

BBL Report October to December 2023

The Friendly Bench

Thanks to the continuing support of The Boston Big local we have continued holding a monthly event at The Friendly Bench holding events that bring the community together.

In October we started a big community project creating poppies for Remembrance Sunday. We were joined by Leslee from The Craft Shop who came with her expertise in knitting and together we continued to make more poppies, sewed some on hessian to be display on the bench.

November 11th, we gathered to Remember all those who have served in the armed forces. We were also joined by ladies from The Friendship Group and Maggie from The Geoff Moulder Community Garden who has gained another member to her group.

After a two minutes silence we then went inside for tea and cake.

December 7th we were joined by Singing for Fun. Students from Boston College and local residents joined us. The Education Support students from Boston College gave a lovely performance of Little Donkey in Makaton and everyone enjoyed mince pies and hot chocolate in the lounge at Ancaster Court.



The Poppy Project

This ran for over a month working together with all our groups also St Botolph's Church and The Centenary Methodist Church who both had a collection point for the kits and collected in all the completed poppies.

We estimated that we collected in 1,700 poppies. When it came to displaying all of the poppies the Boston's Men's Shed made two large wooden poppies for the poppies to be attached to also The Centenary Methodist Church donated large wooden letters saying the words Remember Together which we also glued poppies onto. The ladies from The Friendship Group donated and sewed poppies onto ribbon and the rest was sewn onto hessian to be displayed at The Friendly Bench.

We then worked with Boston in Bloom to display these creations all around The Cenotaph



National Libraries Week

In October we were invited to be a part of the National Libraries week with the subject of ecology.

We used this opportunity to engage with new people to tell them about all our projects with Green volunteering, The Friendly Bench etc talking about how we support community groups and where our Green spaces are and how people can get involved with the various projects.

Green Volunteering

Working with the Green Volunteers we are now working on different areas around the town centre every Friday.

The areas we are worked on are –

The flower bed at the front of the police station, shrubs have been cut back and the whole area weeded. A litter pick was also done around the whole area.

The Pilgrims patch, this area has also had the shrubs cut back. Some wildflowers have been removed to allow room for others to grow, we have also got the ground ready for students to plant spring bulbs. A litter pick was also carried out from the Haven Bridge to the roundabout in Liquorpond Street this area is particularly bad for litter as it's a short distance from McDonalds.

In November we were joined by Helen from The Wildlife Trust to discuss the planting that had taken place and plants we should plant in the future. We then went to Central Park to work on raised flower beds to get them tidied up and ready for students from The Learning Provision to plant bulbs and plants.

Thomas Middlecott Academy joined the Green Volunteers in November to work on the raised beds near the Police Station, splitting up into teams we tackled cutting back shrubs which had overgrown and covered paving, planting spring bulbs and litter picking. Joined also by members from Boston Bloom who advised the students on how and where to plant the bulbs.

In December we were joined by students from The Princes Trust continuing the work started they worked on the area closer to the Police Station cutting down several Buddleia that had been left to grow through the cracks in paving slabs for a very long time. The students had raised money for this project and with the £100 raised we purchased with very helpful advice from the garden centre rockery plants, they then made a rockery using the rocks that had been found around the area.



Geoff Moulder Community Garden

The Geoff Moulder Community Garden is moving location early next year, so we are taking as many cuttings as possible. We have helped take cuttings from the herbs and the fruit trees. Potted up the strawberry runners and potted up sedum.

The Friendship Group

We joined the lovely ladies at the Friendship Group to take part in the Poppie project. The ladies were all experts in knitting and crocheting and we soon had many poppies to add to the collection, the ladies also volunteered to take the poppies home to sew onto ribbons and hessian for the displays. They also wished to join us at The Friendly Bench on Remembrance Day.

In December we joined the lovely ladies again to make Christmas decorations for the ladies to take home, armed with airdry clay and lots of cake cutters we made different ornaments, we also took along some premade ornaments for the ladies to decorate. While we were there, we told the ladies about our up-coming projects for next year and we have been invited back to include the ladies in our future projects.



Feathers Teens

Working in The Community Garden we were joined by Feathers Teens with lots of activities ready we were able to engage with all the students, bird houses were decorated and assembled then placed around the garden making sure they were placed in the correct direction and place to encourage birds to nest. Some students planted bulbs ready for spring showing the students the depth and width apart each bulb needs to be planted, some students helped with getting all the leaves into the compost bin and talked about leaf mould. We then played the Recycle, reuse, reduce game.



The Wildlife Trust

As a Thank you for all the hard work with the Green Volunteers we invited the students from Thomas Middlecott Academy also the Geoff Moulder Community Garden and members of the Kirton Clean up squad to a day of bush crafts run by Vicki and Sam from The Wildlife Trust. This was held in The Community Garden where we all had an enjoyable time being shown how to whittle a Christmas Tree ornament from a Willow branch, then how to use a Kelly kettle to boil water to make hot



chocolate. A few of us found we had a hidden talent for whittling, some not so but it was enjoyed by all.



Big Boston Clean Up

Joining with Boston Borough Council and The Wyberton Wombles of Boston Common we and the Green Volunteers worked together on a large area of Boston which included the riverbank and Maud Foster Waterway. The event saw a total of 313 bags of litter collected from the town and our team collected 78 bags in our area in three hours.



The Cub Scouts

As a part of the Poppy Project, we joined the Cub Scouts to teach knitting, crocheting and sewing. With help from the leaders the children split into groups to teach each activity. All the Cubs created a poppy from felt with a sewn-on button to take home. We also taught the children how to hold a crochet hook to make a chain stitch also some managed a treble stitch. We also had some children that managed to do some basic knitting too. It was a very enjoyable evening, and we hope to return with another project.



Number of Volunteers

Green Volunteers- 17 people Oct, 36 people Nov., 6 Dec.

The Friendly Bench -Oct 6 people, Nov 11th 23 people, Dec 51 people

The Big Borough Clean Up- 20 people in our team.

Geoff Moulder Community Garden -5 people

The Friendship Group- 18 people. Dec 20 people

The Cub Scouts- 23 people.

Feather teens – 10 people

The Wildlife Trust – 20 people

Princes Trust – 17 people

255 people in total during the period October to December.

Micro volunteers – 210 people

Plans post Boston Big Local Funding

We have helped the Geoff Moulder Community Garden and the Men's Shed set up as properly constituted groups and to set up their own bank accounts so that they can go forward without our support. We have also set up a Boston RiverCare Facebook page so that we can continue with river litter picks. The Friendly Bench is a properly constituted group and will continue to receive support from The Friendly Bench CIC so that will continue with monthly events. It also received funding of £800 from Boston Big Local. We are applying for funding from Shine and if successful that will support environmental projects in Boston for the next three years.