



# Queen's Platinum Jubilee Village Green Project

## Consultation

St Helens Parish Council, in collaboration with St Helen's Church, would like to invite you to be part of a discussion about environmental improvements to the Village Green. We would like to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by planting some trees on the Green and enhancing the wildlife environment. We are all passionate about our Greens and know that everyone will want to be informed about the plans. We are now beginning a village consultation process which will run until the end of August. We would be most



grateful if you could read this information and complete our survey.

### **Why do we need to improve St Helens Green for wildlife?**

Biological diversity is essential to human life. Wildlife, and the processes and ecosystems that support it, provide us with clean air, fresh water, fertile soil and pollinated plants without which we would not be able to support ourselves.

But [research](#) published by the Natural History Museum in 2021 showed that, since the industrial revolution, nearly half of Britain's biodiversity has been lost.

Changes to farming practices – the use of pesticides and

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**There is a chance to discuss the plans at the  
Parish Council meeting in the Community Centre, on M**

**Survey forms are available in the Commu**

**Or take the online survey [here](#)**

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fertilisers, removal of hedges and woodland – along with urban development, have meant that habitats for animal and plant life have simply disappeared. Around 80% of land on

the Island is used for agriculture and there is ever-increasing pressure to build on our green-field sites.



St Helens Village Green is protected from building, agricultural and industrial development of any kind, because it is Common Land. It used to have a pond and many more trees around its perimeter, providing more habitats for wildlife than at present. Although we currently have areas of Green where the grass is not mown short, we don't have many wild flowers in those areas. Some of the trees on the green are not in good shape, and we do not have many trees providing blossom or fruit. We believe that carefully chosen trees, judiciously placed, would enhance the natural beauty of the area, potentially providing shade, helping with waterlogged areas and creating a wider range of habitats to increase the biodiversity of the Village Green.

The Queen's [Green Canopy project](#) invites us all to "Plant a tree for the Jubilee." Towns and villages are invited to plant "significant trees, avenues and copses to mark the occasion.

Trees are vital to the fight against climate change because of the way they capture carbon. They also encourage biodiversity, supporting many kinds of life. The [Committee on Climate Change report](#) from 2020 says the UK needs to plant 30,000 trees a year until 2050, in order to meet our net zero goal. All communities have a responsibility to help contribute to that goal.

### **Are we allowed to plant trees and flowers on the Green?**

The [Scheme for the Government and Management of St Helens Green](#) 1906 (para. 3) states that the Council "may plant shrubs or trees for shelter or ornament" on the Green.

Planting trees is an activity which does [not require consent under Section 38](#) of the Commons Act 2006, so long as access to the Green is not impeded.

The IW Council, which manages the Green, has confirmed that there are no legal objections to our proposals as stated.



There is, in fact, a statutory duty on councils and other public bodies to promote biodiversity, including restoring and enhancing habitats, under the Natural

Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 [s.40](#)

In 2019, the Isle of Wight achieved [UNESCO Biosphere Reserve](#) status. Biosphere reserves are charged with promoting “a more harmonious and sustainable relationship between people and nature.” This project is in keeping with that aim.

### **What kinds of trees are suggested?**

We would like to plant an **English oak tree** for the Queen’s Jubilee, at the eastern end of the Green. We would choose one of the smaller varieties appropriate to the available space. We would also install a [commemorative plaque](#) to mark the occasion.

[Oak trees](#) support more wildlife than any other tree in the UK. Of the 2,300 species supported by the oak, 326 entirely depend on it for their survival. Oaks are steeped in stories and traditions of British history, from Gog and Magog – the

ancient oaks named after giants in Somerset – to the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest where Robin Hood and his merry men purportedly hatched their plots. Village oaks were often a meeting point for the village. An oak on St Helens Green would be a wonderful addition to our own heritage and history.

We would also like to plant decorative trees, such as **crab apple and cherry trees** at each approach to the village. These might create an avenue of blossom trees in the spring, and coloured foliage in the autumn. These fruit trees would be wonderful for bees and birds, and with the wildflower meadow, could create a pollinator highway the length of the village. These trees might be an added attraction to visitors, drawing people to the village for picnics under the blossom, Japanese-style!



In 2019, the St Helen's Eco Church group planted tree seeds with children at St Helens school. About a dozen saplings - **oaks and horse**





**chestnuts** - have survived! One suggestion for discussion is to plant some of them alongside the existing woods at the top of West Green, to extend the tree canopy. If there is public support for this, it would be wonderful to involve the school in this part of the project.

The Council has taken advice from Gerry Price, [The Coastal Gardener](#), about trees which thrive in wetter areas but which also have a high wildlife value. She suggests **Juneberry, Hawthorn, Rowan** (pictured) and **Sweetgum**, for the area below the car park.

### **When might the trees be planted?**

It is proposed to plant the trees in October 2022, when tree-planting season begins. This will allow time for consultation over the summer.

### **Who would pay for the trees?**

Generous offers of donations have been received from St Helens Historical Society, St Helens Horticultural Society and from St Helen's Church coffee morning fund. In addition there could be an opportunity for families to sponsor a tree, or an area of wildflowers, in remembrance of a loved one. The Parish Council could also contribute to costs.

### **Who would plant the trees?**

We are recruiting "village volunteers" to help with maintenance of the Greens and upkeep of other areas of the village, as well as helping to plant the trees. We also hope that schoolchildren will be involved in the planting. We hope that this environmental project could become a focus of village collaboration for many years to come.

### **What other improvements are suggested?**

#### **Could you be a Village Volunteer?**

The Parish Council need volunteers to help around the village and, if there is support for the plans, to help with tree-planting and to manage wildlife areas.

Email the Parish Clerk to volunteer:

[clerk@sthelensiow.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sthelensiow.org.uk)

The Horseshoe Trail in West Green Copse has become very overgrown



and waterlogged, so the Parish Council have approached [The Green Gym](#) to see whether they can restore the trail and help to manage this area.

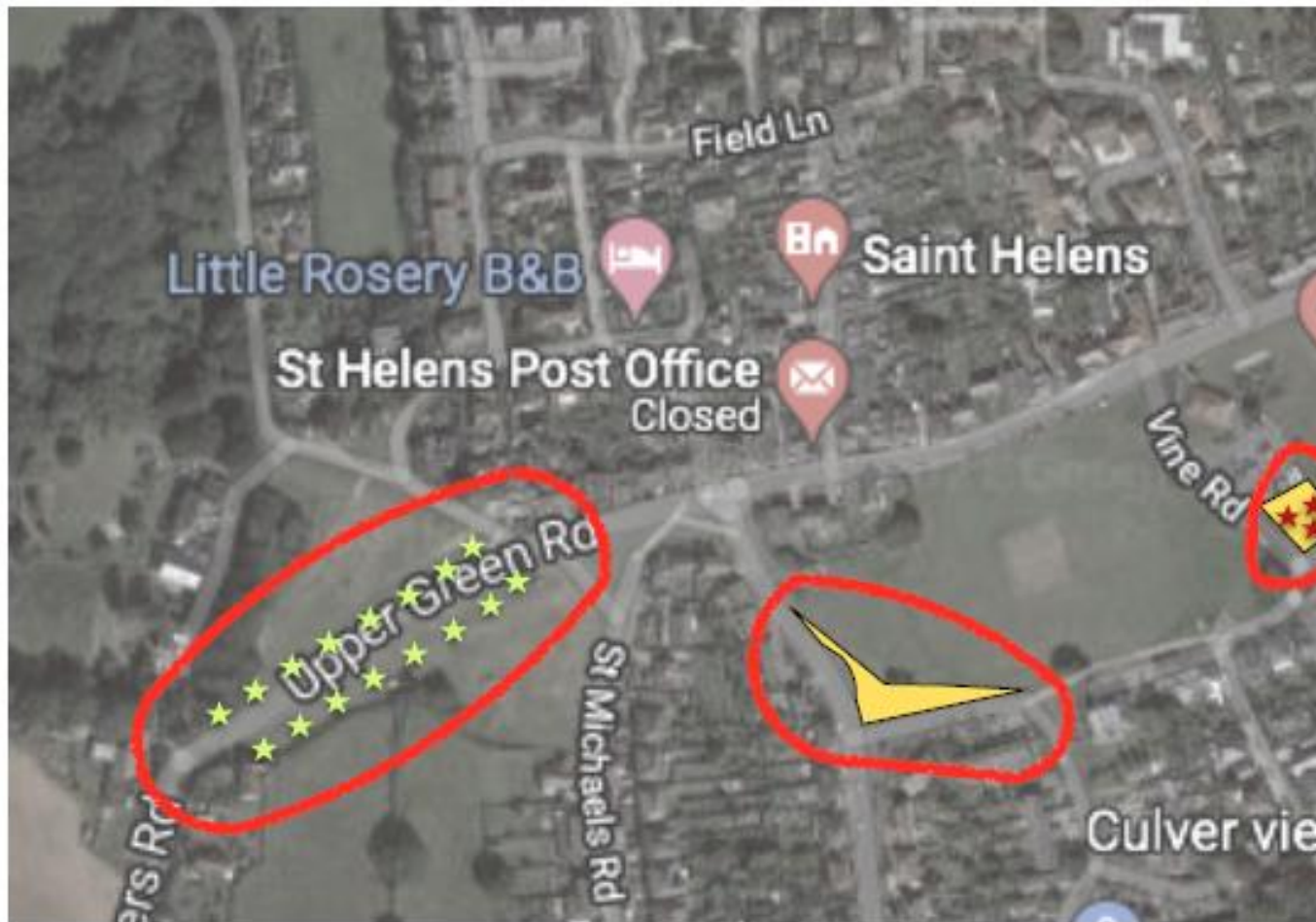
Kelly Wetherick, Wilder Wight Communities Officer with Hants and IOW [Wildlife Trust](#), visited the Green and has further ideas for developing the planted areas to create different habitats for wildlife, such as: log piles under trees; a small pond on the very wet corner near Station Road; or small “scrapes” in wet areas which will fill with water and dry out at other times; and wildflower areas. There are different ways to create wildflower meadow, with different levels of cost and upkeep involved.

Kelly also suggested we involve the school further by having children survey the wildlife in areas of the Green so that we can measure any improvements in biodiversity.

### **Where might the trees be planted?**

The map below indicates the proposed planting areas if the project goes ahead. This is open to discussion and may be changed during the consultation process.

## Location map of proposed environmental improvements



Wildflower area



Platinum Jubilee  
Oak tree



Ornamental tree  
e.g. Crab apple, Cl

NB Location of trees purely indicative - specific locations to be confirmed

### Where can I find the survey?

You can take the survey online here: [Village Green Jubilee Project Survey](#)

Alternatively, there are paper copies available in the Community Centre foyer which you can complete and return to the box provided.

This consultation exercise will help the Parish Council to decide which, if any, of the proposals have public support. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

### **How can I find out more?**

**There is an open meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm in the Community Centre (before the Parish Council meeting) to discuss the project proposals.**

Or:

- for specific queries
- to express an interest in sponsoring a tree
- to sign up be a village volunteer

contact Jacky, the Parish Clerk: [clerk@sthelensiow.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sthelensiow.org.uk)