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Benhall Open Space Wildflower Meadow Proposal Review

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation for their views and comments. Here is a snapshot of the feedback and how we have altered the proposal as a result.

Overall results of consultation

25% of respondents fully supported the proposal as presented

64% of respondents supported the creation of meadows on a reduced scale

11% of respondents objected to the proposal

Comments from the consultation

- Will be great to use this to space to educate the next generation about nature
- It's going to be great for bees and butterflies
- Fully support the proposal
- It is a great boost for bio-diversity
- Really like the idea – I think it will really enhance our local environment
- Nature needs to be a priority in our lives but this plan needs reducing to get a better balance
- Too much – not enough space to play
- Need more space for events like Benfest and Easter egg hunt
- Don't use weed killer
- It's going to create more litter and dog mess
- Money saving exercise
- It's going to look a mess and won't be maintained

As a result of the feedback, we have significantly reduced the scale of the proposal (by over half) to provide more space for walking, playing, exercising dogs, fitness, sledging, community events and more.

We are planning to sow the seed by the end of October to reduce the need for weed killer (one of the concerns raised). This is a cost neutral exercise that will be managed using the best practices available.

Given that a few people have expressed concern about dog mess and litter, separate initiatives will be implemented to encourage greater levels of social responsibility with the aim of alleviating these issues.

Benefits of the proposal

- Wildflower meadows naturally produce a biodiverse habitat, supporting birds, mammals, bees, butterflies and other invertebrate species
- The proposal will create an attractive natural wildflower meadow display - see images above
- Helps to promote physical and mental well-being of the users of the space
- Dogs tend not to like fouling in long grass
- The majority of litter will be caught around the perimeter where it can be collected easily
- The proposal has been refined to ensure that there is space for users to have events, play and travel through and around the site
- This proposal will not affect areas where the community likes to sledge in the snow
- Wildflower meadows require less mowing, reducing use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions
- Can reduce flash flooding by retaining and releasing water more slowly than regularly mown grass
- Reduces soil erosion

Meadow creation and maintenance awareness

The areas will be rotavated and seeded in **October** leaving them as bare earth (muddy). The seed will quickly start germinating through the winter and into spring when it will start greening up. It will then flower into the summer. In the first year this may be slightly patchy while the mix establishes.

The meadow will be hay cut in July/ August to promote good growth year on year. Some flowers will still be in bloom when the meadow is cut. If it is not cut at this time, the dominant weeds and grasses will start overtaking. After the meadow has been cut, the area will be hay colour (yellow/brown) for a short while.

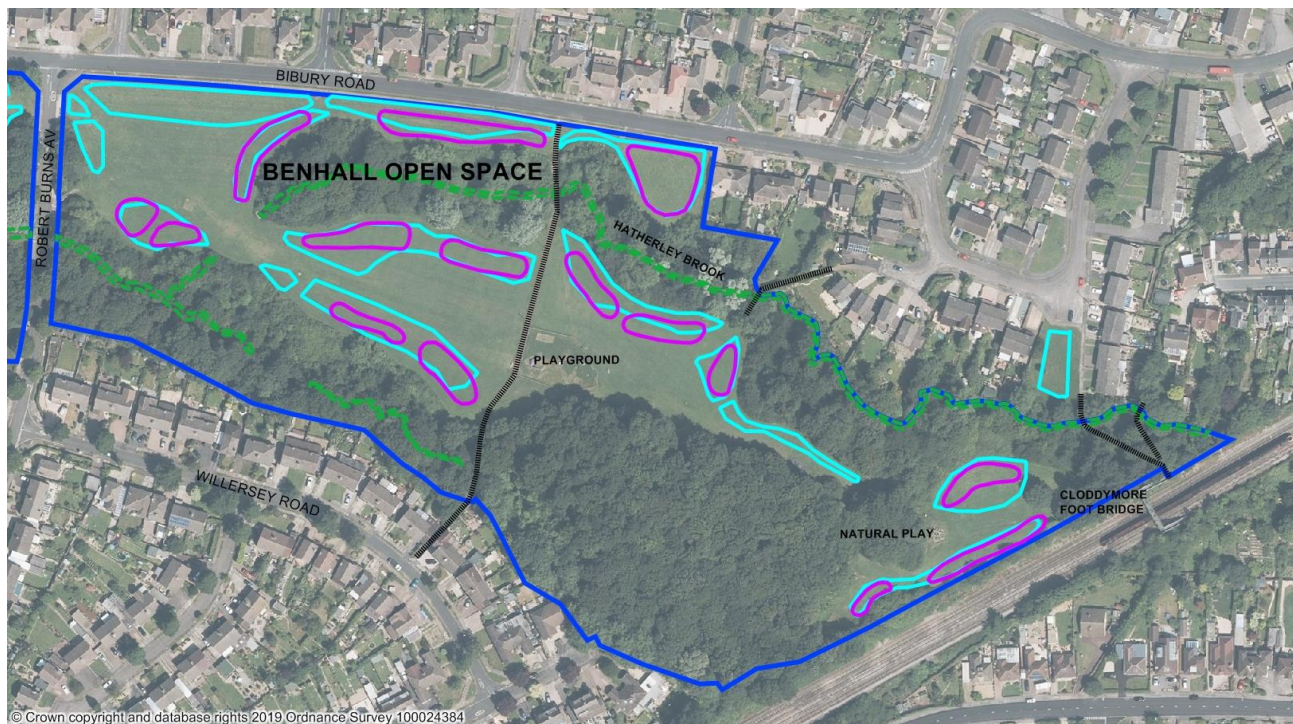
The plants will still be growing in September so the meadow areas will green up again before winter. In early spring, the areas will be grass cut to remove the first flush of grass. This is to give the meadow flowers a chance to dominate over the stronger grasses or plants. Year 2 will see a more diverse display of flowers than Year 1. The on-going monitoring and maintenance of these areas will help this to continue. We hope to use the seed from this meadow to support the creation of more meadows elsewhere in Cheltenham in the future.

Benhall Open Space revised meadow proposal

Original Proposal Turquoise = 1.7ha

New Proposal Purple = 0.8 ha

East Side



West Side



Here is the mix that will be used

Wild Flowers		
Latin Name	English Name	Mix Composition
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	3%
Centaurea nigra	Common Knapweed	7%
Galium verum	Lady's Bedstraw	7%
Geranium pratense	Meadow Cranesbill	2%
Knautia arvensis	Field Scabious	6%
Lathyrus pratensis	Meadow Vetchling	3%
Leontodon hispidus	Rough Hawkbit	2%
Leucanthemum vulgare	Oxeye Daisy	7%
Lotus corniculatus	Birdsfoot Trefoil	5%
Lychnis flos-cuculi	Ragged Robin	3%
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	6%
Primula veris	Cowslip	3%
Prunella vulgaris	Self Heal	6%
Ranunculus acris	Meadow Buttercup	10%
Rhinanthus minor	Yellow Rattle	7.5%
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrel	6%
Silaum silaus	Pepper Saxifrage	2%
Stachys officinalis	Betony	3%
Succisa pratensis	Devilsbit Scabious	2.5%
Tragopogon pratensis	Goatsbeard	2%
Trifolium pratense	Wild Red Clover	4%
Vicia cracca	Tufted Vetch	3%
22 Wildflower species		100%
Grasses		
Latin Name	English Name	Mix Composition
Agrostis capillaris	Common Bent	3%
Alopecurus pratensis (N)	Meadow Foxtail	2%
Anthoxanthum odoratum (N)	Sweet Vernal Grass	3%
Briza media (N)	Quaking Grass	2%
Cynosurus cristatus	Crested Dogtail	21%
Festuca ovina	Sheep's Fescue	22%
Festuca rubra ssp. commutata	Chewing's Fescue	21%
Festuca rubra ssp. litoralis	Slender Creeping Red Fescue	13%
Hordeum secalinum (N)	Meadow Barley	1%
Poa pratensis	Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass	10%
Trisetum flavescens	Yellow Oatgrass	2%
11 Grass species		100%