



Town Ranger Service

Stowmarket Town Council will be launching their new Town Ranger service in September 2024! The Stowmarket Town Ranger service tackles urgent issues in Stowmarket where a quick response is required. The Rangers are working hard to make our community and general environment a more positive place to live in.

The Town Ranger service was developed in March 2024 using Dunstable Town Ranger service as a case study. The Town Clerk and Head of Community Services visited Dunstable to gain knowledge and experience of a similar established service. To kick start the Town Ranger Service, specific routes have been created to target 'grot spot' areas that need urgent attention, starting with Crown Street to Pikes Meadow. When officially launched the public will be able to report issues where Town Rangers can work reactively.



A brilliant discussion was had at the recent Environment Forum where members put forward some great points regarding the ecological, wildlife and biodiversity of the project. Members asked that Town Rangers consider timings through out the year, where hatchlings, eggs and insects may be affected when work is taking place. Another point to consider moving forward is for certain areas to remain 'fuller' for wildlife habitats, concerns were raised that cutting hedgerows, nettles etc. may affect the biodiversity.

Stowmarket Town Council thanked the Environment Forum members for their advice, have taken note and will aim to apply them to the project moving forward.



The Rangers will deal with the following:

- Supporting community clean ups
- Litter-picking
- Repairs
- Graffiti removal
- Painting of street furniture and signs
- Cutting back of overgrown trees, hedges and shrubs
- Enhancing green spaces
- Planting schemes
- Weed removal

Saving Water in the Garden

Self watering beds (Wicking)

Red Gables have installed 9 wicking systems, saving thousands of litres of water and they rarely need to refill them (4 times a year at most).

Wicking beds is a watering system where water is stored in an airtight reservoir underneath the soil, and it “wicks” up through the soil to the roots above as the plants transpire moisture through their leaves. Depending on its size, the reservoir can keep the soil moist for up to 10 days. It virtually eliminates evaporation from the soil and removes the chance of leaf scald, which can occur when you water your plants from above.



Top Tips

- Always water from the bottom to encourage strong roots.
- Water first thing in the morning.
- Collect rainwater in butts, barrels, old sinks and baths and use it to water plants and top up pond water levels.
- Use a watering can not a hose as it uses less water, and don't waste water on paths or patios.
- Water your garden early in the morning or in the evening if the morning is not possible.
- Let your lawn go brown, it helps it to build up resistance and will spring back to green after it rains.
- In hotter weather, let the lawn grow a little longer as it helps keep the moisture in the soil.
- Consider native plant varieties and species which need less water including those with grey or silver leaves that reflect more of the sun's radiation or succulents.
- Create a mini drainpipe-wetland which will soak up excess rainwater and provide vital habitat for wildlife and beautiful plant life for your garden.





Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC)

Mid Suffolk District Council have now completed their orchard planting in Stowmarket, unfortunately 2 trees were lost on Pikes Meadow due to vandalism, there are plans for these to be replaced in Autumn. Changes were made to the approach of 'Meadow Management' this year, which included mowing a neat strip around the edge of the longer grass to improve the appearance, so far no complaints!

Rattlesden River Valley Network

The first 6 months of the year have not favored moth numbers which is down on previous years. Amateur moth enthusiasts observing and recording moths in the Rattlesden River Valley have recorded lower numbers in 2024, however the diversity of species has increased from previous years.

Stow Stories

Don Egan has been commissioned to film at each venue hosting a painting to promote inclusion and access to Lois Cordelia's Tinkler's Quest collection which reflect aspects of Stowmarket's heritage and environment. This is a new Tinkler's Quest digital project to create community and learning resources which inspire storytelling and conservation action.



Red Gables

In the next few weeks, Red Gables hope to have signed the lease for the old fire station, there are plans to turn this into a new and exciting 'green skills and transport hub'. New electricity distribution cords, LED lighting, and hand dryers have now been installed at Red Gables to be more eco friendly!

Stowmarket Eco Future Group

Bonitas Wholefoods have donated money to Stowmarket Eco Future Group to produce an economical vegetarian/vegan recipe book which will encourage people to reduce food waste and create eco friendly food. This will be donated to the food bank. More good news followed, Stowmarket Eco Future Group have now started their Climate Cafe where people can express feelings, concerns and information.



Suffolk Tree Wardens

June is a quiet month for the Suffolk Tree Wardens. They have been busy working away in the background growing trees that will be ready to plant when tree planting season begins in November. Following the Go Green Go Wild event in October, Suffolk Tree Wardens now have 7 active wardens in Stowmarket! They most recently helped plant hundreds of hedgerows at Combs Ford Primary School and are looking to encourage other local schools to do the same.



Food Museum

Meet Juno! A brand new Suffolk Punch filly who was born at The Food Museum on 8th June. This is exciting because Suffolk Punch horses are critically endangered, even more so than the giant panda. The Food Museum recently switched to EGO Electrical tools, they have found that these work well, staff and volunteers are very happy with them.



Next Meeting

Wednesday 10th October 2024 at 7pm, via Microsoft Teams

For more information about the Stowmarket Environment Forum please contact us on 01449 612060 or email communities@stowmarket.org