

ASH IN BLOOM



South West in Bloom Portfolio 2018

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Introduction

The Village of Ash

Set on high ground on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels, Ash is a small rural village in South Somerset. We are probably one of the smallest communities to take part in South West In Bloom. At the time of the 2011 Census there were only 261 households with a total population of 626 and this included the surrounding hamlets of Milton, Witcombe, Highway and Durnfield, all of which lie within the Parish. Given our close proximity to the old Fosse Way there is thought to have been people living around here since Roman times. As in most Somerset villages, the church and pub are close together on the highest ground.



The Bell Inn is one of our oldest buildings and parts of it date back to the late 16th Century.

Holy Trinity Church by comparison is much younger, it's foundation stone was not laid until 1840. The first schoolroom was erected soon after in 1846 and was used for village functions until the Village Hall was built in 1960.



Today, Ash has a thriving Primary School, Pre-School, Recreation Ground, Pavilion and Children's Play Area. The Pavilion and Village Hall provide a choice of venues for the many village activities, clubs, groups and classes that take place here.

Main Street runs through the village and in recent years traffic calming measures have been introduced in an attempt to reduce the speed of passing traffic. Planting and enhancing the street scene along Main Street has an important role to play in reminding motorists to slow down whilst driving through our village.



Back Street and Burrough Street form a loop off Main Street. Many houses throughout the village are built from locally quarried Ham Stone.

Thanks to the efforts of a small group of dedicated volunteers, The Millennium Wood provides a natural amenity for the whole village right here on our own doorstep.



Visit the Ash Village Website at www.ashpcsomerset.com to find out more about our community.

Ash in Bloom - The Story So Far



Ash in Bloom was started last year in March 2017. A small group of residents came together with ideas for bringing the village together in a community effort to improve and maintain the overall appearance of the village. A steering committee was formed and Antoinette Groves was elected it's Chair, Victoria Clarke, Treasurer and Kim Groves, Secretary.

With Ash Parish Council's backing we entered the small village category of 2017 RHS South West Britain in Bloom. Going from a standing start with little funding and only four months to judgement day was a big challenge but we were delighted when our efforts were rewarded with a Silver Gilt Award in the Mary Mortimer Trophy at our very first attempt. We were also nominated for The Michael McGahey Trophy for Exceptional Community Effort, the Art in the Landscape Award and South West Tourism's Award for Best Portfolio.



2017 Judging Day

In the words of the judges "a fantastic result for four months of hard work".

2018 Theme & Objectives

THEME - Willow

Situated as close as we are to the Somerset Levels, we chose Willow as our theme and have introduced it into much of what we have done.



OBJECTIVES -

- Develop a year round plan
- Introduce co-ordinated colour scheme
- Introduce additional, more interesting planters
- Create more impact at entrances to village
- Mark end of World War One 100 year ago
- Increase fundraising
- Recruit more helpers



COLOUR SCHEME - yellow, white and purple



Feedback from the judges last year suggested our planting would have more impact if it had greater consistency and colour co-ordination. We chose yellow, white and purple.

This Year's Key Achievements

ACHIEVEMENT : More interesting planters



Old pony cart installed on the green at the corner of Main Street and Burrough Street

A traditional wheelbarrow adding more interest at the Book Exchange in Main Street - full of bee loving plants



Half barrel planter at the Book Exchange



Tower planters for entrance to the Recreation Ground

ACHIEVEMENT : More impact at village entrances

BEFORE



AFTER



ACHIEVEMENT : Co-ordinated floral colour scheme

A yellow, white, and purple colour scheme was introduced for this year's main summer planting



ACHIEVEMENT : Year round planting

WINTER

Our illuminated winter pole-planters were switched on at the same time as Santa turned on the village Christmas Tree lights. Santa is a Bloomer, of course!



ACHIEVEMENT : Year round planting

SPRING



ACHIEVEMENT : Year round planting

SUMMER



Fun, edible plants outside school gates



Wild flowers at village entrance



Planters by Main Street noticed board



More interest around the Book Exchange

ACHIEVEMENT : Planting around the Pavilion

In June this year we took on the planting around the Pavilion at the Recreation Ground



ACHIEVEMENT : Floral and Photographic Competitions

Floral and photographic competitions for adults and children were launched for the first time last August, engaging more people and helping the village look it's very best.



Judging the Children's Tallest Sunflower

The Bell Inn's entry for most unusual planter



Competition winners were announced at the Ash Fun Day



Proud winner of Best Front Garden



ACHIEVEMENT : Lest We Forget

We wanted to mark the ending of World War One 100 years ago this year and have done this in a number of ways. These include poppy plantings, Lest We Forget displays and a Remembrance Planter category in the Ash In Bloom competitions.

At the going down of the sun, we shall remember them



Further commemorations are planned for the run up to Remembrance Day on 11th November such as a cascade of poppies that will be draped on the Welcome Stone at the entrance to the village.



ACHIEVEMENT : Living Willow Den

In March, Ash in Bloom donated, constructed and planted a living Willow den for the children of Ash to enjoy in the Children's Play Area at the Recreation Ground.



Achievement : Ash Fun Day and Dog Show

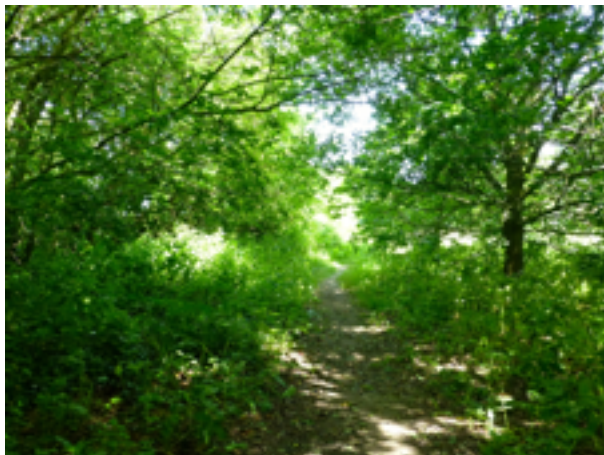
This successful fundraiser held last September was organised and run by Ash in Bloom. It was the first village fete for some time.



Environmental Responsibility

The Millennium Wood ("It's Your Neighbourhood" Entry)

A great example of conservation and biodiversity



In the year 2000, to commemorate the new Millennium, the villagers of Ash got together to plan and plant a new wood for the benefit of the village. The site was 4 acres of rough grassland close to Ash Primary School. The land was purchased by Ash Parish Council from Somerset County Council. The 120 trees planted by volunteers included beach, oak, cherry, birch, rowan, willow, field and Norway maple, horse chestnut, yew and hazel. The site was left to fend for itself over the next decade. The trees grew well but scrub, rough grass, nettles and hogweed became predominant.

Under the leadership of wood manager Mick Wooden, volunteers were recruited and funding obtained from a variety of sources. With careful management, diverse habitats have been created and overgrown grassland is being transformed into a wildflower meadow.



Bird and bat boxes and bug-hotels have been installed as part of the nature conservation programme and more trees, hedgerows and woodland bulbs continue to be planted.

The Millennium Wood won an "It's Your Neighbourhood Award" of "Thriving" by the RHS and South West In Bloom in 2017.

Resource Management in Action

Through our own actions we try where possible to minimise demands placed on natural resources and harmful impacts made on the environment. We support others who share these aims.



After taking on responsibility for the planting around the Pavilion at the Recreation Ground, we organised and installed a water butt to conserve water coming off the roof of the Pavilion. This also simplifies watering the plants there.

Ash residents participate in the District Council's Christmas tree recycling scheme with the Pavilion car park used as a collection point.



Old hub caps and wheel trims have been collected from the roadside to be recycled. They were painted and can now be seen in an Ash in Bloom flower art installation at the Children's Play Area.



Local Environmental Quality

Neglected spots in the village have been improved during the past year.



At the southern entrance to the village a neglected verge has been dug over and planted with wild flowers and poppies..



.. creating a better first impression and prominent site for a Remembrance display on this 100th anniversary of the ending of World War One



Improvements around the Book Exchange



Pride of Place

Keeping things clean and tidy

Litter pickers have been out and about



New dog notices have been placed around the village, in the Millennium Wood and on local footpaths



Weeding around Pavilion

Volunteers of all ages have been cleaning bollards and street signs



Art in the Landscape

Art in the community involves more people whilst adding interest to our surroundings

Sculptured Willow deer have been installed by the Welcome Stone at the entrance to the village



Willow displays in gardens around the village



Woven Willow flowers at the village car park



Large colourful flowers made from recycled wheel trims now enhance the Children's Playground



Community Participation

We seek to provide opportunities for individuals and groups within the village to contribute in whatever way they can to help us improve and maintain the appearance of the village we all share.

Spreading the Word

We have various ways of increasing awareness of Ash in Bloom, what we do and how people can get involved.



Bloomer's meeting are held every third Monday of the month at the Pavilion.

Ash in Bloom information, announcements and notices about our activities appear on village notice boards and in the Ash Newsletter delivered monthly to every household in the parish.

We keep supporters up-to-date with regular emailings, have a wide following on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ashinbloom) and now have our own page on the recently launched village website (www.ashpcsomerset.com).



We also issue press releases to local newspapers and free distribution journals.

Doorstep Challenge



We challenged residents to create planters that could be seen from the road in this year's yellow, white and purple colour scheme, optionally including Willow.

Young Bloomers

We involve the younger generation in as many of our activities as possible.



The School's "Garden Growers" grow and then sell their plants and produce from a stall at the school.



They also make bug hotels

Pupils will meet the judges and will take part in activities planned by Ash in Bloom to mark this year's 100th anniversary of the ending of World War One.



We work closely with Ash Primary School who have a representative on our Steering Committee.



MORE INVOLVEMENT BY YOUNG BLOOMERS



Young Bloomers helped construct the living Willow den

helped prepare new flower beds



took their turn watering



enjoyed the Willow Weaving Workshops



made interesting bugs from old golf ball to enter into the Ash in Bloom Children's Competitions

More than just flowers

Ash in Bloom has never been just about plants and floral displays. Instead, we reach out to as many different groups, clubs, societies and individuals as possible so that everyone can find their own way of participating in what we do to help make Ash an even more pleasant place to live.



We organised Willow Weaving Workshops in June for young and old where we learnt new skills that are now on display around the village.

Willow
Weaving Workshop
With local Willow Weaver Maurice Fawcett

Sunday 20th May 2018
The Pavilion, Ash Recreation Ground

Morning Session: 10.30- 1.00/ Afternoon Session: 2.00 - 4.30

Children £3 / Adults £5
to cover the cost of materials

To book a place contact
ashinbloom123@gmail.com / 01935 825020
(Book early to avoid disappointment)

Have fun making your own Willow creation to take home.
All ages welcome.

Light refreshments available

#ashinbloom



The Art Club and others helped turn old hub caps into giant flowers.





Many volunteers helped make the Ash Fun Day a success. Thanks go to all those residents and local businesses that donated prizes for the tombola and raffle.

Caz and her team from The Bell Inn helped keep us refreshed at the Fun Day and we thank her and her regulars for their generous contribution to our fund raising efforts.



The Bell ringers from Holy Trinity Church will be on hand with a welcome peel for the judges.

Flower arrangers at the church will be displaying their artistic creations.



The Craft Group and the Purple Patchers are working on a Poppy Cascade for a First World War Remembrance display at the Welcome Stone in November.

Funding and Support

This year, Ash in Bloom spent around £1,800 on its various activities. Of this, £1,200 was obtained from our own fundraising activities, most significant of which was the Ash Fun Day and Dog Show that we ran last September. The remaining £600 was donated by Ash Parish Council for which we are very grateful. In addition, material assistance in-kind of around £200 was donated by various local businesses. We thank all those businesses, organisations and individuals who supported us.

THANK YOU

Ash Parish Council
Glen Prince of Great Britain
Gould & Sons, Butchers
Martock Community Group
Palmers Garden Centre
Alpha Signs
Lotus House, Martock
Sign Solutions SW Ltd
Rapid Response Team
Justin Orwin Photographic Studios
New Image
Little Wings & Subwoofers
Gardening Direct
Fit Martock
South Somerset District Council



District Council Support

We particularly wish to thank

South Somerset District Council for their help -



... the Horticultural Team for their advice and encouragement and the Street Scene Team for their help in cleaning and tidying our village.

Our Future Plans

- Pursue additional funding sources
- Raise funds to purchase a mobile water bowser to help overcome one of our biggest challenges, watering our floral displays
- Introduce "The Friends of Ash in Bloom", a more structured way of recruiting active volunteers, new supporters and sponsors and of keeping them informed of our work and achievements
- Improve the sustainability of our planting by providing some year-round displays to control our planting costs
- Continue to build stronger relationships with other groups in the village



