

**SOUTH MOLTON
IN BLOOM (SMIB)
PORTFOLIO 2022**



INTRODUCTION

South Molton in Bloom was started on February 11th 2021 by Sue Harrison. The group was overwhelmed to win the Ayre Cup and Gold after only 5 months. Now exactly one year and five months later, we are again arriving at judging time. In order to completely understand our story, it may be of interest to read last year's portfolio which can be found on our website: www.southmoltoninbloom.co.uk











AIMS



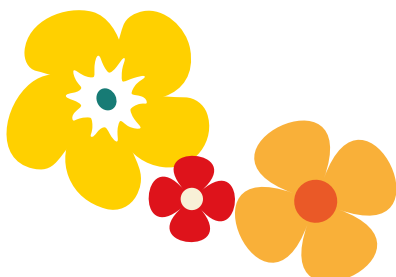
The aims of the group remain the same i.e:

-  To make South Molton as pretty and colourful as possible in terms of planting but within the financial means of the group
-  To bear in mind the environment: to maximise sustainable planting, plant trees and wildflowers, preserve bees and birds and wildlife wherever possible
-  To work as a diverse community and a happy group towards the same aims within an atmosphere of friendship, care and respect for each other
-  To do this for the wellbeing of all residents and their environment 
-  Friendship and improving South Molton are our top priorities, whilst bringing South Molton together, as it is a town with an ever increasing population.



THEMES

Last year's theme was colourful to cheer everyone up in the midst of Covid and to give variety as we were starting from scratch. Driving back from Weston Super Mare last October, we immediately decided on a **colour theme of purple, white and silver** to reflect The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and a general theme of **wellies** (being a farming town) and **tiaras**. Taking note of the Judge's comments on the return journey, we brainstormed how we could address the lack of recycling initiatives and came up with so many ideas that again we were overwhelmed for different reasons! The beauty of this group is that we all buzz off each other and each individual brings such different qualities to the group that as a whole we are truly amazing, as the townsfolk continually tell us. The **recycling theme was to bring in farming**, as well as the **Platinum Jubilee**, South Molton being a market town trading mostly in sheep and cattle.



SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLICITY

This year Matthew Tapp is doing our website for free and is continually improving it:
www.southmoltoninbloom.co.uk

We are also on FB: South Molton in Bloom and we share our posts with South Molton Noticeboard and South Molton Community Chat.

The local magazines: Molton Monthly, The News South Molton and Community News all publish whatever we want for free and help us advertise our events.

After winning Gold, Day Lewis pharmacy gave us the use of their front window to display whatever we want, so we can advertise in there and display our work, plus they also paid for us to have a banner erected over Church Walk arch. Prior to this the window just had a tatty blue board there with nothing on.

Last year Chanters Bakery gave us the use of their window but shortly after judging, there was a fire there and so we were unable to use it anymore.

This year we have bought 14 Framed Notice Boards for The Pannier Market to display our work, our sponsors and events.

The Mens Shed continues to make sponsor signs for us to erect around town and on the advice of the judge last year, we have painted the lettering black.



CHOSEN AREAS

We have continued with the same areas as last year i.e.

- **Raised beds along East Street, New Rd, The Enhancement, North Rd and behind the Pannier Market**
- **Church Walk Steps**
- **Mural Gardens**
- **Old Lorry Wash Park**
- **King Street Tree Stump**
- **South Molton Medical Centre and Amory Centre Pots**
- **Two pots in front of The Mens Shed in the Cemetery**
- **Gateway Path**
- **Raleigh Mead**



Livarot Walk ... we will not be including this on the judging tour although we continue to maintain it, as a car has driven over it this year and South West Water have not only blocked off a water storage tank that we put there to aid us with new planting but they have also destroyed some of our beds!



We will not be entering Pride in Parks this year, as sadly we have had to withdraw from Central Park and also the Library Gardens on the advice of the police and the town council. The vandalism in both these areas has been very bad although the art work we arranged last year in The skate park area has remained intact! The police have advised the council to get CCTV in both areas and this remains under discussion. To continue would be a complete waste of sponsors' money as the planting in both got destroyed. We did manage to move the raised beds from the

park to the hospital. We also had to remove the planted tyres from alongside the swimming pool in Central Park as their insurance company insisted they were a fire hazard. A local business took the tyres and we reused the remaining plants and compost. We also replanted four of the eleven trees that we planted there but sadly the rest disappeared. We also planted a heart of beech trees but again they all got pulled out and stamped upon.

We also spent a good two months working on The Courtyard Garden in The Amory Centre, preparing it for North Devon Dementia Trust to garden there and two of us became DBS registered in preparation but sadly the leader of the group got another job and abandoned the idea. We are ever hopeful this idea may be restored.



Not to be discouraged, we continued to expand not only the current areas but into new areas where we hoped would not be vandalised, as more open and on view to the public. Since last July, having sought permission from various authorities, we now do:



- 1 Two three tiered self watering planters on The Enhancement (since March 22)**
- 2 In front of Sainsbury's (since April 22)**
- 3 The War Memorial Gardens in The Cemetery (since February 22)**
- 4 Sheep Pen Car Park (December 21)**
- 5 South Molton Hospital (April 22)**
- 6 Bloomers' Corner (April 22)**
- 7 Southley Rd (May 22)**
- 8 We have also doubled the size of the bank at Raleigh Mead (November 21)**



We are also attempting a wild flower meadow at The Gateway Path and The Hospital (March 22). All the areas that we have attacked have been completely overgrown and untouched for many years. Next year we have plans to expand into further areas around the hospital and possibly help the Baptist Church. We also have an area we call scrubland that we have started to attack but is very much work in progress!

This year we have encouraged both The Community Gardens and The Sheep Fair Field to enter as IYNs again. The schools are all active with gardening and although very involved in the art side of South Molton in Bloom, they did not feel they had the time to enter as IYNs. Covid has still been rife here for the whole year. Many of us in the group have had it this year including one as I speak in June. The school staff therefore have been under enormous pressure. Despite this, we have also encouraged two pubs, two care homes and the McCarthy Stone homes to enter the business awards.

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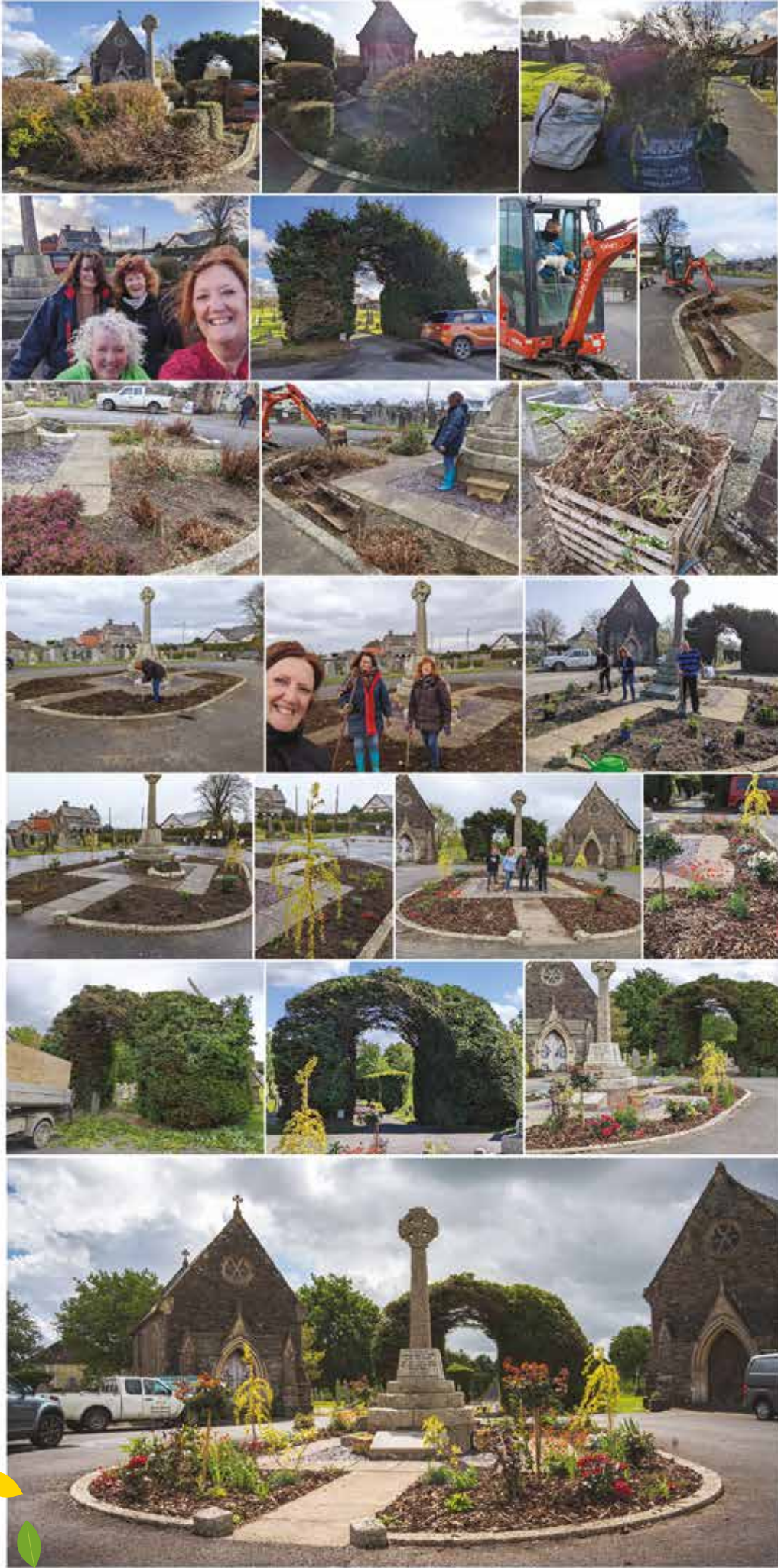
**NEW PROJECT
THIS YEAR**

**The story of
the Sainsbury's bed**



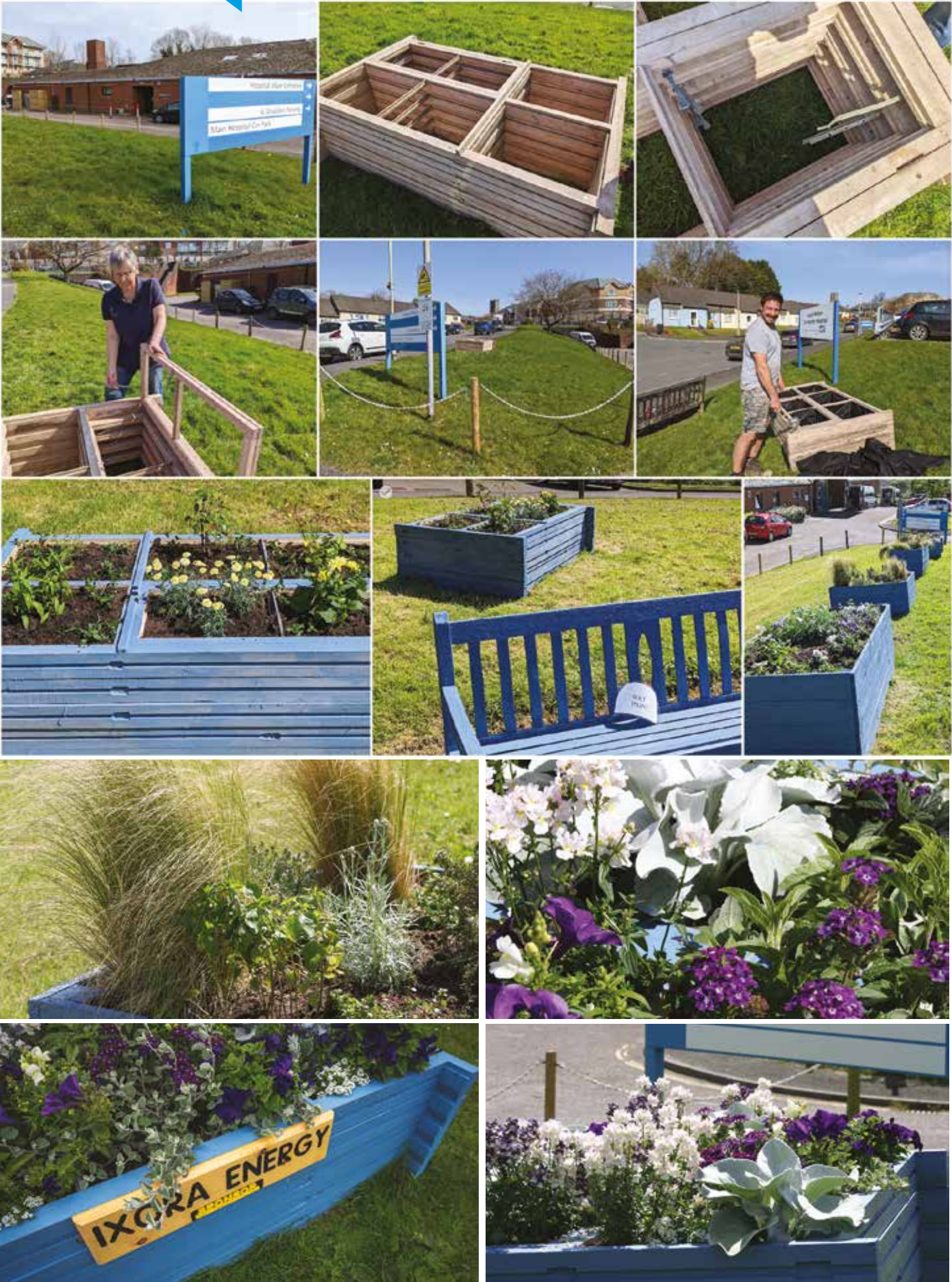
**NEW PROJECT
THIS YEAR**

**The story of the
Memorial Garden**



**NEW PROJECT
THIS YEAR**

The Story of the Hospital beds



NEW PROJECT THIS YEAR

The story of Bloomers' Corner

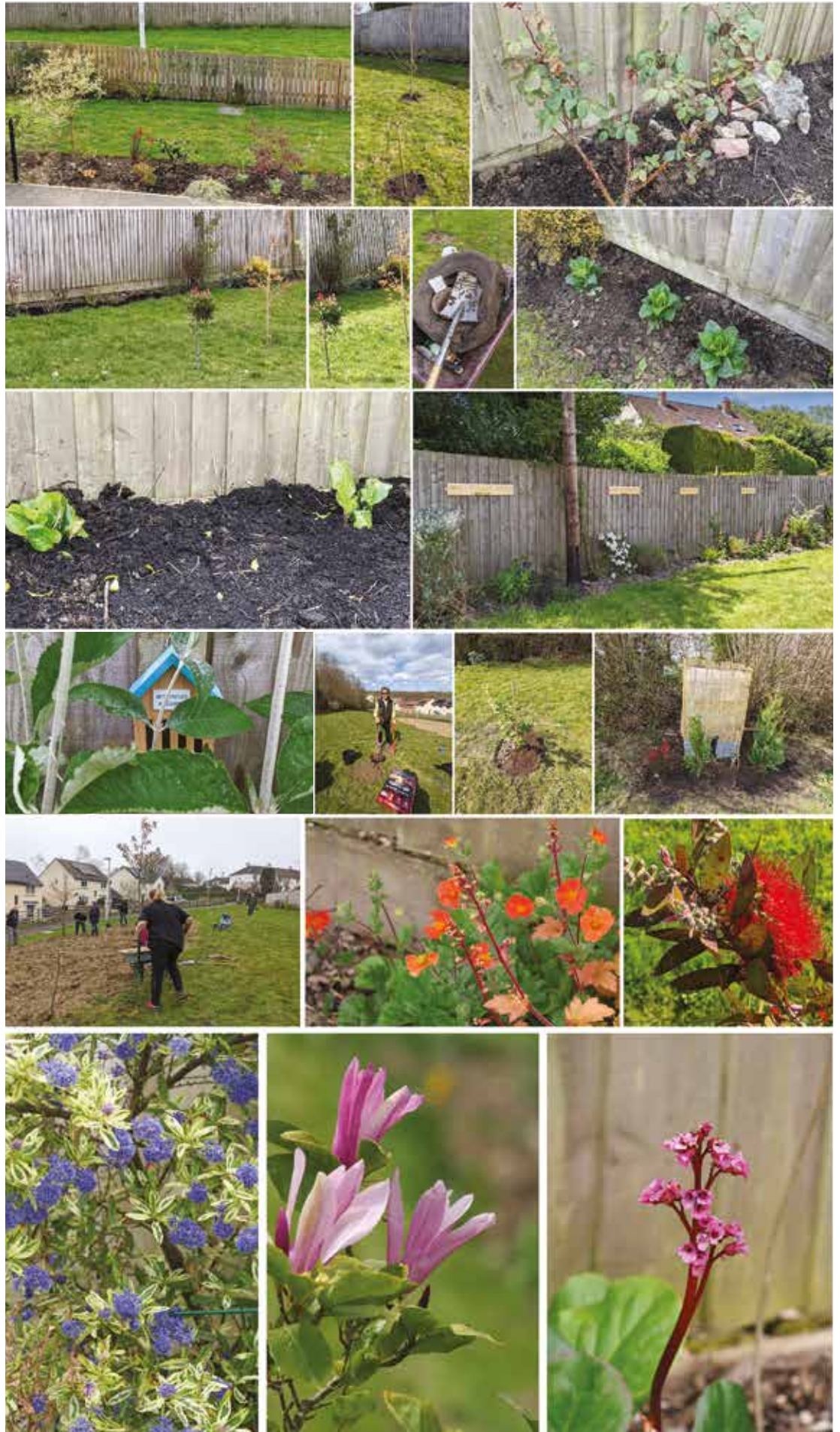
We have started two composters this year in Bloomers' Corner. This is a totally new project for our group. We also have just acquired a wormery that was given to us. We have started a stumpery. We have also erected bird feeders, bird and butterfly houses as well as a bee and insect hotel. This year we have used all Horizon peat free compost and the only difference we have found is that it dries out more quickly and maybe the annuals are slower to fill out.



The story of Raleigh Mead



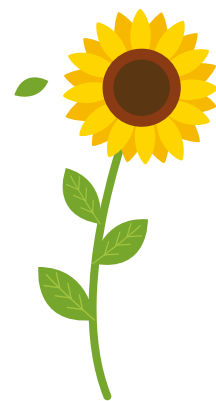
The story of the Gateway Path



The story of Sheep Pen car park



BEFORE AND AFTERS



The Lorry Wash



Beds on North Road



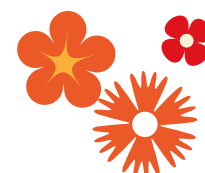
Mural Gardens



Brick Planters on East Street



The Enhancement on Broad Street



MEMBERSHIP

We have 25 members. This includes our newly appointed Patron at our AGM in February. Lady Arran is the Vice Lord Lieutenant for Devon and is running The Queen's Green Canopy in Devon. She was thrilled that we were ahead of the game and had been planting trees since last October on The Gateway Path, plus those in the park for last year.

The group has only changed slightly over the 17 months but essentially the core remains. We had some men join us after October. Our treasurer is Mary McMonnies and Rev Jane Lucas is our minutes secretary. We have a few dogs who give us a paw! The group is great at socialising and two ladies in the group have blossomed since joining after losing their husbands of over 40 years. David Worden is the only councillor in the group and is very supportive.

We are lucky to have Kacper who works at Quince Honey Farm and not only grows plants to sell but also advises us on bees. Anne Beagley and Debbie Thrower grow plants to sell at our plant stalls. Will Locke runs South Molton Wombles. David Beagley does all our printing for free and Helen Waller, whilst a brilliant gardener, is also our graphic designer. Becca Brewer is the mother of Henry who has done some art for us this year and last year planted a succulent bed in Central Park that sadly got destroyed. Bridget Smith helps Elaine Symons with the artwork.

Christine Goddard is The Manager at Squires Court opposite the bank at Raleigh Mead which we started to garden to please the residents and it was so successful that we have now done the whole bank. Christine has now entered Squires Court in the Business section. Then we have 15 gardeners in the group including Helen and Elaine. It is fascinating that only two of the group are South Molton born and bred and the rest of us are 'blow ins', showing how important the group is for helping people to get to know the town and make friends. We all love our town and love it even more now we have made it so colourful and attractive.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We are all so encouraged by the fantastically positive comments we get on FB and from passers by. There is no doubt that the residents, tourists and businesses are so impressed and appreciative of our work.

The Fire Service help by filling our self watering planters and the three water storage tanks we have put around the town. **Mens Shed** do superb signs in return for home made cakes! The **local businesses and individuals** support us financially as you will see from the accounts later. **Stephen** the town gardener is always so helpful in clearing any rubbish or helping us lift anything heavy! **The Town Clerk** helps as much as he can and appreciates our work.

We have started getting people to come forward to do the odd job for us like **George** who recently offered, whilst waiting for his pizza next to Old Lorry Wash, to do some hedge trimming for us. Many residents have come to us via FB to give us free plants or to buy items for sale to help us raise funds. We managed to get lots of **knitters** to make us some special bollard covers and bunting for the Platinum Jubilee theme. We asked one of the graffiti artists who did the Skate Park last year if he wanted to help us revamp Bloomers' Corner and he organised a group of young people to paint all the walls at the front in one weekend. The paint was in the most part donated, as was all their time. **Phil Rycroft**, another local artist, offered to paint the back wall.

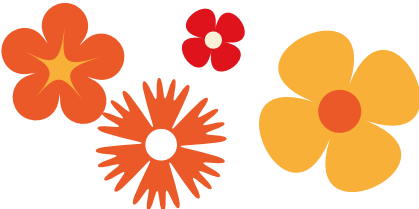
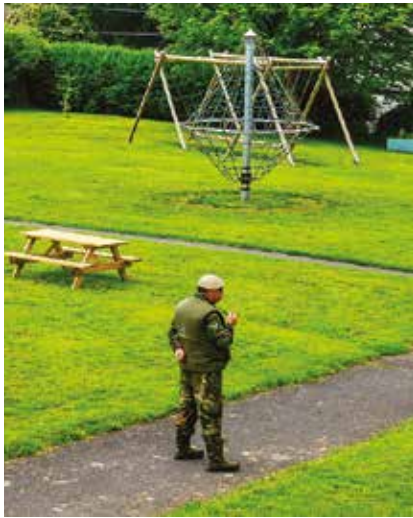
When we were gathering wellies and items which were going to be dumped to be recycled and used around town, we had so many offers of help. **Maritime Motifs** made us all high vis tabards with our logo.

The bingo night that we organised to raise money was truly indicative of how the town's people like to support us. **The Coaching Inn** allowed us to hold it there for no charge and we had so many people come, we were forced to turn away 40 people as there was no room at The Inn! Consequently we raised £1277 and we plan to do another in The Assembly Rooms in the autumn where more can attend.

Some help us water, Henry Brewer has done our Bloomers' Corner sign and Noah Trevena and his grandfather have planted a raised bed at the hospital. Last but not least, Elaine's son Lee, who has Downs Syndrome, has also helped us to do gardening. It really is a community effort.



HELP FROM THE COMMUNITY



FUNDRAISING

Apart from the bingo night, we have had two plant stalls raising £441.50. At Christmas we had a couple of stalls in the market where we as a group made wreaths and wooden xmas trees amongst other things to sell and made £1565.27. We also had a boot fair which raised £90.90. Sainsbury's gave us lots of dead plants that we revived and sold on FB making £73.

Due to the restrictions of Covid and the fact the virus is still spreading, we have not done as much fundraising as we would have liked. We had a symposium planned but that has been delayed until October, as when planned we had a bad outbreak in town. Even I caught Covid at the bingo night! At the Symposium, Kacper will talk about the importance of bees and how to encourage them and Darren from Condate will inform us about the renewable energy secret in South Molton.

David Beagley has recently made us birthday cards for free which we can now sell and so far we have made £10 but we are now going to try putting them in the local shops to sell.

The majority of our income comes from business and individual sponsors as listed on our website:

www.southmoltoninbloom.co.uk/oursponsors/



ART DISPLAY

Last year we did a massive art display involving the whole community, so this year Elaine and Bridget have organised local schools, community groups, nursing homes and local artists to come together again to do a wonderful collection of art in The Pannier Market. This is the focus of our town and hub of activity where everyone from South Molton and the surrounding area, visitors and residents alike, can come and enjoy the exhibition.

The theme this year is RECYCLING. Everyone was encouraged to save and use sweet wrappers, crisp packets, anything made of foil or any other suitable items to make their works of art. In addition, they were asked to focus on the colours purple, white and silver, wellies and tiaras and The Platinum Jubilee. The age range of participants is 6 weeks to 99 years old!



FRONT GARDEN/FRONTAGE/WINDOW COMPETITION

Julie and Margaret are organising the competition again, focusing on the same colour theme and wellies and tiaras. Christina Williams from The Molland Estate and winner at RHS Chelsea is to judge the gardens and Lady Arran will judge the windows. The purpose is to get people to take pride in their gardens.

LITTER PICKING

Will Locke runs South Molton Wombles and he does big litter picks twice a year but has individuals who do it regularly. However this year we have had another group help as well from North Devon Biosphere.

HIGHWAY WEEDS AND LIME TREES IN EAST ST

Devon County Council have informed us that we cannot remove any of the weeds in the highways which means both the road gutters *and the pavements*. We understand that weeds are important for biodiversity but are also aware that at times they can look unsightly and are damaging to drains. However we have been explicitly told that we cannot attempt to remove these because of health and safety and the council's budget for this was removed in 2014. Furthermore the Lime Trees in East Street are hugely overgrown and growing weeds around the base. These are managed by Devon County Council and we have an email saying we are strictly forbidden to prune or weed these trees as they have a preservation order on them. *Emails can be provided from Richard Sables Devon County Council as proof of the above.*

STREET FURNITURE

The group has painted the metal arch leading to Church Walk and the seats along Broad Street and East Street. We have done some of the waste bins and bollards where safe to do so but The Town Clerk eventually agreed for one of his council workers to paint the others to help us.



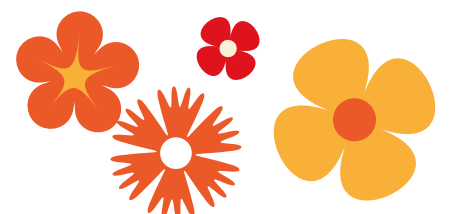
BUS STOP

We only have one bus stop in town that is under the jurisdiction of South Molton Town Council. It was filthy dirty and tatty. We have managed to get the council to agree to and WrapIt to produce covers for four panels on the bottom half of the bus stop. Our member Helen has designed the work.



WATERING

Last year we were dependent on going around the town with cans and water bottles, plus we installed one water butt by Stags. However we have now bought five rain water butts at our expense and Julie's husband Keith has installed them. Furthermore we have bought three large water storage tanks off a local farmer and the Fire Service regularly top them up for us. We also have existing rain water butts at Bloomers' Corner. We have also bought two three tiered self watering planters from Amberol. Individuals in the group have also installed rain water butts at their own homes at their own expense.



RECYCLING

We keep all flower pots to either use for Anne and Debbie to plant or to return to the garden centres and nurseries for reuse. We have been actively searching for items to recycle and use as planters. These you will see in Bloomers' Corner and in town. The theme for the artwork has been recycling.

Cardboard has been given to allotment gardeners. Kacper is building bee hotels out of recycled materials. Malcolm, a local resident, has made us a bird feeder and bath out of recycled materials.

Many residents have offered us items to be recycled. We also made two beds in the hospital out of hardwood window frames that someone wanted rid of.

CONDATE (IXORA ENERGY)

Condate (Ixora Energy) have sponsored us the same as The Royal British Legion, that is £2000 each and are our two biggest sponsors. Condate is probably the biggest secret in South Molton as it produces all of the gas for the town's residents and 40% of their electricity. It is renewable energy whereby a process called anaerobic digestion transforms energy crops, agricultural waste and animal manure. Biogas ticks so many boxes in terms of what is going on in the world and the environment.



Condate have also provided us with a huge amount of digestate, which is an organic fertiliser, left over from the process of anaerobic digestion. It is rich in natural nutrients and the farmers use it on their land to replace artificial fertiliser. We have been trying this out at Bloomers' Corner and Southley Road but were advised to mix with peat free compost just in case it burnt the roots of the flowers. Touch wood so far it is doing well!



We did a bulb lasagne in all the raised beds in town and apart from all the usual winter bulbs, we bought lots of unusual tulips this year and have been stopped by so many people asking where we got these tulips from, as they were so stunning. We planted the different tulips right across town in all the ordinary beds too. This year we are going to buy even more as they were so successful and plant in all the new areas.



SWIFT BOXES

In June 2020, Fran Sendell set up South Molton Save Our Swifts with the aim of erecting a large variety of nesting boxes to suit various roof sites. Over 40 have been erected and we have erected two in Bloomers' Corner. We are now ready for the amazing aerial displays and evocative screaming when they return from Africa.



FINANCES FROM FEBRUARY 11TH 2021/JUNE 22ND 2022

Since starting in February 2021 up to 22/6/22, the group have spent **£23430.84** on planting, which includes plants, bulbs, seeds, compost, mulch, fertilisers, weed mat, raised beds, wooden surrounds to beds, paint for the wooden planters and costs for rotovating.

The materials for all the Mens' Shed signs have cost **£609.14**. We have over 70 signs around town and these include sponsors who have given us goods as opposed to money or helped us out in another way such as loaning us a rotavator for free or storing our three tiered planters until Storm Eunice had gone!

The art work in the Pannier Market for both this year and last have cost a total of **£1217.65** but this year we were able to recycle the frames, so substantially reducing our costs.

In order to achieve the above, Sue Harrison has been actively engaging with all the businesses and local charities, resulting in us acquiring **£14499.36 plus £925 vouchers** over 17 months.

We have also done fundraising including producing our own calendar. After expenses, the profits from fundraising events is **£2044.50** but this has been significantly hampered because of Covid.

South Molton Town Council has granted us a total of **£2660** but this year we were successful in getting **£2499** from North Devon District Council as part of Boris Johnson's plan to assist towns in rejuvenating their surroundings after Covid.

Individuals around town have donated a total of **£1865**.

South West Water also gave us a grant last year of **£1000**.

Local councillor grants have been given totalling **£1925**.

We have worked hard to achieve this and are of the firm opinion that this money is given so as to see easily where it has been spent but we spend wisely in that we want to feel the benefits for many years to come! However we must reiterate that South Molton in Bloom would have not been able to make such a difference to the town without the support of the businesses and charities.



CONCLUSION

SMIB would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work in whatever way, as we just love the way the community works together to make South Molton look wonderful. We are doing our best to make the town look bright and cheerful, as well as a fantastic environment for not only the residents and visitors but for birds, bees, insects and the gifts that nature provides. We are planting in such a way that it will all have a lasting impact for years to come and will encourage biodiversity. This is because we are an amazing cohesive team bringing a variety of skills and personalities to the group.

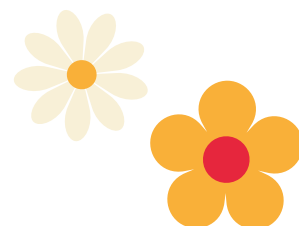
EXAMPLES OF PRAISE FROM SOME OF OUR AVID FOLLOWERS

Well done South Molton in Bloom they look great **Jan Davies**



Well done everyone involved. You are making wonderful changes all around the town!
Kevin Pallett

Very well done, folks! **Darrellyn Gunzburg**



Brilliant job!! Well done – and thank you! **Top fan**

Dee Adams Great job team as they did need a new coat of paint

Karolina Andreasova Great job!

Maureen Beauchamp Well done and thank you for all the work you have done



Jacky Hiscock
Fantastic South Molton in bloom

David Webber Thank you, it looks great



Yas Harman

You are already winners South Molton is looking really good thanks too your hard work but winning a cup will top it x

Molton Monthly Well done

Sally Angel That looks fab, well done!

Tina Trevena Looks lovely x

Amanda Richards Looking really beautiful around the town





SOUTH MOLTON IN

Bloom

WINNER OF THE RHS GOLD AWARD AND
AYRE CUP IN SOUTH WEST IN BLOOM 2021

Our aim is to improve
South Molton for all
residents and visitors!



For information please contact Sue Harrison, Coordinator

Telephone: 07885 510 400

Email: sue@southmoltoninbloom.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/southmoltoninbloom



Environmentally
friendly and sustainable
planting



We involve the
whole community!

Helping the
butterflies

Bees love
flowers

We are planting
trees and
wildflowers

We are even painting
street furniture!

