
Kirkbymoorside Town Council
Information for the meeting on Monday 15 September 2025

Managed Wildflower Grassland

Thank you for the Town Councils considered response (24.07.2025) to my earlier concerns about the management and extension of this project which continues to detract from the visual amenity of the town. I and all the local residents I have spoken to about this matter, were extremely disappointed with the town councils response and that a number of my earlier comments seem to have been ignored in the response.

I have set out below my, and many others, ongoing concerns about this project.

(i) I feel that the chief ecologist at NYNP may not have had all the background facts explained fully about the specific areas I have raised. In connection with the existence and promotion of ragwort I take issue that:-

A. the areas in question were not and are not “wildlife areas”. They are urban grass verges.

B. According to Butterfly Conservation and the Wildlife Trusts:

1. The Cinnebar moth has a conservation status of “Common”.

2. Whilst the caterpillar of the Cinnebar moth does feed on the leaves of common ragwort, it can also be found on other ragworts and groundsels. Its preferred habitat is on well drained rabbit grazed grassland, mature sand dunes and heathland. None of these describe the habitat at the end of West Lund Lane and junction with and along the A 170.

3. It is well distributed throughout most of England, Wales and Scotland, but it is more confined to predominantly coastal habitats in Northern England and Scotland. Kirkbymoorside is not classified as a coastal habitat.

4. Ragwort is poisonous to horses **and other livestock** [RHS /DEFRA]. The West Lund Lane/A170 site is in close proximity, as I stated in my original email to the town council, to both paddocks with livestock in and fields used for silage/haylage to feed animals.

(ii) I do not consider the detail provided in the Moorsider publication in Autumn 2023, Summer 2024 and Autumn 2024 to constitute meaningful consultation due to the vagueness of the project aims, objectives and deliverables and, more importantly, the lack of accurate proposed site locations before any work commenced. If it had it would have allowed relevant local council taxpayers to understand where work is proposed, what it will entail, when it will be started and completed, how it will be monitored and what it will actually deliver by way of measurable outcomes.

As an example, the Autumn 2023 Moorsider article set out the requirements of the highway authority concerning visibility splays at junctions and the distance the grass should be cut back from the carriageway. These matters were only addressed by the town council after the matter was raised with it by local residents earlier this summer. Secondly, the same article states that the trial area for 2024 is an area of verge in proximity to the sports field. There was no mention of West Lund or West Lund Lane being used as sites for this project in 2024. In the Spring/Summer 2024 Moorsider It highlights for the first time that West Lund and West Lund Lane junction with the A170 **has been planted and seeded** with wild flowers. No mention is made of why these sites have now been included and what has happened to the original trial site. No pre work consultation has ever been carried out with local residents about whether these sites around West Lund Lane should be included into the project. In the Autumn/winter 2024 edition of Moorsider it states that 40 different wild flowers were identified in the summer of 2024 and that having cut the areas, yellow rattle seed has been planted to reduce the strength of the grass and give the wild flowers a better chance next year ie 2025. This is exactly why I previously stated that “*the preparatory work was incorrect and clearly insufficient*” as the ground should have been properly prepared and yellow

rattle seeds sown to suppress the grass **before any wildflowers were sown or planted** and there has been no visible ongoing management observed by residents of West Lund Lane since the “planting” in early 2024 and the July 2025 “survey”.

The Autumn 2023 Moorsider highlighted that “*Nettles, Thistle, Docks and coarse grass*” will not allow wild flowers to thrive, yet what we now have after two years are more Nettles, Thistle, Docks and coarse grass and with the exception of ragwort no new wild flowers and verges that look a disgrace!

The coarse grass is now so rampant and tall that it completely obliterates the view of the Kirkbymoorside in Bloom (KiB) flower tubs stack for anyone entering the town along the A170 from the west.

(iii) As a resident of West Lund Lane I regularly pass and stop and look at the two West Lund Lane sites most days and quite often several times per day. I have observed over this summer, various types of bee, hover flies, butterflies etc taking nectar from the flowers in the tubs provided and maintained by KiB, a small self sown patch of oxeye daisies just in front of the KiB stack, patches of self sown yarrow adjacent to the highway kerb and where the grass has been kept relatively short, clover. At the same time I have not seen a single pollinator in the unkept, overgrown grassed areas that has been allowed to thrive at the expense of what was a larger thriving environmentally friendly area before this ill conceived project was foisted on local inhabitants.

(iv) I did make it clear in my original complaint to the town council that a rural county like North Yorkshire has an abundance of rural areas and substantial amounts of grass verges outside of more urbanised town areas that could and should have been used for this project. I noticed that this projects blue heart signs were visible along the A170 outside of Kirbymoorside earlier this summer but a number of these sites then inexplicitly vanished mid way through the summer, the blue signs removed and the grass was then cut. Why?

(v) In the town councils response to me the term “pollinator corridors” was used for the first time. What the town council has created so far are not “pollinator corridors” as there are virtually no wild flower plants in the areas to provide pollen and secondly they are not corridors as the areas are not linked together but are in fact small isolated islands of unkept grass and weeds.

(vi) As the town council has a duty to promote and enhance biodiversity can I be advised what the town council is doing to fulfil its duty under the act at the play area in Old Road, on the A 170 roundabout and what steps it has taken to get the overgrown area between the A170 and the newest houses at the far south west end of Wainds Field managed properly for the benefit of local residents of the town and the environment rather remaining as waste land?

(vii) The residents of the town are justifiably proud of their town and want it in looking lovely condition for their benefit but also to attract visitors who hopefully will stop and spend with local businesses in the town. The A170 is the towns shop window and should always look pristine and welcoming. However, since this project commenced the A170 verges have looked unkept and shabby and unwelcoming to any passing visitor thinking of stopping.

I remain opposed to this ill conceived and badly managed project and the town council should, without delay, review and abort the project within the parish boundaries before more council tax payers money is wasted on it.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Halo
Tour clerk.

High Market Place

YO62 6AT

09.09.25.

Dear Lisa, I write as a new arrival in Kirkbymoorside which I'm finding a great place to live. It has such a sense of community and I'm enjoying getting involved with volunteering - at the library and with the "In Bloom" group. What a difference the beautiful tubs make to the appeal of the town!

I understand that the Council has been attempting to establish wildflower verges along the 170, particularly to attract pollinators I think. The verges, however, seem to consist of very tall, unkempt grasses which obscure signs and look most unattractive. I believe they are supposed to be 'managed' but have never seen anyone doing this. Moreover, surely the plants in the K.I.B. tubs attract a lot of pollinators and as we live in such a rural area with plenty of natural habitats around the town, I don't understand the rationale

for the matted grasses with their invasive
weeds - including ragwort which can be poisonous.
I'd like to see the outer boundary of kirkby
(170) looking as appealing as the town itself.
I hope these concerns will be raised at the
meeting on Monday.

Yours sincerely

As the summer draws to a close, we have been very aware of the stress the gardens and surrounding verges /approaches to the town roads have experienced. Gardeners and home owners have managed their own immediate area, and the town council have done a good job mowing the grass areas within the town precincts.

The Kirkbymoorside in Bloom Group have made a really stalwart effort in keeping their planters tended and watered, giving a colourful focus around the town, much appreciated by locals and visitors, making Kirkbymoorside a place to visit, benefitting local shops and amenities, attracting custom. What is disappointing is the care and maintenance of roadside verges as you approach the town. They are also a hazard as the tall growth/grasses give limited views for the traffic wanting to turn into or coming out onto the busy A170 through road as it speeds in and out of the town. It also gives the impression of 'neglect' and 'disinterest' in the town, and the verges as far up as Starfitts Lane and the Welburn turning are a real hazard to road users.

I understand the ethos of rewilding and encouraging pollen rich plants but we live in a countryside with many hedges, trees and fields in close proximity to the roads. A neat and well maintained safe approach to the town leaves a far greater impression on visitors and local people alike. 'You can't make a first impression twice' as the saying goes.

I would ask that you review your commitment to this issue for the coming months and definitely put it on the agenda for the coming year,

Thank you

Re: Wilding along the A170 within the Kirkbymoorside town boundary

I wish to strongly object to the continuance of the wilding project along the A170 within the Kirkbymoorside town boundary. The areas of predominantly overgrown/ unmown grass look appalling both to residents of the town and no doubt to visitors and those passing through.

Often seen as secondary to Helmsley and Pickering with their tourism, more abundant shops etc, these wilding areas compound the existing detrimental, industrial look of the town along the A170 by making it look untidy which is not good for the town's overall image. In turn this must impact

upon the number of visitors to the town and be reflected in the town's trade. People like to be proud of where they live.

The benefits, if any, to nature of these wilding areas within the town's boundaries to the county's overall biodiversity and wildlife must be infinitesimal given the thousands of square miles of open countryside and grass verges in this predominantly rural county. They are most certainly not wildflower zones. Apart from a little knapweed, yarrow and a few ox eyed daisies there are no other noticeable wildflowers, just predominantly grass interspersed with docks, nettles, brambles, creeping thistle and ragwort. Many wildflowers don't grow in tall grass as they can't compete.

If intended as wildflower zones, these areas should have been better prepared and managed from the outset. The long stretch of overgrown grass from Sylatech to West Lund Lane on the south side of the A170 is largely under trees and in shade for a greater part of the day. Whilst some wildflowers may grow in shade the vast majority prefer a sunny site.

May I refer you to the Rotherham River of Flowers Project. Here annual seed mixes of a combination of wild and cultivated flowers are sown in grass verges which have been properly prepared so as to provide a whole season of continuing colour enhancing the neighbourhood and providing a feast of nectar for pollinators. They are admired by local people and visitors to the town bringing joy to all and a satisfaction that something is also being done for both wildlife and biodiversity.

In addition, the project has actually saved Rotherham Council money on grass cutting.

I accept that whilst some 'weeds' like ragwort (poisonous to horses and toxic to humans if touched) can be beneficial in some parts of the country to the Cinnabar moth and nettles provide a food source for some species of butterflies and aphids which all form part of food chains, they do grow in abundance outside of the town's boundaries. Grasses too.

Please don't let these untidy grassed areas within the town's boundaries become an excuse for saving money on grass cutting. Please either do something positive to make a real beneficial impact upon the town and biodiversity along the lines of the Rotherham River of Flowers Project or mow these areas as I cannot see they provide any benefit either to the town or nature.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Kirkbymoorside.

To whom it may concern

Re The Kirkbymoorside managed wildflower & grassland project

My husband & I were looking forward to seeing the results of the wildflower project along the A170. However, after 2 years it has been rather disappointing to see overgrown coarse grass & weeds with no signs of any flowers. It looks unsightly & I find it hard to believe adds any biodiverse environmental benefits. Please can you inform me if this project is ongoing or if it has been scrapped. I would also like to know how much time & expenditure has been given to this project & how it has been funded. Given the appalling & dangerous state of the A170 through Kirkbymoorside I would suggest the money could be better spent on improving the road.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]