Damson trees here last winter.

Initial Project Summary

We are looking for an 18month- 3year project for starters. With funding for both capital works and revenue funding for a project worker.

The focus:-

To encourage community engagement with the natural environment in Market Drayton through the development of Walkmill Meadows, making it more family friendly and to increase the diversity of the site for wildlife. To encourage them to explore green spaces, appreciate nature and enjoy it.

This might include:-

- Creation of a wildflower meadow
- Sculpture park (highlighting environmental heritage of the area)
- Pond clearance and restoration work
- Pond dipping platforms to encourage use by schools
- Fruit tree planting (in line with the IEMD concept)
- Fishing platforms for the river tern
- Creating more picnic areas
- Put up bird boxes
- Interpretation of geological features
- QR codes to encourage engagement and to easily amend information on site
- Develop a web presence
- Organise wildlife surveys
- Organise family event days
- Development of a second wetland site (Walkmill Marsh; around the corner from Walkmill Meadows)
- Create a willow coppice area to enable the produce to be used for willow weaving/domes etc (either onsite or in local schools etc)

How:-

Charlotte has approached a local charitable trust that initially seems keen on the idea. Before a bid can be put together all the partners need to be identified, including a lead partner.

Fordhall would be happy to act as the employer for the project if required. This may link in to some pond and woodland restoration work at Fordhall alongside a Farmland Conservation Management Plan.

OR Shropshire Wildlife Trust may act as the employer.

Progress to date:

- Emma has met with Market Drayton Wildlife Trust. They were generally supportive and loved the concept, but were not too clear on how they might get involved as they already struggle for numbers for work parties. They were very aware that as a group they do not currently have a site in Market Drayton and this could be an opportunity, but some of the members were also keen on Walkmill Marsh from a wildlife perspective.
- The MDCP and those local councillors at the meeting (David Minnery, Roger Hughes, Roy Aldcroft, Lee Ridgeway) are very supportive of the general concept as outlined above.

Next steps:

- Agree concept with Shropshire Council (aka Clive Dean)
- Arrange time to survey Walkmill visitors with group volunteers (week of 12th August)
- Arrange time to survey people in town centre – would they/ do they visit and would they use it more if plans move forward.
- Nicola to find copy of Friends of Walkmill Meadow group constitution
- Do Shropshire Wildlife Trust want/need to be partners?
- Arrange a meeting with Clive Dean, charitable trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust (?) and MDCP leaders.
- Emma, Clive and Charlotte to work up a bid before the end of September