

CONGLETON IN BLOOM

2022-2023



25 years celebrating
all things In Bloom
and Community
Spirit.



Congleton
Town Council

Welcome

David Brown – Chair of Congleton in Bloom.



“The last five years have not been without significant challenges; this has given the team the chance to reassess our strategy and approach to maintaining and enhancing the “Congleton Experience”. We have developed very strong working groups with Congleton Partnership for specific projects which impact the environment and biodiversity. Thank you to everyone involved and I look forward to your continued support throughout the year.”

Welcome to the market town of Congleton in Cheshire. Congleton in Bloom began in 1998, initially run by volunteers. The team is now a mix of volunteers and the town council, who meet regularly to plan events, activities, and floral displays throughout the town.

2023 is special for us as we celebrate 25 years, everyone has been engaged with making a visit to the town one to remember.

Enhancing biodiversity throughout the town has been a focus since 2019, e.g., ‘no mow’ May, the Blue Campaign, planting wildflower meadows, hedgerows, orchards, and trees (almost 20,000 since 2019). The town council’s Biodiversity Action Plan was launched in April at Stirling Close.

Our ‘Just Bee’ garden in Congleton Park, funded by local charitable Trusts and voluntary organisations, demonstrates sustainable pollinator-friendly biodiverse gardening. Designed, created and maintained by volunteers, this is a wonderful example of the community coming together. This garden enhances the well-being of our visitors and is one year old.

We hope that you enjoy your visit to Congleton today.

Aims of Congleton in Bloom

- ✿ To encourage biodiversity, energy conservation, sustainable growing and growing food locally
- ✿ To make Congleton an attractive place to live, work and visit.
- ✿ To make Congleton a clean, green town through anti-litter campaigns, organising litter picks, removal of graffiti & fly posting, improving local grot spots and recycling campaigns
- ✿ To provide opportunities for volunteers in the community to become involved either individually or in groups & encourage people to take pride where they live and work
- ✿ To raise standards and promote the town by entering competitions such as RHS Britain in Bloom
- ✿ To promote tourism and support the retail sector by providing attractive floral displays and green spaces.
- ✿ To encourage our Eco Schools and parks to gain green flag awards.
- ✿ To encourage intergenerational involvement

The Congleton in Bloom Team



Cllr David Brown
Cllr Margaret Gartside
Cllr Russell Chadwick
Ruth Burgess
Sue Conway
Bob Edwards
Glen Williams
Patti Pinto

Chair
Green Group
Town Centre
Streetscape CTC
Resident
Resident
Tidy Town Champion
Eco, Conservation Biodiversity



Achievements

Britain in Bloom

- ✿ *Finalists in 2001, 2007, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022*
- ✿ Britain in Bloom Silver: 2007,
- ✿ Britain in Bloom GOLD: 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022
- ✿ Britain in Bloom Community Awards 2021: Highly Commended:
- ✿ Green Solutions, Achievement: Community & Planting with purpose



North West in Bloom

- * GOLD: 2000, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011-2019, 2021, 2022 (15 golds)
- * Best Large Town North West in Bloom: 2000, 2005, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2021 2022

Congleton Park

- * Awarded 15th Green Flag & 3rd Heritage Flag (2022), RHS Gold medal 2019 & 2021, 2022.
- * Cheshire Playing Fields 'Les George' Parks Award 2017
- * Green Flags in nurseries, schools & parks

Congleton

- * Six-time winners of the Cheshire Civic Pride Awards.
- * Numerous Little Gem awards.
- * Cheshire Community Pride,
- * Best Kept Village- Overall Winner 2018.
- * Cheshire Pride, Community Champion 2015- Patti Pinto.
- * **RHS Community Champion 2018- David Brown**

New Projects for 2023

- * Refresh the Dutch Wall.
- * Launch Biodiversity action plan at Stirling Close.
- * Create wildlife area 'Behind the Wall' & new fencing at Elizabeth's Garden
- * Congleton Park: floral plaque 25 years of Congleton in Bloom

'Celebrations' Community Garden festival in Congleton Park (weekends July- Sept)

Calendar of events August 2022 - July 2023

August

BIB national judging; enjoying the childrens' floral displays, maintaining grass verges, pocket parks and floral displays etc. Behind the Wall project begun by Community Gardeners. Judging wheelbarrows



September

Breakdown of Gardening Festival helped by volunteers from AstraZeneca;; autumn open day at IYN Bath House & Physic Garden



*Children attend the '750 Charter Year' gardening festival;
Celebrating apple harvest at school orchard;
Congleton Apple Juice on sale by IYN Old Saw Mill*

October, change-over to winter bedding displays; begonia & cannas saved,

National BIB awards in London ; another **GOLD MEDAL** for Congleton

NWIB awards IYNs:2x Level 4, 6x Level 5 Congleton large town **GOLD** & joint best in NW,
Congleton Park GOLD



Created CIB calendar for 2023 (celebrating 25 years of CIB)



Moving a big Phormium at Margaret's Place Coronation Bowling Club sowing a wildflower meadow in memory of Berwyn, a long serving bowler

November

*CIB awards evening;
Celebrating NWIB
awards in Congleton
Town Hall, **GOLD** &
joint **best in NW**
large town category;
15th green flag (Keep
Britain Tidy) for
Congleton Park*



general tidy-up at the park, tree maintenance begins by Trees for Congleton volunteers



new fruit tree nursery at the park (community gardeners); childrens' autumn tub plant-up



Community Gardeners planting up at the Cenotaph; The Cenotaph after the Service of Remembrance

December

winter pruning and

Rotary 'Tree of Light' at the Community Garden (CG),



Christmas trees through the town centre;

summer bedding and perennials chosen by CIB core team, Trees for Congleton awarded grant for hedge, orchard & tree planting project (The Tree Council)



a snowy Just Bee Garden

January



snowdrops,



hedge planting;



fruit tree pruning training

February

tons of Biowise compost delivered by Ansa Environmental Services to park. 3rd Community Gardening Festival invites issued to schools, nurseries & care homes.

The crocuses are out! more tree, orchard & hedge planting 1st town tidy at Mossley



March due to redevelopment, the Food4free garden at Capital Walk has been moved to the Fairground garden will see on the tour; several tons of Biowise delivered & spread;



• Town Community



Tidy based at Garden; tidying borders

in the park ready for spring,

- Elizabeth's Garden tidied, special fence commissioned; visiting & advising tennis club & Green Gables (new IYNs). Contact all IYN & new IYN & businesses for entry to NWIB 2023.
- Planting last of new hedgerows with young gardeners.



enjoying the dazzling daffodil and blossom displays around the town



April 2nd Town Tidy; Big Seed Sow; sowing sunflower seeds for Ukraine & giving away wildflower seeds to residents '





Big seed sow in town Tulips display, Congleton Park; Waste Reduction Volunteers 'Amble with Ansa' National Gardening Week: visit various IYNs, nursery & care home to plant a POT for the KING



IYN Friends of the Community Garden



IYN The Old saw Mill

May: *celebrate installation of commissioned metal fencing at Elizabeth's Garden, with sponsors, Elizabeth's group & gardeners (see App A).*



King's coronation picnic in the park,



Hunt the bee & planting in the Just Bee garden;



kid's tubs planted; winter bedding removed, primulas distributed to schools, care homes, etc; IYN BHPG spring open day; 'check all the newly planted trees, hedges & fruit trees; weed, water etc



June: ; summer floral displays planted (park, roundabouts, troughs); portfolio finished.



poppies at the Cenotaph, 2 gardens from Congleton Choral Society garden trail



Young gardeners planting for wheelbarrow challenge, planting the big new container at Astbury Mere Visitor Centre

Community Garden Festival: planting back-to-back gardens, the boat,



July: Town Tidies; final preparations for NWIB judging on 1 August.

Expanding partnerships in our community 2022-2023

WELCOME: Three new IYNS this year: Congleton Lawn Tennis Club, Green Gables Care Home & Bromley Bloomers. Rotary Congleton ('planting for polio', thousands of purple crocuses and the Tree of Light at the Community Garden; helping in the grounds of several schools & Trees for Congleton, donating & planting two coronation cherry trees in Congleton Park).

ENCOURAGE: Businesses as partners: Alexandra Court Hotel, shops as sponsors and gardening at churches: St Peter's, St Mary's, United Reform Church, Wellspring (Appendix B). Sponsorship of school gardens & IYN groups by William Dean Trust

INVOLVE: 8 Care homes, all 9 primary schools & both high schools voluntary groups, e.g. Rangers, Scouts, Guides, etc (wheelbarrow challenge, back to back gardens, new mini-gardens, jubilee tree & wildflower planting).

Celebrating the King's Coronation – tree planting



Children planting 4 Coronation cherry trees

from Bromley Farm Youth Project;



coronation orchard (5 fruit trees) at Stirling Close

RHS judging Criteria

Section A Horticulture, (A1, A2, A3, A4, overall impression, plant selection, maintenance & quality)

Throughout the year, Congleton boasts colourful and attractive floral displays, with town centre bunting and festoon lighting creating a fun, festival feel to the town. The routes into town are lined with brightly coloured plants, with troughs along the centre of Mountbatten Way. The Streetscape team have grown on all of the plants (supplied by a local nursery) used throughout the town in the park's polytunnels. This includes: hanging baskets, troughs, flower towers, large planters, small tubs, all roundabout bedding and the fabulous park displays.

Congleton Park (CP)- visit on the tour, see new information boards on History of CP, trees & butterflies; celebrated 150 years in 2021



The Park is maintained by Congleton Town Council's Streetscape team with help from the Friends of Congleton Park (FoCP).

The ***Streetscape team*** has 14 operatives.

In the park they are responsible for trees, shrubs and grass cutting, together with most of the planting. More sustainable perennials have been added recently to complement the bedding displays. Public floral displays areas (Jubilee Gardens in Congleton Park, some roundabouts) are re-planted twice a year, so there are only four weeks in the year without plants. The team does a great job watering all the troughs and hanging baskets & weeding public places, with daily litter picking and emptying public bins.

Roundabouts- maintained by Streetscape gardeners; Congleton has a reputation for fantastic roundabout designs, featuring a mix of seasonal bedding & sustainable planting (trees, perennials, bulbs) with metal 'Congleton In Bloom' signs. Images of two of the roundabouts in spring:



IYN Friends of Congleton Park

- *fernery with 100 new ferns in the shady border in Autumn 2018*
- *Sustainable planting in the riverside border, with new seating structure in honour of the founder and great supporter of CIB, Margaret Williamson MBE DL*
- *Trees planted 2012 (lime avenue), 2019, 2021-23*
- *In 2021, 'hot and cool' borders were designed and planted with perennials and grasses to enhance biodiversity in the park, to provide year-round colour, reduce workload and attract pollinators, especially bees. Bee hives in the park by the riverbank.*

Green spaces

There are floral displays in other green spaces, which are designed, planted & maintained by volunteers, either the Community Gardeners or IYN groups



IYN Congleton Community Garden- will visit this garden

Many volunteers have worked in this garden over the 25 years since its creation from a space left derelict when the cinema was knocked down.

Planted and maintained by community gardening volunteers; the garden has won many awards. It is planted with a huge variety of trees, shrubs, hardy perennials, bulbs, grasses and has 25 species of 'David Austin' roses in the scented roadside border.

Margaret's Place- This public green space, formerly a private garden, adjacent to a medical centre, renovated in 2015-16. [Many perennials, shrubs, trees, an apple core sculpture, soft fruit bushes & bedding, plus outdoor gym equipment]. Now looked after by the Community Gardeners, who have replaced the bedding with pollinator friendly grasses, perennials & shrubs, with a calming blue/pink colour palette.



Elizabeth's Garden will visit this garden, created in 2018, 100 years since Give Women the Vote,



Celebrating new fencing installation

IYN Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden- will visit this garden

Congleton Bath House was rescued from demolition. The Physic Garden with a range of medicinal, industrial and edible plants was created within the grounds by Congleton Building Preservation Trust, complete with a Georgian Bath House. Open days each spring & autumn; up to 14 volunteers, every Monday 11-1



*Community Gardeners at work with **IYN Friends of Congleton Park***

Other green spaces/areas include Astbury Mere Country Park, Congleton Churches (App), Congleton Canal, Railway Station. Many Congleton Public Houses created gardens during the pandemic. Churches in Congleton: many have gardens tended by volunteers. The URC has gained a bronze award from Eco church (Appendix B)

Congleton & District Horticultural Society- *Over 50 years old, the group typically holds monthly meetings, open to the public, with an annual show each September at the Town Hall, where local people display over 140 varieties of plants, flowers, fruit, veg and handicrafts. A record number of young gardeners were presented with awards in 2019. In 2019, 2021 & 2022, members of the society were delighted to judge the Wheelbarrow Challenge entries. Monthly meeting & outings resumed in 2022; we will be delighted to see the Annual Show return to the Town Hall in Sept 2023.*

Section B Environment (B1, B2, B3)

B1 Local Identity & Pride of Place Evidence

Local heritage: art in the landscape,

- two bears (living sculptures) on the roundabout
- community orchard at Astbury Mere, (2012) & in 2016, an edible hedgerow & sculpture of apple core created from felled trees were added
- apple core sculpture at Margaret's Place
- Sculptured seat to commemorate Margaret Williamson MBE DL founding member of CIB in 1998, in Congleton Park (2017)



- Penny-farthing on Park Lane roundabout to commemorate Stephen Sebire a local businessman (autumn 2021)
- Statue of suffragette, Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy in the town centre (5 March 2022)
- No litter, graffiti etc, with dog fouling posters created by children
- Street furniture: recycling bins in the town centre & park
- Monthly Town Tidies based at different locations around the town

B2. Natural environment: Conservation & Biodiversity Evidence

There are many green open spaces in Congleton, with trees, hedges, wildflowers and



numerous orchards for the public to enjoy. **Astbury Mere Country Park, Congleton Park, St John's recreation ground, Stirling Close Conservation Area and Dane-in-Shaw Pasture**, amongst other green open spaces are well used & definitely help with people's mental health as they go for walks to clear their heads & relax in nature.

Astbury Mere Country Park and Eco Centre- will see this on the tour

Astbury Mere is a former silica sand quarry that has been transformed into a much-loved country park, owned &

managed by a voluntary trust with paid countryside ranger support. The land covers 14hs of open space- which includes a wildflower meadow, pond, all weather easy access path and Cheshire's first and only Keep Britain Tidy Eco Centre.

The majority of tree stock is less than 40 years old. The site has been awarded multiple green flags and is one of the most visited free attractions in the North West. The trust raises £30K a year for upkeep of the site. Schools from around the area use the educational facilities. Programme of activities including; weekly Parkrun, Nordic walking, Pram Fit, Nature walks, U3A walking groups, dog training classes, by the 'Dog Father'. Margaret, one of the Astbury Mere trustees, took a look around the park during the spring. This is what she saw:

"We can see the gradual changing of the seasons with the first tentative snowdrops, the catkins and the pussy willow. The park has a wealth of wildflowers often in hidden places and it's been worth exploring to find the hidden clump of cowslips, the violets and bluebells; today I even found orchids.

The burst of early spring blossom on the blackthorn was followed by the gradual greening of the trees as the buds opened to their own timetable. It's only in spring, that we observe the many different shades of green as each individual tree makes its own contribution to the colour palette".

Recently the paths were covered with white 'cotton wool' as the willow trees shed their seeds. The green changed to white as the hawthorn (May) and apple trees were covered in blossom. Now the trees are full of birdsong as the birds produce their young.



A commemorative woodland and wildflower meadow for late Trustee Margaret Williamson MBE was created at the Mere in 2016 by volunteers.



Congleton Sustainability Group with many young volunteers created the first **Community Orchard** within easy walking distance of the Mere in 2012. In spring 2016, this was upgraded with new steps, a sculpture, an edible hedge and soft fruit under planting. This orchard is now looked after by the Congleton West Rangers, the community gardeners & the Ranger. The community orchard at Astbury Mere, flourishing in 2016.

Congleton Town Wood- The Town Wood is an important biological resource in the heart of Congleton to the north of the park. It is an Ancient & Semi-Natural woodland, a 1000 year old remnant of riparian woodland, now a County SBI. Formal bound gravel paths (renewed winter 2022-2023) ensure accessibility through the wood throughout the year.

Tree species in the wood include beech, oak, pine, hawthorn and hazel. There is a Woods Management Programme run by the owners, Cheshire East/ANSA Environmental Services. During spring there is a superb display of native bluebells. Wildflowers in the wood include: wood



anemones, archangel, wood avens, wild garlic.



Numerous bird species can be observed in the wood and new bird boxes have been added, along with an interpretation board.



Dane-In-Shaw Pasture- a SSSI with grassland of national importance, managed by Cheshire East (CE) Countryside Rangers with support from local farmers. In 2014 it was designated a Coronation Meadow- an honour awarded to one meadow in every county. It is now a 'donor' meadow, providing seeds for the creation of new meadows at 'recipient' sites in Cheshire, including nearby Swettenham Meadows.

Residents on a Feast of Flowers walk through Dane-in-shaw pasture led by a CE Ranger, each spring.

- ❖ **Wildflower Meadows-** Congleton Rotary has sponsored a wildflower meadow in the park at the site of the annual Rotary Bonfire for 8 years (see on the tour).
- ❖ There are also wildflower meadows at the Mere and at many of the schools.
- ❖ £13,000 worth of S106 money was earmarked to create new wildflower meadows along roadsides in 2019/20, this was deferred until 2021/22. Fourteen sites were chosen & seeded in spring 2022 by the Streetscape team.

AstraZeneca volunteers planting wildflower plugs near the River Dane



Congleton has adopted the national '**Blue Campaign**', there are many blue hearts throughout the town. The Blue campaign is a national campaign to rewild areas to benefit wildlife.

Wildflower meadows are something that the In Bloom team are passionate about, as they encourage biodiversity and are great for wildlife.

Hankinson's field

Already rich with trees and wildflowers, this public field is next to the River Dane. The new hedgerow & six cherry

trees, planted by Trees for Congleton with Congleton West Rangers & Visyon volunteers are flourishing.

Congleton Park Allotments- *will see this on the tour*

Previously an aviary, the park allotment was introduced in 2013 after a suggestion by the NW In Bloom judges. The Streetscape gardeners plant the allotment each spring. It is signposted & the produce is enjoyed by the public. Leaflets are available for children to pick up & identify the different foods & herbs to make the allotment more interactive & educational.

A big bug hotel & compost bays, using reclaimed wood, were built by volunteers to encourage biodiversity. Hedgehog Houses have been added next to the bug hotel.

Surveys by volunteers/staff of grassy areas/verges (no mow May and low mow town campaigns)

Wildflowers observed included: dandelion, meadow buttercup, daisy, Common mouse-ear, Common Cat's ear, cuckooflower, cowslip, Ribwort plantain, nettles, dead nettle, oxeye daisy, speedwells, red & white clover, purple vetch, Dove's foot cranesbill, ragwort, red campion, orchids.

Grasses included Yorkshire Fog, Meadow Foxtail, Rye, Timothy & Cock's Foot.



B 3 Environmental Management

Congleton Sustainability Group- Since 2010, the Sustainability Group has collected unwanted apples

from the public to make them into award winning Congleton apple juice and cider, this prevents tons of apples from going to waste/landfill. Other unwanted fruits that are donated are made into a variety of jams, jellies and chutneys. The profits from the sales of these items are ploughed back into local community projects.

Teams of volunteers make juice, cider and cider vinegar at the Old Saw Mill (OSM). Now 10 tonnes of donated apples are processed each autumn onsite at the OSM.

There is now a monthly Repair Café, meals on wheels, weekly clubs and various activities at the OSM 'running on volunteer power'. *IYN OSM will be visited today*



Volunteers working at the Secret Garden

the Secret Garden created by volunteers in 2016.

Climate change

Congleton takes its commitment to the environment seriously. In autumn 2019, the town council declared a climate emergency and set up **Congleton Green Group and commissioned the Biodiversity Action Plan featuring 30 sites around the town.**

Trees for Congleton is a sub group of Congleton Sustainability Group and Congleton Partnership. It comprises a group of volunteers with different expertise, including a landscape architect, conservation biologist, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Green group etc who design & manage the tree & hedge planting in & around Congleton. Their aim is to plant **30,000 trees**, hedges, woody shrubs, approximately one per person in the town, over a 5-year period, started in 2019.

Funding: Congleton Partnership & the William Dean Trust (years 1-3), Tree Council (year 3 & 4). This year external funding grants (~£2+K) from Tree Council (Community hedge fund & Branching Out) were awarded, funding hedges, wildflowers and encouraging young people under 25 to volunteer for the project.

Tree planting has proved to be very popular. Members of the public have worked with Congleton in Bloom, Friends of Congleton Park & Trees for Congleton planting as follows:

Number of **trees** planted so far **~17K (57%)**; **.11 new hedges planted in 2023 (1750 plants)** plus other plants totalling 2012; Large numbers of volunteers involved (age range 3-80)



Patti & Margaret at the annual Green Fayre in Congleton



another hedge planted

Community orchards: after planting over 200 fruit trees at over 20 sites, over 4 years, the trees need annual maintenance. With weeding & mulching, fruit now appearing sites planted in 2020.

Cardboard layer added pre-mulching

spring 2023, apple, plum & pear trees



Other environmental news.....

Other volunteer groups are now active in Congleton, e.g. Climate action group, plant swap/gardening for wildlife, Congleton Food4free, Waste Reduction Volunteers, who all hold meetings/ interact with the public either via Facebook or at events. These groups all give the public opportunities to be involved in projects to combat climate change and enhance biodiversity.



Plastic free Congleton, a sub group within Congleton Sustainability Group celebrating! After 3 years of campaigning and in spite of covid, Congleton was awarded 'Plastic-free Communities' status by Surfers against Sewage in June 2022.

Keep Britain Tidy: International awards; Green flags are proudly flown at the following sites: Congleton Park & Astbury Mere Country Park; **Eco schools:** Marlfields Academy, Saint Mary's

Catholic Primary, Buglawton Primary, Smallwood Academy, Friendly Faces Nursery, Astbury Lane Nursery. One of our CIB team is an experienced green flag assessor, and she is currently working with several schools on their eco topics.

The CIB core team are doing their best to deal with the effects of climate change, while following the guidance of the Royal Horticultural Society with regard to sustainability.

Waste/recycling

- ❖ Congleton is within Cheshire East.
- ❖ All residents have recycling bins (56.3% rate of recycling)
- ❖ All residents with gardens have brown bins for garden & food waste collected for a new facility at Crewe, ANSA, Biowise compost
- ❖ Recycling bins in the town centre & Congleton Park
- ❖ **Plant pots**, we have a stock of plastic plant pots at the park polytunnel, which are reused by the community gardeners each year. Plastic planting trays are returned to the local Nursery for re-use.



Compost CIB has committed to only use peat-free compost in the floral displays. For three years we have been able to take delivery of Biowise compost from CE Council, via our active Waste Reduction Volunteers. The Biowise has been used as mulch in the park, a growing medium for the community gardening festival, and given away to allotments, IYN groups, schools and care homes.

Woodchips as mulch - to suppress weeds and retain moisture.



Any tree work at the park generates chippings, which are used on site. In addition, several local tree surgeons have donated their excess woodchips/bark for the Trees for Congleton project (mulching the new hedgerows and trees), the Just Bee Garden, Behind the Wall project and Elizabeth's Garden.

Water - Our many troughs have water reservoirs, which are filled by Streetscape using the bowser, taking water from the River Dane (licensed)



Green Walls

Congleton is a town of trees wherever you look and hedges new and old, as well as floral displays.

e.g. mature trees and hedgerows line Clayton by pass except for the bridge across the river.

Ivy clad walls & fences can be found all around the town.

Section C Community Participation (C1, C2, C3)

- ❖ 12+ IYN groups, businesses & local charities all contribute to make Congleton Bloom.
- ❖ CIB meetings (8 core members), advice & gardening sessions in national gardening week
- ❖ The CIB group relies on the experience, expertise & manpower of a wide range of groups & individuals, all working towards a common aim of making the town a great place to live, work & visit.



Volunteers at Congleton Park during a town tidy, Dane Valley Beavers help at a town tidy

- ❖ Volunteers via open garden sessions, community newsletters, town centre activity days, Facebook & Twitter advertising, workshops, school visits & word of mouth.

- ❖ Community gardeners (between 6 & 14 volunteers) who work at several sites (Elizabeth's' Garden, park borders, Margaret's Place, Community Garden/Cenotaph garden/Garden of Reflection, Just Bee garden), average 100-125h/month, average 120h x12m = 1400h/y
- ❖ IYNs Buglawton in Bloom & BHPG groups, weekly 2h sessions, with 6-14 volunteers (total 1800h/y), IYN The Wednesday Club (14 volunteers at Congleton Football Club) 2h weekly, care for grounds & terraced garden.
- ❖ Congleton Food4free 120 volunteer hours/y (four volunteers)
- ❖ **Trees for Congleton:** Oct- March maintenance & planting, numerous sites, all volunteers welcome
- ❖ **Open Gardens trail** on 3 June, run by Congleton Choral Society with seven choir & U3A members' gardens open to the public
- ❖ Working with partners, e.g. Congleton & District Horticultural Society, Rotary International, Congleton West Rangers, Dane Valley Beavers
- ❖ Local artists for Art in the Park (see on tour)
- ❖ **Community Gardening festival** (in the tunnel at the park, from June to September), is as sustainable as possible. Many schools, nurseries & care homes are involved, planting small back-to-back gardens &/or wheelbarrows. (see on the tour)



Congleton West Rangers planting up their boat garden; adult members of the Trefoil Guild helping Rangers helping out at the Community Garden

Support & funding

Sponsorship: Local charitable trusts are very generous to many of our projects

The **William Dean Trust** has awarded in 2022-23

- ❖ Grants to local volunteer groups to plant trees (Trees for Congleton, Dane Valley Tree Group); schools, IYN groups
- ❖ Dutch Wall
- ❖ Fairground garden (Congleton Food4free)
- ❖ Elizabeth's garden part funded new fence)
- ❖ Behind the wall project

Congleton Partnership awarded Elizabeth's garden part funded new fence (£600 Apr 2023)

Floral display at the
Community Fire
Station;

Businesses: shops:
Hanging baskets (180);

Troughs/containers; 178 Mountbatten Way, plus large containers in
town



Appendix A Communication: via Local newspaper, radio, social media

[@Congletontowncouncil](#) (4.4k followers), www.congleton-tc.gov.uk
[@Congleton-In-Bloom-1377417495816332](#) (1000+ followers)
[@Congleton-Partnership-39675823430058](#) (616 followers), www.congletonpartnership.co.uk
[@FofCP](#) (1.3k followers), www.friendsofcongletonpark.co.uk
[@CongletonPark](#) (4,190 followers)
[@Congleton-Bath-House-and-Physic-Garden-183758682045944](#) (818 followers), congletonbhpg.co.uk
[@OldSawMill](#) (2,9k followers), www.theoldsawmill.org
[@Congleton-Sustainability-Group-1633258516905672](#) (318 members); CSG 252 followers
[@Buglawton-In-Bloom-752316145167633](#) (497 followers)
[@CongletonFood4Free](#) (673 Followers)
[@Trees-for-Congleton-102719481683789](#) (506 followers),
www.congletonpartnership.co.uk/sustainability/trees-for-congleton
[@The-Vale-Allotments-145140415692844](#) (188 followers)
[@thealexandracourthotel](#) (1.6k followers), www.thealexandracourthotel.com
[@Astburymerecountrypark](#) (5k followers), www.astburymerecountrypark.uk
www.porthaven.co.uk/astbury-mere-congleton
www.congletonu3a.org.uk

Town tidies are advertised on all Facebook pages & local newspapers for volunteers to help make our town cleaner & greener. Jobs include litter picking, weeding by hand, cleaning signposts, street furniture, planting, mulching etc

Interviews on local radio, articles in the local press



Appendix B Churches bloom together



United Reform Church, Antrobus St, Congleton, ECO church & new community allotment in the church grounds (From Feb 2023) Eco Church welcomes churches from all denominations and none, it is a learning community of churches of all shapes and sizes. It provides a framework to support your church and its leadership to take practical action on caring for God's earth. It includes a toolkit of resources, an online award survey, a quarterly email update, online events, prayer forums and occasional conferences. The Eco Church survey, with its suite of supporting resources, will help you 'go green' in all areas of your church life. The

work all counts towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold Eco Church award. <https://arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/eco-church/>. URC gained a Bronze award in 2022.

New Community Allotment at URC, with the aim to grow food in a new allotment with & for the local community, who are depending on Food banks to eat.

There was a big clear up session 26-27 Feb, rubbish collected by volunteers, old wood, pavers, hedges trimmed etc. A big seed give away by Jackie Kay on behalf of URC/Climate Action group (ex-stock from Astbury Mere Garden centre). A gardener from AMGC is helping them with design of the allotment (raised beds, bug hotels, etc. Distributed to local schools, nurseries, care homes. They are building the raised beds soon. Fortnightly garden sessions have begun.

Gardens at other churches

St Mary's Catholic Chapel, West Rd; (view on tour)



Wellspring Church garden always looks wonderful, bulbs in spring, roses & dahlias in summer



Weeding the front borders at St Peter's,



St Peter's flower festival

Appendix C Biodiversity

Stirling Close Biodiversity site

First of 30 sites listed in Congleton Town Council Biodiversity Action Plan to be launched (April 2023)

At the opening event people could plant trees (coronation orchard) and wildflowers, build dens and visit a variety of stands featuring wildlife (bats, hedgehogs, trees, Food4free), climate action, council biodiversity plans manned by local volunteers.



Ged Ryan, 'Batman'



Lisa Miller, wildlife gardening, hedgehogs rescue



CIB stand



planting wildflowers



Congleton Food4free stand

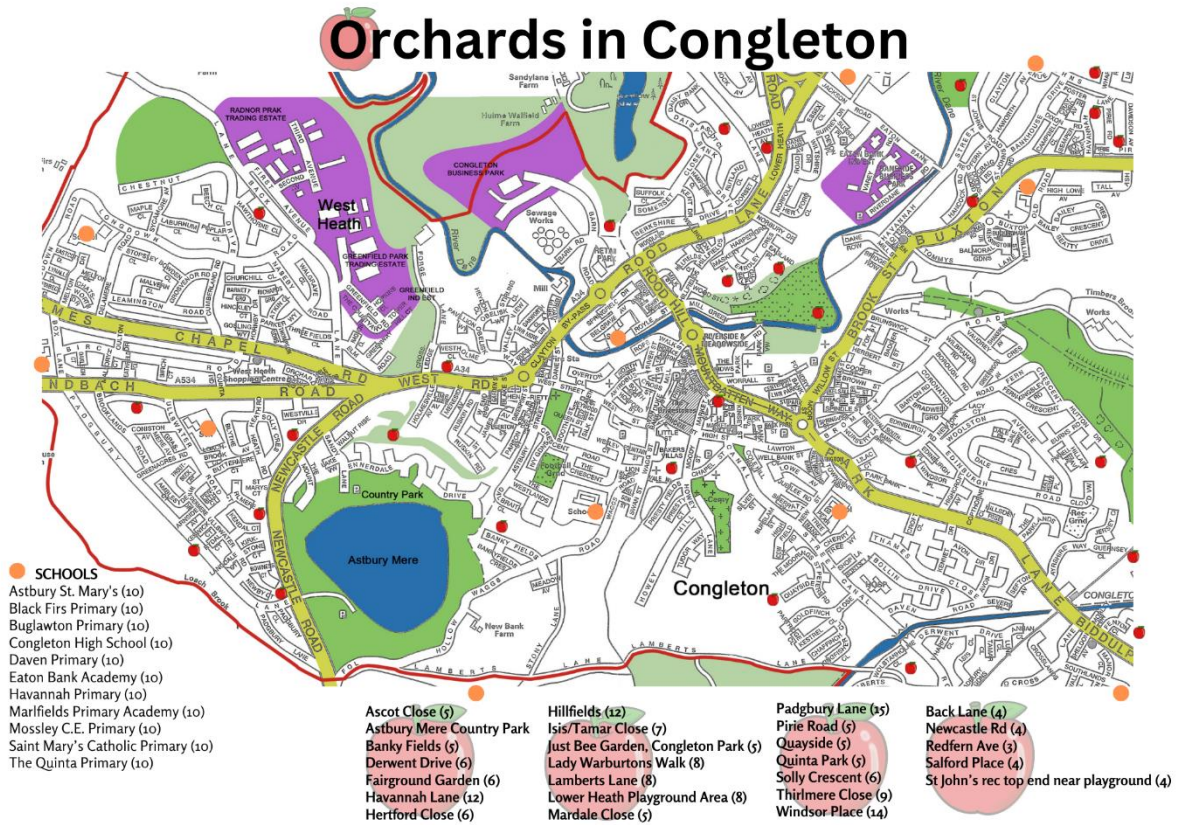


climate action stand

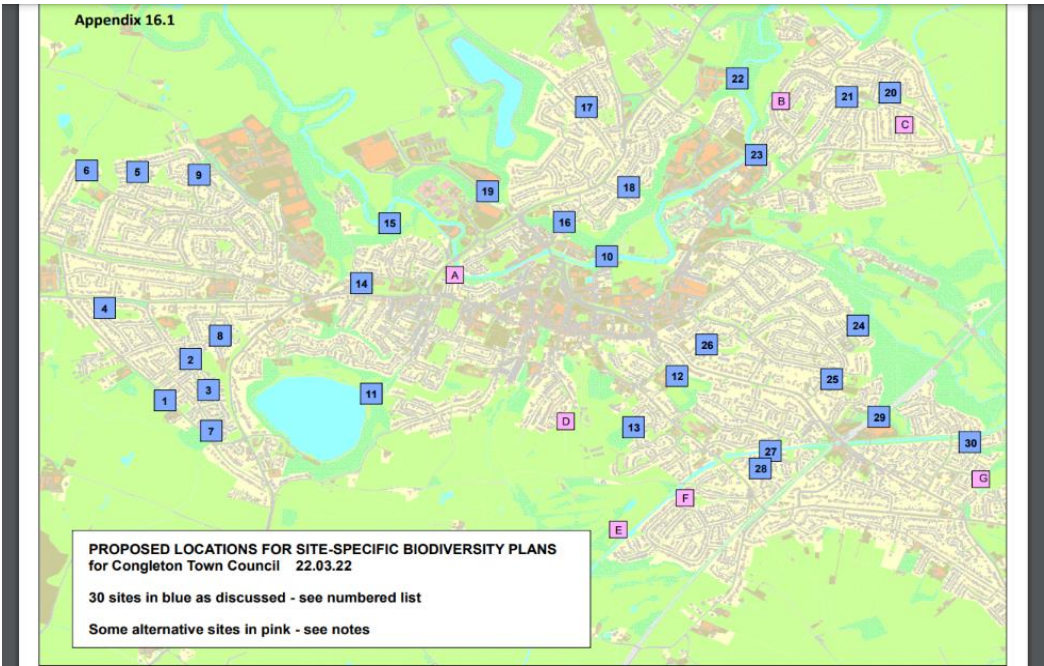
Appendix C continued

Maps

Orchards



Biodiversity sites - Reference the 30 sites action plan



Appendix C continued
TREES FOR CONGLETON SUMMARY OF PLANTING 2022-23

Tree Council sites

Site	hedge	Orchard/trees	No. volunteers	No. plants
Back Lane	19m	-		96
Hertford Close	29m	orchard		150
Havannah Lane/St John's Rd	20m	-		100
Lambert's Lane green space	20m	-		102
Solly Crescent	14m	Orchard, 2 trees		79
Quinta Park	65m	2 trees		325
Pirie Rd green space	13m	orchard		75
Thirlmere Court		orchard		6
Quayside	30m	1 fruit tree, 1 tree		152
Ullswater Rd	30m	-		149
Lowe Ave	83m	orchard		421

Cost/grant - £2,259.22

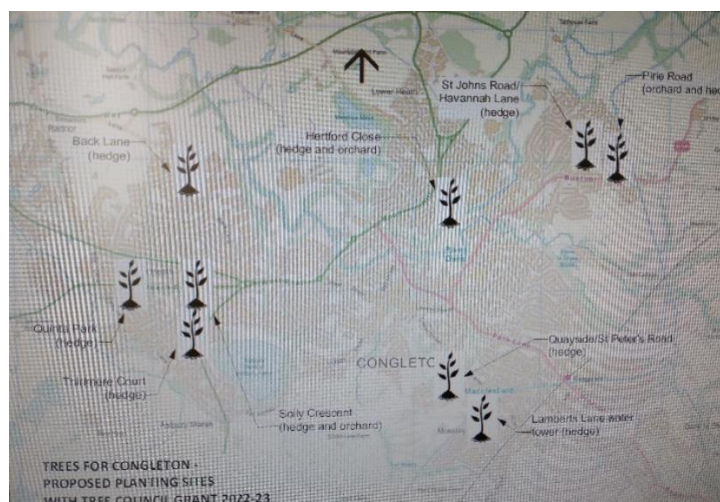
Total 1648 (29 fruit trees, 1613 hedging, 6 trees)

Other sites			notes
Daven School	15 m hedge	75	Mainly TCV plants
Congleton hydro		76	DVCE + some tree nursery plants
Highfield Farm		115	Private (landowner and colleague, trees from tree nursery
Swettenham Hall Farm		62	farmer
Isis Close	2 m extra hedge)	12	Surplus hedging
Astbury Golf Club 15 th hole		15	Golf club choice
Ascot Close/Daisybank Dr	fruit	3	
Alderley Gate	fruit	8	
Hillary Avenue	cherry trees (Kanzan)	4	King's coronation
Stirling Close	fruit	5	King's coronation
		355	

Overall planting by, or facilitated by, Trees for Congleton - 2025

Since 2019: Trees and shrubs and hedging – **16,789+** 2021-2022 – 14,643

But there is likely to have been more planting done by private individuals.



Appendix D New Projects

Dutch Wall, Congleton town centre (will see on the tour)

Planted & looked after by a Congleton in Bloom volunteer for many years, she retired in 2021. Assessed by the CIB members: needs a refresh, there are many old shrubs and plants, some dead or dying, no goodness or texture in the old soil/compost. Find funding & redesign the planting. Grant from WDT awarded, project to go-ahead **Spring 2023**

- ❖ Remove old compost, add new mix of Soil/Biowise and top-up with peat-free compost. Save those plants still alive & healthy. (Streetscape)
- ❖ Create a green wall alongside Mountbatten Way, plant a different set of plants, including bulbs in the two arms of the wall along Market Street, opposite Morrisons.
- ❖ Community Gardening volunteers will do the job, after Streetscape have removed the plants & old soil & replaced the compost.



April-June 2023: Dutch Wall plant-ups, using some saved plants and bulbs, new plants bought & planted.

Behind the Wall, West Rd (will see on the tour)

An overgrown green space literally behind the wall of Elizabeth's Garden, begun in August 2022, noticed by the community volunteers as they cleared overhanging ivy along the perimeter fence. Over a number of months, the overgrowth was cleared and dead trees removed; new borders dug over and planted, paths created using chipped bark from Congleton park. Local children asked to create artwork to show wildlife, which has been used to decorate the fence.



Appendix E It's your Neighbourhoods (IYN)

Name of IYN	Created/Year first entered NWIB	Previous assessment level 1-5
Bromley Farm in Bloom	2013	5
Bromley Bloomers	2023/2023	n/a
Buglawton in Bloom	2003	5
Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden	2014 ?	5
Congleton Lawn Tennis Club	2023/2023	n/a
Friendly Faces Nursery	2022	4
Friends of Congleton Park	2015	5
Friends of the Community Garden,	2021/2022	5
Greengables Care Home	2023	n/a
Hillary Avenue Allotment Association	2013 ?	5
The Old Sawmill	2018	5
The Wednesday Club	2022 (Not entering 2023)	4
Vale Allotments & Gardening Association	2021	4



IYN Buglawton in Bloom



IYN Friends of the Community Garden



IYN Congleton Lawn tennis Club



IYN Bromley Bloomers