

Proposal for the renovation of the 'village sign' flower bed

18th November 2023

This proposal is submitted on behalf of the Saxilby Waterfront Working Group, who after several discussions at meetings have decided they would like to renovate the flower bed that is currently positioned at the Mill Lane / A57 / Queensway junction.

PROPOSAL:

The group proposes to:

- A. Remove the original flower bed at the base of the village sign. This would entail:
 - Digging up and saving all perennial and evergreen plants as well as bulbs that the group have planted in the flower bed.
 - Removing the stones that form the circle around the flower bed
 - Either; removing the inner ring of stones (which form a small circle at the base of the village sign post) or leaving them if the council prefers
 - Back filling the exposed area of soil with additional soil if needed and grass seed to allow the grass of the verge to continue up to the base of the post (or inner circle of stones if preferred)
- B. Creating a new flower bed at the base of the slope, nearer to the footpath. This would entail:
 - Digging out the desired area of turf and soil
 - Adding new top soil / compost to enrich the ground before planting
 - Plant the area with evergreen flowering shrubs, perennials, bulbs, alpine plants and each year a small amount of additional seasonal planting.

REASON FOR THE PLANNED RENOVATION:

1. The current flower bed is positioned at the top of the slope, in full direct sunlight all day during the summer months. This causes the flower bed to be incredibly dry and increasingly difficult to keep on top of in terms of watering during the summer months.
2. The soil in the flower bed is likely to be very depleted in nutrients and is absolutely riddled with bind weed and other weeds. The level of weeds and the nature of the bind weed is that it completely chokes up the other plants and stops them thriving. The flower bed needs weeding every 2-3 weeks during the summer. It is impossible to get on top of the weeding without digging out the whole flower bed to a depth of at least 6-8 inches. The group are keen to find a solution that minimizes the work load on the volunteers to maintain the flower bed.
3. The group feels that moving the bed to the lower end of the slope will allow natural water drainage down the slope to maintain moisture levels in the flower bed during the hotter months and therefore reduced the workload and water volume needed (by the volunteers and / or grounds team) to keep the plants healthy.
4. The new location and fresh soil should mean the best start for new plants as well as minimal weeding, which when done at regular intervals should avoid the same issue starting that has occurred in the existing flower bed with bind weed taking over.

SPECIFICS OF THE PROPOSED FLOWER BED:

The group plan to create an informal 'L' shaped flower bed with rounded ends and curved angle that follow the contour of the existing footpath. Image 1

The dimensions of the flower bed (image 1) will be 3metres along each long edge and 1 metre wide at each end and 1.5 metres wide in the centre. For comparison the existing bed is a 2 metre wide circle.

The edge of the flower bed will have a lawn edging strip applied. This will maintain a clean edge to the flower bed and not allow grass to encroach into the planting and also allow for easier mowing for the grounds team where they can simply run along the edge of the bed with no additional strimming like they currently need to do around the rocks of the existing bed.

The planting will consist of:

Types of plant	Names of plants	Reasons for use / benefits
Evergreen Shrubs	Hebe, heather, euonymus pittosporum, daphne etc	Year round colour from leaves. Flowers at different times of year for added interest. No shedding of leaves so low maintenance.
Perennials (particularly sun loving varieties)	Salvia, antirrhinum, chrysanthemums, phlox, campanula, geum, hardy dahlia, etc etc	Wide spread of spring, summer and autumn colour. Plants flowering each year at no additional annual costs. Relatively low maintenance with occasional dead heading.
Bulbs	Spring – daffodils, tulips Summer – aliums Autumn - nerine	Colour at different times of year. Repeated flowering year on year with minimal effort. Very low maintenance.
Alpine plants	Collection of alpines	Low growing plants, often ever green, with colour at different times of year with minimal maintenance.

LOGISTICS:

WHO?

The group plan to do the work themselves during volunteer days and also with additional, task specific, volunteer sessions. The group plan to recruit additional volunteers for the task, if they are short of volunteers within the group, by advertising the project on the village facebook forum.

WHEN?

The group would like to get the first stages of the work completed during the autumn/early winter 2023 in order to get the bulbs transplanted from the old bed into the new one before they start growing in the spring. At this stage the chrysanthemum's and geums retrieved from the Bridge Street planters would also be planted into the new flower bed.

Once the flower bed is created, and old one filled in, the group plan to do the majority of the main planting in the spring, or potentially over the winter if plants are available at a good price.

HOW?

The volunteers will use their own domestic gardening equipment and wheelbarrows to remove the existing flower bed plants and stones (no more than 5-6kg each) and to dig the new flower bed. The volunteers will need an agreement with the grounds team, for removal of any waste from site – any waste material could be left piled, away from the footpath, on the grass verge for collection. This would be the same as any green waste the volunteers currently generate on Waterfront tidy up days which is left at the bottom of the foot bridge access slope. Or alternatively a very small skip may be needed, which along with a bulk order of soil/compost may need to be arranged for on a neighbouring driveway. If planning is approved the group will approach the residents at the Mill Lane end of Queensway to coordinate this.

WHERE?

The flower bed will be positioned at the north:northwest corner of the flower bed. The perimeter of the bed will be no closer to the path than 50cm (image 2 & 3).

The flower bed will be no nearer than 50cm, in any direction, to the collection of man hole covers in the middle area of the grass slope (image 4). No plants with invasive or deep root systems will be used, so no risk to the underground utilities.

The proposed flower bed being lower down the slope than the existing flower bed means that no planting, even growing to 1.5 metres high, would cause any obstruction to drivers view of oncoming vehicles at the junction from Queensway to Mill Lane (image 5). The proposed plants to be used will all only grow to a maximum of 1 metre high and any capable of growing taller will be cut accordingly to keep their height under control.

SAFETY WHILE WORKING:

As the volunteers will be working on the grass area which has the full width of the footpath on all sides before being anywhere near to the road edge, the group don't see any reason why the work cannot be completed by volunteers, as opposed to a Highways approved contractors. The existing flower bed, much nearer to the A57 has always been maintained, planted, weeded by volunteers just with a high visibility vest, so the same logic should apply to the works for the new flower bed.

All volunteers will wear high visibility vests. They will all receive a full briefing before work commences regarding the safety of working near to the road side. No heavy machinery or equipment will be needed to complete the project.