

Norton in Hales

Heart of England 2018





Entry of Norton in Hales in Britain in Bloom 2018

After a very long history of taking part in the 'Bloom' competitions, Norton in Hales became Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions in 2015. It was difficult then to see how we could top that pinnacle and of course it could not be done. As a result the village has been resting on its laurels for two years, but then, at the turn of the year, the decision was made to enter a competition in 2018. The team's efforts had not ceased during those two years of absence, but there was not quite the same incentive without the judging day goal; hence the entry in Heart of England in Bloom this year, in the village category.

Theme

At an early stage of the 2018 year planning, the main theme for the year was decided on as 'Nature in Habits'.

Key objectives for the current year are as follows:

- ♦ To reduce watering requirements – by the replacement of planters by surface beds, and greater use of mulching
- ♦ Recycling plants and use of sustainable plantings
- ♦ Improvement of environmental habitats and the use of pollinator friendly plants

It is a community entry and not just about one or two people who plant some flower beds! Whilst there is a core of people who drive the project, many others take part to a lesser or greater degree to ensure that our local environment is one to be envied by others and enjoyed by those who live here

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Acknowledgements and sponsorship

Norton in Bloom would like to thank the following for their support:

THE HINDS HEAD

NORTON IN HALES CRICKET CLUB

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NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

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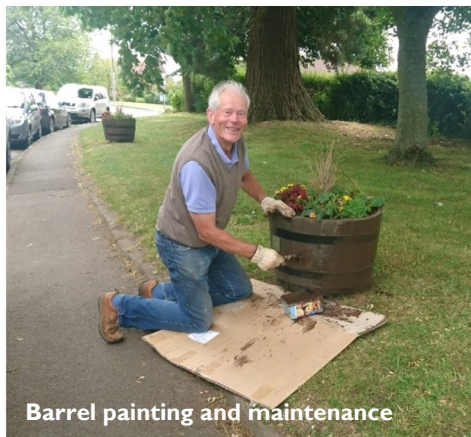


The many volunteers who support when they can and attend our regular events—thank you!



The village square in June. This very picturesque part of the village is maintained by the Bloom Group - there are beds, barrels, hanging baskets and planters that are maintained across the year. The wildflowers are adjacent to the Bradling stone and village sign that highlights previous successes with village in bloom.





Barrel painting and maintenance



A working party planting up the square



Continuing the planting theme at the school

Summer Planting

May/June 2018

Plants used in the scheme this year include:

Bidens , Marigolds, Geraniums, Begonias, Cosmos, Salvias, and Coleus.

Some of these that were difficult to source or are easy to grow were grown by members of the group in their own gardens.

Volunteers from across the village have taken ownership a certain area and are responsible for watering and deadheading over the season. Rainwater collectors are available behind the bus shelter and at the village hall and the group aim to be water wise at all times.

Overwintering and spring plants were recycled to another part of the village—either a permanent bed or The Hinds Head planters.



The planting colour theme 2018



Barbara's Bed

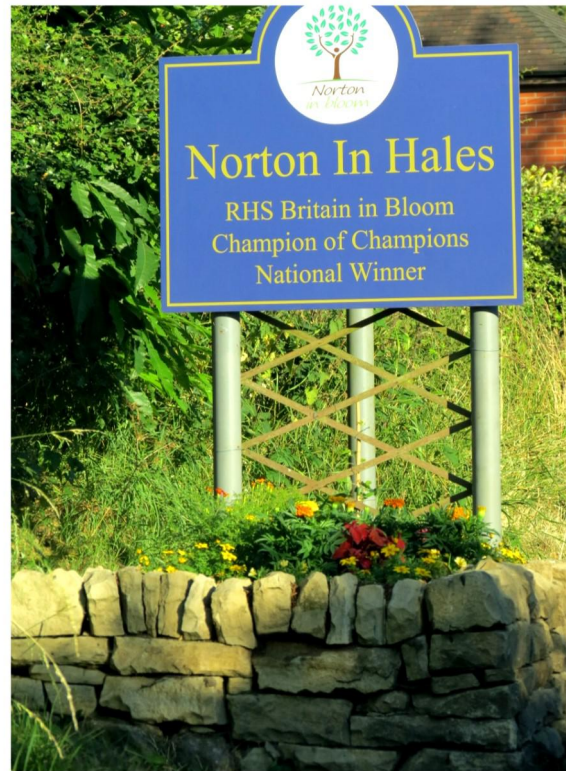


Committed volunteers!

Colour planting theme for the year

Members of the group expressed the desire to have a fairly colourful theme this year, majoring in on yellows, orange and purple. This could be seen to great effect in the spring with wallflowers and tulips, and has again been used for the summer bedding.

Village road sign beds have been enhanced this year with new stone from the local area. The bedding at these main routes into the village share the planting theme throughout the year.



A young volunteer filling a trough with summer bedding



School entrance barrels



Taking delivery of the summer plants - time to get planting!

Winter work and planting

Working parties meet almost every Monday throughout the year. A list of jobs is created and volunteers meet up and work through them. Many volunteers look after a certain area which may require extra hands at times.

A list of jobs goes out to members of the group in advance so that there is a coordinated approach, however in addition to this several volunteers will work on projects in their own time throughout the year.



Working party out in all weather sorting the Horsewash

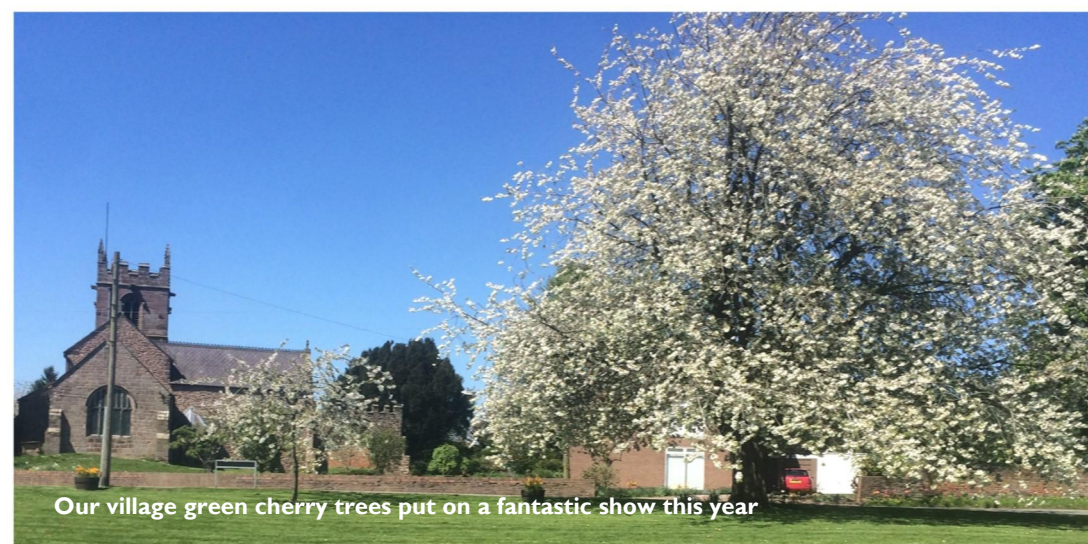


Keeping the square in bloom, all year around

Spring in the village

Over 400 tulip bulbs were planted in beds, barrels and planters around the village in Autumn 2017. Along with 1000 wallflowers and daffodils also planted by the group there was a very colourful display across the village. Wallflowers were also sold to anyone who wished to support the planting scheme. In early summer members of the group and willing volunteers set to removing and storing the bulbs for use next year and sorting the beds for the summer plants.

Other plants were added to the barrels and were then recycled to the Hinds Head pub planters or the beds on the village square. The cherry tree pictured below put on a fine display on the village green.



Norton in Hales Cricket Club



The pavilion in late spring

Much work is put into maintaining the beds at the cricket club and the fine displays are enjoyed by many people. Cutting the hedge back has widened the beds and sustainable planting is a key theme. This is a large area and the dedication of members of the group makes the difference. The planting themes here mirror those of the centre of the village.



100's of hours of work much appreciated by those visiting the club



A large border to maintain throughout the year

Parton's Pool

Habitat work begins!

This area is owned by a local farmer, who kindly allows the group to manage it for wildlife and allows the villagers to enjoy its tranquillity and wildlife.

Over recent years the tree cover had become excessive and this winter a number of people agreed to thin it out. None of the brush or large branches were removed from the site. Everything was reused to improve the hedging and create new wild-life habitats. In addition those that worked on this project thoroughly enjoyed climbing trees, using chainsaws and creating the dead hedges, which will last for many years.

A few volunteers have agreed to lead the management of Parton's Pool and have developed a seasonal work calendar that has ensured this area is managed effectively and supports our local wildlife population.



Allowing more light to the pool





Dead hedging using brash felled earlier in the month



The dead hedge now covers a gap in the hedge line



Building a bug hotel from the brush

Parton's Pool

All of the thinnings were used to make a dead hedge, using the larger branches to provide hedging stakes. This will provide a haven for various types of animal life.

Parton's Pool is an ongoing project with work needed every season. It is used by the school as a local resource.





Another project undertaken at the Pool was to replace the steps down to the river which had become unsafe and to line up the stepping stones across the river. Most of the work was undertaken by the village group who maintain and improve footpaths in the parish.

The work undertaken has greatly improved this unique feature that those going for a walk greatly enjoy. During the previous winter the group erected a temporary fence to protect the river bank from erosion. During spring plants were again starting to establish. Wild garlic grows profusely along the banks.

The group also maintains a bench and information at the Pool. The site provides regular sightings of kingfisher and heron and greater-spotted woodpecker and blackcap both nest here.



Taking a well earned break after a mornings work at Parton's



Turf being removed to plant the corms and then carefully replaced



Learning about Autumn planting



The Bloom Group led the session with the school

Crocus Planting

For the last 3 years the group has worked with the Rotary Group to publicise their work in eliminating polio across the world. Newcastle Rotary Club have supplied us with several thousand crocus corms and children from the village school have planted them.

This has made makes the children aware of the problems of disease and gives them ownership of an area of the village.

The Bloom Group continue to support this initiative and it received publicity in the local press.

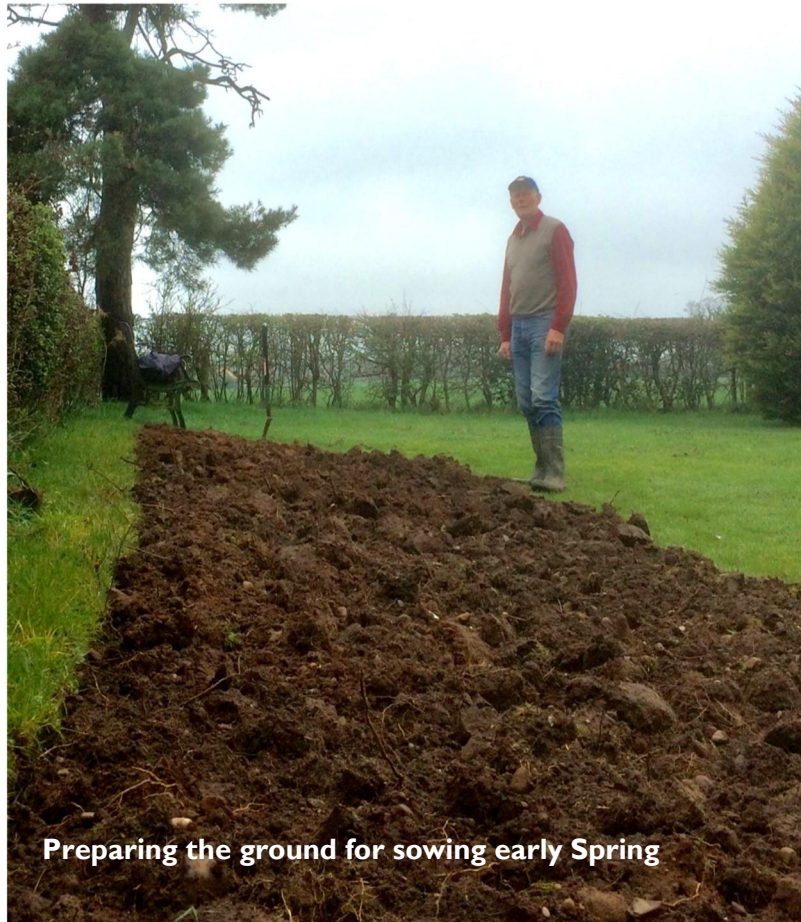


For all to enjoy in the spring

Wildflowers at remote graveyard

There is a remote graveyard out of the village along Bearstone Road which has a lovely view across the valley from the far end. A strip along the hedge was selected for wildflowers. The ground was prepared in early Spring and native wildflower seeds sown.

This project had a focus on our theme Nature in Habitats and it is hoped that we have provided more pollinating plants and seeds for birds later in the season, such as the goldfinch—this photo was taken in the village by the Bloom Group and shared on the Norton in Hales website.



Preparing the ground for sowing early Spring



Wildflowers in early July



Talk in the village hall

Visit to Hodnet Hall Gardens Friday 11th May - 2pm



The **In Bloom Group** have organised a PRIVATE visit to these gorgeous gardens.
See the fantastic displays of Azaleas & Rhododendrons!

Guided Tour by Head Gardener, Ross Underwood
(The gardens will not be open to the public on the day)

Entrance Fee £7 on the day

Please Pre-book your place before 4th of May by contacting:
Ann or Malcolm McDonald on 656646

We will make our own way to the gardens (entrance by the Church) and are coordinating transport. Those without cars or who do not wish to drive please let us know on booking. The Tea Room will NOT be open so bring your own cake and flask for an afternoon tea picnic.

As a follow up to the talk, the group organised a visit, open to anyone, to the gardens at Rhododendron time. Ross proved to be an extremely knowledgeable and entertaining guide to the group. The flyer above was delivered door to door by Bloom Group members

Talk by Ross Underwood of Hodnet Hall Gardens

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall gardens, Shropshire presented a talk entitled '**Shropshire to Sikhim**' in April 2018.

The event was organised by the Bloom Group to raise awareness of the work being done in the village and to encourage participation from anyone wishing to volunteer. The event was a huge success and the group covered the cost of the talk and the free hot-pot supper which was provided to encourage attendance!



A guided tour of the gardens



The Jubilee bed
Project



The Jubilee bed had long been a problem area, having thin top soil over hardcore!

Various planting schemes had been tried, to no avail. The solution was seen as making a raised bed and grassing the area outside a shrubbery.

This project was a joint effort with the parish council; they purchased local sandstone and topsoil whilst the group provided the labour and plantings.

The shrubs were also thinned out and under-planted suitably for the conditions.

Those approaching the village now enjoy the blooms and the sandstone bed matches those across the village.



The article below featured in the Shropshire Star on 10th May 2018.

The In Bloom Group also featured on BBC Radio Shropshire in April 2018. They provided the presenter with a brief tour of the village and discussed the activities of the group and what it is like to live in a quintessential village.

Village gunning for bloom success



Tulips in the centre of Norton-in-Hales. The village is looking for more In Bloom success.

A VILLAGE group has its sights set on a Heart of England in Bloom award after previous success.

Norton in Bloom has announced it will enter the national awards scheme and work is already underway to get Norton-in-Hales' green spaces ship shape.

Nigel Passmore from the group said: "The village has won this category many times in the past so every effort is being made to repeat the village's continuous run of success in the bloom competition."

"Plans are well in hand and there are regular work parties to ensure ongoing stunning flower displays; these are attended by many dedicated members of the bloom group. This year's theme is 'Nature in Habitats' to reflect the diversity of wild-

life that is being encouraged in the village environs.

"In addition two separate wildflower areas have been sown to reflect the theme.

"The bloom group has also arranged several community events including an open gardens day in the summer and a visit to Hodnet Hall gardens. Also scheduled is a talk on the subject of bats at the Jubilee Hall and a bat and moth walk in September."

Norton in Bloom was named Champion of Champions in the 2015 RHS Britain in Bloom awards. The group meets in the Hind Head on the second Thursday of each month.

Judging by Britain in Bloom representatives for this year's awards is expected to take place towards the end of July.

Annual Village Show

The village show, which had been dormant, was reintroduced by the Bloom Group quite a few years ago and is now a much looked forward to event. It is well supported by local people and is run by a sub-committee. Monies raised are used to cover the costs, including trophies and certificates and children's prizes. The group also provides some growing and show tips through the Messenger to encourage and support entrants.



Victoria Sponge—a popular category!



Class	Vegetables	Number	Notes	Entered ✓
1	Onions	3	Tied off, on sand, on a plate	
2	Courgettes	2	On a plate	
3	Beetroot	3 globes		
4	Vegetable Marrow	1		
5	French Beans (runner or dwarf)	5	On a plate	
6	Runner beans	6		
7	Bunch of herbs in water	4	In water	
8	Tomatoes - standard	6	On a plate	
9	Tomatoes - cherry	6	On a plate	
10	Cucumber	1		
11	Potatoes	4	White/Red	
12	Carrots	3		
13	Peppers (sweet or hot - chillies)	3	On a plate	
14	Selection of vegetables	6	Different varieties	
15	Longest Runner Bean	1		
16	Heaviest Onion	1		
17	Unusual Shaped Vegetable	1		
Class	Fruit	Number	Notes	
18	Eating Apples	5	On a plate	
19	Cooking Apples	5	On a plate	
20	Plums	5	On a plate	
21	Damsons (unripe entries permitted)	9	On a plate	
Class	Flowers	Number	Notes	
22	Vase of cut flowers	1	In a vase	
23	Single cut flower .	1 stem	Different from 24,25,26 in a vase	
24	Rose	1 bloom	In a vase	
25	Dahlias	3 blooms	Any variety can be mixed in vase	
26	Gladiolus	1	In a vase	
	Flower Arrangements	Number	Notes	
27	Arrangement in a vase	1		
28	Foliage Table Arrangement	1		
29	Arrangement in a teacup	1		
Class	Other Home Produce	Number	Notes	
30	Eggs	3	Own hens, in egg box. 1 egg will be cracked open by judges.	
Class	Domestic Section	Numer	Notes	
31	Victoria Sandwich	1	8" jam filling, no sugar on top, on a plate	
32	Quiche /savoury flan	1	7"- 8", on a plate	
33	Marmalade	1	Any size jar	
34	Soft Fruit Jam	1	Any size jar	
35	Chutney/Relish/Pickle	1	Any size jar	
36	Fruit scones (Male entrants only)	3	3 on a plate	
Class	Adults Creative Section	Number	Notes	
37	Handmade red poppy	1	Any medium or craft	
38	Photo: Wildlife in Norton parish	1	No Larger than A4	
39	Knitted scarf	1	Any size	
Class	Children 7 and under	Number	Notes	
40	Biscuits	3	On a plate	
41	Colouring in (drawing supplied)	1	Outline supplied by Bloomers	
42	Painted stone	1		
Class	Children 8-11 years	Number	Notes	
43	Wildlife drawing/painting	1	Max A4	
44	Flapjack	3	On a plate	
45	Minature garden on a plate	1	Max 12"	

The village show schedule

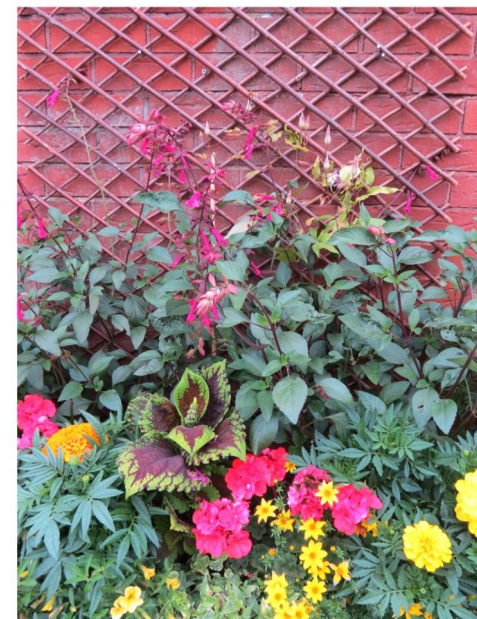
Saturday 1st September 2018



Jubilee Hall

The village hall planting scheme has been enhanced this year to include some extra planters and trellis.

The hall is used by many community groups and hosts the In Bloom events and village show each year. The group also maintains the hedges.

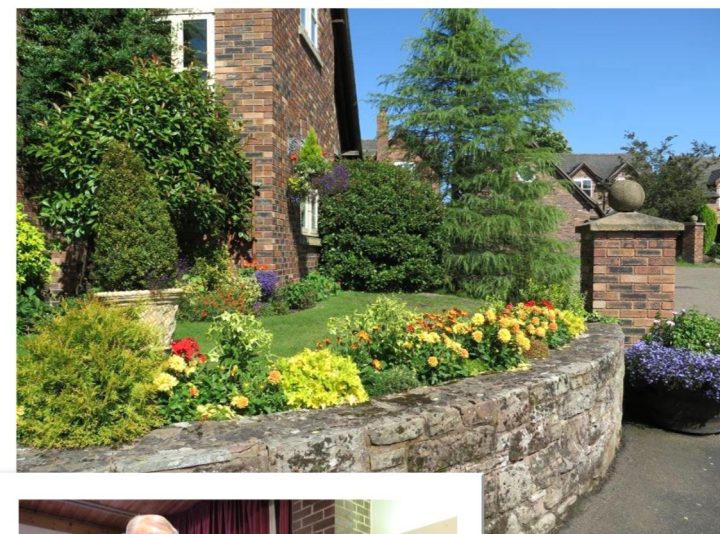




Close on the heels of the In Bloom judging comes the parish front gardens competition. This is run by the parish council who engage a local horticultural expert to judge all the front gardens in the parish. Kathryn Robey from Willoughbridge gardens is pictured here with Cairman of the then parish council, Peter Eardley and Chairman of Bloom, Ann Holland.

Best Front Garden Competition 2017





Celebration Evening' on Tuesday 3 October 2017

The Norton in Hales Parish Council's 'Celebration Evening' held in the Jubilee Hall on Tuesday, 3 October 2017, was a great success with the hall filled to capacity with parishioners and friends. The evening is arranged to celebrate all that is best about living in our award-winning North Shropshire village. The speaker was Kathryn Robey, curator of the Dorothy Clive Garden, at nearby Willoughbridge, who also presented the awards for the Parish Council's 'Best Front Garden Competition 2017', which Kathryn judged on 17 August. She was welcomed and introduced by the Chairman of the Parish Council Peter M Eardley and she then gave an excellent presentation on the development of the Dorothy Clive Garden in recent years which continues to delight visitors all year round. After a question and answer session Kathryn then presented the awards as follows –

First Prize with Silver Cup, special cake and Gardening Voucher – Jeremy and Sally Guest, 'The Old Post Office'

Second Prize with Gardening Voucher – Stephen and Fiona Bailey, Main Road

Third Prize with Gardening Voucher – Bert and Daphne Rathbone, Chapel Lane

Highly Commended Rosemary Illingworth, Bellaport Road; Sue Mayer, Betton; and all the houses in Napley Drive for a combined effort

2nd Annual Village Festival June 2018



In Bloom Secretary talking about his bees

The Bloom Group had a marquee at the village festival. Many local people provided a wide variety of plants that were for sale with Bloom Group volunteers available to offer advice on planting and after care. Over £100 was raised for Group funds.

A display of live bees in a glass observation hive attracted attention from several 'would be' beekeepers, and offers given of the opportunity to examine bees in a full hive at the group's apiary at the wildlife pool.



The steam engine returns



Lots of entries!



Vintage vehicles add to the setting





NORTON IN
HALES FESTIVAL
9TH JUNE 2018

Takes place on the village
green from 2.00pm to
5.00pm plus beer festival at
the Hinds Head.

Stalls avail-
able at £5.
Ring 01630
658983 to
book.

Lots of stalls
including crafts,
plants and
antiques. Dog Show, vintage
machinery, cream teas and
Wildlife Trust.

The Bloom Group running the plant stall at the Village Festival

Perfect Pollinators

Bee keeping in the village



Hives at Parton's Pool



Sold at In Bloom events

Nature in Habitats

A main aim for the Group in 2018 was to increase the use of pollinator friendly plants and to improve, and increase awareness of the natural environment. To this end we have:

Used more open pollinated plants

Planted a memorial small leaf lime tree

Encouraged pollinators by having honeybees in an apiary at the wildlife pool

Given school children the opportunity to build a bug hotel

Constructed a log pile and large dead hedge and have opened up the tree canopy at the pool

Sown wildflowers in the village centre and graveyard.

Put up Tawny Owl nest boxes and bat boxes

Held a talk on bats and have planned an evening bat walk later in the year

A section in the monthly village 'Messenger' providing advice on how to manage gardens for wildlife



Bat and owl boxes made by local residents supporting the work of the group. These have been erected around the village by the Bloom Group. The village has a healthy population of tawny owls who are very vocal on all sides of the village.



At Parton's Pool



Mick Brassington Memorial Bed

A new bed for the village green

The two images far left—Doreen Brassington can be seen with her son and grandsons during the tree planting ceremony

Mick Brassington was a parish and county councillor for many years. He also ran the council front gardens competition and kept the In Bloom group going for many years. To mark his passing, the Parish Council and Bloom group have provided a tree and memorial plaque in a new bed on the village green.

The ground level bed had been envisaged as also serving to be more environmentally friendly than the very thirsty planters, which are now removed. In order for the bed to be maintained local residents living near the bed kindly volunteered to water and care for the plants.



Making a start on the new bed during a Monday morning working party

The Norton in Hales In Bloom Group and Volunteers



The In Bloom Group meets once every month at The Hinds Head . This allows for seasonal planning and ensures that In Bloom Group events take place across the year. Along with the Monday working parties this is a commitment but adds tremendous value to the village and fosters a community spirit.

Following each meeting information is shared across the village through the village newsletter, the Messenger.

Chair

Ann Holland

Secretary

Malcolm McDonald

Vice Chair

Chris Green

Treasurer

Jim Blackburn

Committee

Veronica Green, Anne McDonald, Bev Sanderson, Carol Swales, Joseph Bloor, Sally Peake



Portfolio for Heart of England Judging

Compiled by Chris Green

Norton in Hales

Shropshire

25th July 2018