

Parish Council Wins £4000 Zero Carbon Grant

Willingham Parish Council, in conjunction with the Willingham Action Group, has been awarded a grant under the South Cambridgeshire District Council's Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) scheme. The £4160 is towards the cost of two biodiversity projects on Parish Council land – a wildflower meadow strip along the edge of the QEII children's playing field next to the lode and a native-species hedge on the boundary of Barton Field, off Black Pit Drove. Both wildflower meadows and hedge are excellent at capturing CO₂. We will progress these two projects over the next few months..



Planting a wildflower meadow of carefully chosen grasses and perennials with subsequent annual cutting will allow native wildlife to flourish. It will encourage more insect life and birds as well as supporting habitats for small mammals and the water vole in the adjacent lode. We plan a display board to provide information for the many visitors to the QEII field about the flowers and wildlife.

The Barton Field hedge is about 320 m in length and will comprise a double row of native species - hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, wild privet and hazel - making a hedge 2 m wide. As well as capturing CO₂ once established, a 'no-till' hedge planting system will minimise carbon emissions. Adding a hedge will facilitate shade, movement and shelter for a wide variety of insects, birds, small animals and reptiles. Fruits and berries will be available for small mammals and birds over the winter. Cuttings and logs will be reused as homes and hibernacula for a wide variety of wildlife.



Your involvement

One very important aspect of the ZCC grant scheme is involvement of the local community so we are very keen to encourage Willingham residents to take part in these and future plans. While basic maintenance of both areas will be covered by the Parish Council, we hope that volunteers will do other maintenance in Barton Field such as replacing dead plants in the hedge and self-sown saplings, and enhancements such as bird and bat boxes, hibernation structures for invertebrates and insects and additional planting. Both there and in the wildflower area, volunteers can do surveying, monitoring and organising nature trails, involving children where possible.

And perhaps you might be motivated to think about how biodiversity of your own garden could be improved.

If you want to help, or have ideas on future plans please do get in touch.

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