

KIRKBYMOORSIDE IN BLOOM OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING OF 4TH FEBRUARY 2026

The In Bloom group welcomed the facilitation of this meeting by the Town Council and the presentation by North York Moors National Park (NYMNP) representative Holly Ramsden. This scheme is in essence very laudable.

.

There was consensus of opinion that the scheme affecting the grass verges within the town had not been welcomed by the general public on the grounds of safety and aesthetics. There has been a general misconception that the scheme was solely a cost cutting exercise. The views of differing wildflower schemes and their respective success and failures from the highly experienced RHS National judge attending the meeting were very informative and should be used as a beneficial guide moving forward with a modified and therefore different project scope.

.

For the scheme to move forward there needs to be modification, potentially as a compromise, evidenced by our neighbouring market towns of Helmsley and Pickering.

Kirkbymoorside In Bloom's (KiB) preferred option of retaining the scheme within the rural areas immediately outside the town boundary met with a mixed reception from this meeting. Another option would be to reduce the physical area of the scheme on the verges to a strip in front of existing hedges with a clear cutting line denoted. The views of individual residents near to any proposed areas should be sought beforehand and recognised.

.

KiB Group felt the input of the grass cutting contractor to the discussion to be very pertinent and would wish to empathise, support and congratulate him in his role, especially during the last challenging season. Mr Gospel is at the forefront of delivery of service, and as such is best placed to make assessments regarding lines of safety and potential areas of dog fouling. We would strongly recommend that he is allowed significant discretion, without impunity, to adjust cutting lines as he sees fit.

.

There was discussion around corridors of pollinators. A horticultural fact is that the most robust and varied of these corridors are those from one garden to another, not grass verges adjacent to busy A roads and junctions.

.

Kirkbymoorside is not a bio-diversity desert; there is much to acknowledge and celebrate within the town already, as evidenced by the wealth of interest and expertise within the town and by the very wide variety, size and planting schemes showcased by the many private gardens that partake in the annual In Bloom Open Gardens event. This of course does not preclude further expansion in very carefully selected areas and we would particularly welcome areas dedicated to the NYMNP scheme within the considerable landscape of the playing field, and the two play areas owned and maintained by the Town Council, together with interpretation and explanation boards targeting the younger generation. The area left undeveloped south of the Waind's Field housing has also been put forward as a current eyesore that could be addressed by the proposed project without detracting from the well maintained, litter free grass verges running through and within the town area. However, we would stress the importance of suitable and sufficient ongoing management. The argument that areas will improve over the years is not a convincing one in the eyes of the public and we strongly maintain horticulturally that the removal of invasive weeds such as Docks etc, is essential to maximise any future success.

.

Additional tree planting would be welcomed by many, but cognisance of root damage to existing paved surfaces needs to be considered. Carefully selected varieties of trees can be planted in large planters, but again, these will require watering and continuing maintenance, especially in the early stages, and there needs to be a clear line of responsibility for that. Most tree species will after several years outgrow the planters and need to be removed and replanted into the ground in a new home as they will otherwise outgrow the planters and eventually perish.

.

In Bloom planting schemes are developed and adapted to location, with colour, visual and sensory impact, attraction to pollinators, and increasingly, drought resistance being considered factors. We are professionally guided in this. Our planting scheme for summer 2026 was decided upon and ordered before the end of last year and is grown locally specifically to order for KiB.

.

Following on from the In Bloom community award we have been directly invited by RHS to partake in the Golden Rose Initiative. A unanimous decision has already been taken by KiB to accept this invitation based on our existing connections and partnerships. We would see it as a positive step forward were the Town Council to also support us in this. We would suggest that a very quick and easy initial gesture of support would be to reimburse Kirkbymoorside In Bloom the modest cost of entry.

.

Some discussion took place around community ventures such as scarecrow trails and business involvement. We fully acknowledged and highlighted at the meeting the considerable support KiB already receive from some 40 businesses within the town, for which we are indebted. The Open Garden event is now a major and continually developing aspect of Kirkbymoorside's calendar attracting hundreds of visitors and residents, providing a real showcase of bio-diversity within the town. Whilst acknowledging the suggestion of extending this over a weekend there must be recognition of what can be reasonably expected from an existing intensely loyal and hardworking group of volunteers. We continue to be disappointed in the perceived lack of interest and attendance from our councillors; perhaps this coming year is an opportunity to rectify that and enjoy an uplifting horticultural and social experience.

.

KiB looks forward to being part of a solution that whilst benefiting the environment does not detract from the equally important need to encourage visitors into the town that in-turn supports our town centre businesses to thrive, which will make the town a wonderful place to want to live and work in now and into the future.

Gaynor De Barr
Chairman, Kirkbymoorside in Bloom