

Wem Bloom Meeting held Monday 12th October 2020 at 19.00 via the Zoom Virtual meeting platform

Present

Sue Challis – Wem Youth Club, Matt Hudson - Mills Gardening Services, Gill Glover and Janet Hankey Wem Gardening Club, Susan Livesey, Helen Blackburn – Local residents

Penny O’Hagan – Wem Town Council

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a general discussion over whether there was any interest in organising a Wem Bloom initiative for 2021.

It was explained that there had previously been a Wem Town Gardens Competition as part of Wem Bloom but that this had ceased in 2005 although some of the trophies were still held by the Town Council.

Several suggestions were put forward and all present felt that if Wem Bloom were to be relaunched it needed to focus away from just handing out awards and more towards working with the community to educate and inspire. A suggestion was made to focus on a different theme annually e.g gardening for wildlife, improving biodiversity and develop events based around the annual theme.

Suggestions made

- Allotment open day – chance for residents to look round the allotments and gain advice from allotment holders
- Gardening advice – Education / Advice sessions held around annual theme e.g. climate change, biodiversity.
- Annual event on Sweet Pea Weekend (3rd weekend in July) to incorporate an annual celebration of the Sweet Pea along with a wider event based around the theme of the year.
- Community gardening sessions e.g. drop in event to help tidy up a disused patch of ground (with owners permission) bulb planting or to help out Incredible Edible.

It was suggested that Incredible Edible be asked to join the group.

Administration

Penny explained that subject to approval the Town Council may be able to provide some limited admin support to get the project started but that it would ultimately have to be driven forward by a community group. She stated that she would find out more information from other Town Councils about the support they give to Bloom Groups.

It was agreed that a WhatsApp group could be set up for the group to communicate with each other between meetings.

Next meeting

It was agreed to meet again Mid November with suggestions for a theme for 2021 and ideas for events that could be held along with categories for awards.

Bloom Initiatives in other Towns - Town Council input

	Admin support	Financial support	Council representation
Oswestry	Admin support to the In Bloom Committee, the amount of time spent varies across the year but it can be significant	£3k in 2019/20.	
Market Drayton	Do all the promotion and administration for it.	Budget £1,500 for the in bloom competition which covers the cost of engraving the trophies, £20 voucher for the winners and a presentation evening Finances managed by Town Council	
Ellesmere	None	£300 grant	2 Councillors on committee
Ludlow	In kind assistance, printing certificates for best of... local award	£3,000 treated like an external body in terms of funding	

Recommendation

- **The Town Council agree to provide limited admin support in the form of meeting set up, promotion and copying costs to help establish the project and review this on an annual basis.**
- **That Wem Economic Forum be asked to consider whether they would be willing to provide financial support if needed e.g to businesses to partially fund hanging baskets / brackets / planters.**
- **A Councillor is co-opted onto the group.**
- **The group is encouraged to apply for a grant from the Town Council.**