



Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom portfolio 2024

royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk



RoyalTunbridgeWellsinBloom



RTWinBloom



1. Foreword

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom has been an annual event in the town’s calendar ever since 2010, when Royal Tunbridge Wells entered the South & South East in Bloom competition.

Our campaign is organised by a committee of volunteers with professional support from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) and the Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP).

Community involvement keeps growing stronger in Tunbridge Wells due to the wonderful commitment from all parties. We get enormous support from Friends of our parks and open spaces and various community groups. We are also pleased with the engagement with the new BID management team (Tunbridge Wells Together), and the developments of the Tunbridge Wells Community Nature reserve by KHWP and borough-wide TWBC Climate Action programme.

2023 was a successful year for our campaign – Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom has been awarded Gold in the RHS Britain in Bloom finals.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the RHS South & South East in Bloom judge, Ian White, who will visit our town this July.



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM

2. Review of the past year events

Below table shows, in chronological order, Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom events that took place between July 2023 and June 2024.

14 July 2023	S&SE in Bloom judging of the town in the Small City category
25 July 2023	RHS Britain in Bloom judging
Mid July – early August 2023	Judging of the entries to the local RTW in Bloom competition 2023
05 September 2023	TWBC big litter pick
06 September 2023	Visit from the David Austin rose experts
29 September 2022	S&SE in Bloom Awards at RHS Wisley. Awarded Gold.
03 October 2023	Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2023 Awards at the Assembly Hall Theatre
05 October 2023	Delivery of English Woodlands trees for autumn/winter planting
09 October 2023	Planting of park herbaceous and Azalea borders with Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park
11 October 2023	KHWP task – improvements by Calverley Grounds entrance
13 October 2023	Judging of the RTW in Bloom photo competition entries - 'Portrait of a Wildflower'
13 October 2023	Dunorlan Park Camellia Garden project – planning meeting
16 October 2023	Planting of park herbaceous and Azalea borders with Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park
17 October 2023	The Inner Wheel group bulb planting at Calverley Grounds
23 October 2023	RHS Britain in Bloom finals awards in London. Awarded Gold.
October – February 2023	Planting of trees, including memorial trees, across the parks
07 November 2023	Precinct and Five Ways planters tidy-up
9 November 2023	Visit at the Blue Diamond garden centre – collection of donated native trees
13 November 2023	Planting of Crocus bulbs for the End Polio campaign with the Tunbridge Wells Rotary
17 November 2023	Delivery of spring flowering bulbs to community groups
17 November 2023	Station planters and roundabout trough planting
21 November 2023	Bulbs planting at Crematorium Cloister Garden
01 December 2023	Delivery of trees from Barcham
15 December 2023	RTW in Bloom team Christmas lunch
18 December 2023	Christmas Breakfast with Monday Volunteers in Dunorlan Park

23 January 2024	Interpretation training with KHWP
26 January 2024	Planting of memorial tree with the Inner Wheel at Calverley Grounds
29 January 2024	Meeting with KHWP and all Friends groups
02 February 2024	Tree planting at Mary Caley playground
15 February 2024	Cannon Hoare garden replanting
22 February 2024	Planning meeting with Community Payback at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park
14 March 2024	Planning meeting with the Amelia Scott gardening team
22 March 2024	KHWP and Angling club litter pick at Sherwood Lake
10 & 11 April 2024	KHWP planting at Calverley Grounds playground borders
18 April 2024	KHWP planting gravel garden at Dunorlan Park
19 & 20 April 2024	Launch of RTW in Bloom 2024 at the Precinct
25 April 2024	Sensory Garden project meeting at Dunorlan Park
May 2024	Green Flag Award judging visits
15 May 2024	KHWP spring walk
22 May 2024	Buglife, KHWP and BNP Paribas project at Dunorlan Park
May 2024	Delivery of plants to community projects
05 June 2024	Volunteers Week celebration 2024 with KHWP
06 June 2024	Barcham & Bedgebury Pinetum tree seminar
June 2024	Judging of the art competition for children 'Mammals in Parks'
June 2024	Various gardening activities in preparation to Bloom judging
June 2024	Judging of RTW in Bloom entries to the Best Allotment category
Regular Events	
Bi-monthly	RTW in Bloom committee meeting
Weekly	Monday Volunteers in Dunorlan Park
Weekly	The Amelia Scott courtyard volunteers
Weekly	Trinity Churchyard Volunteers
Weekly	KHWP volunteer conservation tasks
Weekly	Woodbury Park Cemetery Volunteers
Monthly	Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery gardening volunteers
Monthly	Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery gardening volunteers
Monthly	Thursday Conservation Volunteers in Grosvenor & Hilbert Park

3. Our achievements

A. Horticultural Achievement

a. Horticultural practice and plants quality

Quality of plants used in our schemes in town and parks, as well as services delivered on sites, are very important to us. We engage with reliable and certified suppliers and contractors, to ensure best possible results.

This year we started a new partnership with bedding plants supplier, Kent based **Amethyst Horticulture** nurseries. Amethyst supplied plants for the launch event, summer bedding for the parks and hanging baskets, barrier planters and three tier planters for the town centre.

Trees planted over winter came from well-known nurseries of **Barcham** and **English Woodlands**. On rare occasions, when they are not able to supply a tree required, we order trees at **Ornamental Trees UK**. Shrubs and perennials are supplied by local **How Green Nursery** and **Palmstead** nurseries; roses - directly from **David Austin Roses**.



Spring barrier planter at town centre.

Majority of the spring bulbs are supplied to us by **J Parkers** and **Lubbe & Sons**. Snowdrops in-the-green and winter Aconites are purchased at the **Cambo Heritage Trust**.

Grounds maintenance services of our parks and open spaces and the town centre displays are currently contracted out to **Tivoli Group Ltd**. Grass verges, roundabouts and street trees are maintained by **Kent County Council**. Trees maintenance is carried out by a local arboricultural contractor, **Treework**. For invasive weeds treatment we use services of a local specialist, **Complete Weed Control**.

b. Impact

We continue to maintain a wide range of floral displays through the seasons. Examples include planters in highly visible areas of the town centre: Town Hall, Precinct, Five Ways, station bridge, High Street and Chapel Place.

Last year, Economic Development team together with the **BiD** team secured funding towards new six planters at the Five Ways. We anticipate gaining more funding to replace the old

three-tier planters at Five Ways for season 2025. Planters at Forest Road, installed and maintained by the community of Hawkenbury, are now well established.

For the last five years we have been reducing number of seasonal bedding plants used; this includes use of perennial planting at the town centre planters.

c. Green spaces

Our beautiful parks and open spaces play crucial part in supporting physical and mental health of residents. We are pleased to welcome S&SEiB judges back this year for judging of Dunorlan Park, Grosvenor & Hilbert Park, Calverley Grounds, Woodbury Park Cemetery, Barnett's Wood, Tunbridge Wells Cemetery and the Tunbridge Wells Common, in their own categories.

Last winter, with help of volunteers and Friends, we continued tree and spring bulbs planting across sites. Bedding displays have been significantly reduced and replanted with perennial planting; we still however use seasonal planting at the Dunorlan Terrace and by the Cemetery Chapel, due to the heritage nature of these sites.



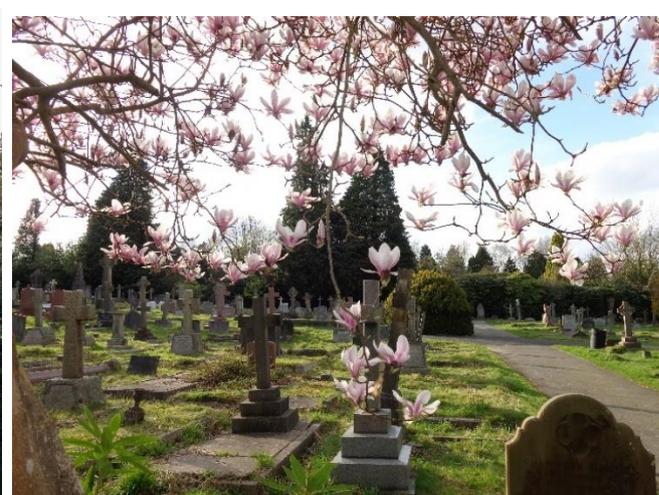
Planting with Friends at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park



Friends of Calverley Grounds helping in the park



Autumn maintenance at Dunorlan Park



Spring at the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery (photo by Friends)

d. BID and local businesses

Our campaign receives continuous support from local businesses through sponsorship, promotion, and volunteering. Currently we work with over 30 local businesses (including: Coolings, Camden Road traders, Royal Victoria Place shopping centre, Audley Villages, Halliwell Care Home, Dunorlan and Calverley cafes and businesses at the High Street and Chapel Place). **Tunbridge Wells Together** (BID) plays an active role in connecting us with local businesses.

e. Residential and community gardening

- **Residential gardening**

There are many keen gardeners in Tunbridge Wells. Every year we encourage residents to join the local Bloom competition, and to celebrate horticulture with us through volunteering and taking part in our events.

- **Town allotments**

TWBC owns and manages 10 allotment sites. There are no vacant allotment plots since April 2020! Allotment holders are encouraged to enter our Bloom competition.

- **Hilbert Community Allotment**



Welcoming gates at the Hilbert Community Allotment

Hilbert Community Allotment is managed KHWP and provides the perfect therapeutic space for adults struggling with mental health challenges. Each Monday morning, participants spend a few hours enjoying the wellbeing benefits of this beautiful natural setting and get involved with activities such as growing food and flowers, gardening, watching nature, woodwork, and mindfulness.

- **Community Orchard at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park**

Community Orchard, planted in 2015-16 as part of the HLF project and managed by the Friends in partnership with TWBC, consists of 80 fruit trees sponsored by an individual, family or organisation linked to the park.



Regular maintenance session of tree pruning and maintenance are organised by the Friends and KHWP, in autumn and spring. Improvements to the meadow area there, funded by Sussex Lund, are currently on-going.

Hilbert Community Orchard in the spring

B. Environmental Responsibility

a. Conservation and biodiversity

Tunbridge Wells is blessed with several high value conservation areas. Most of these sites are managed by charitable organisations and our key partners. All of them are managed in accordance with best practice to conserve the environment but allow appropriate levels of access, educational and other activity.

- **Kent High Weald Partnership**

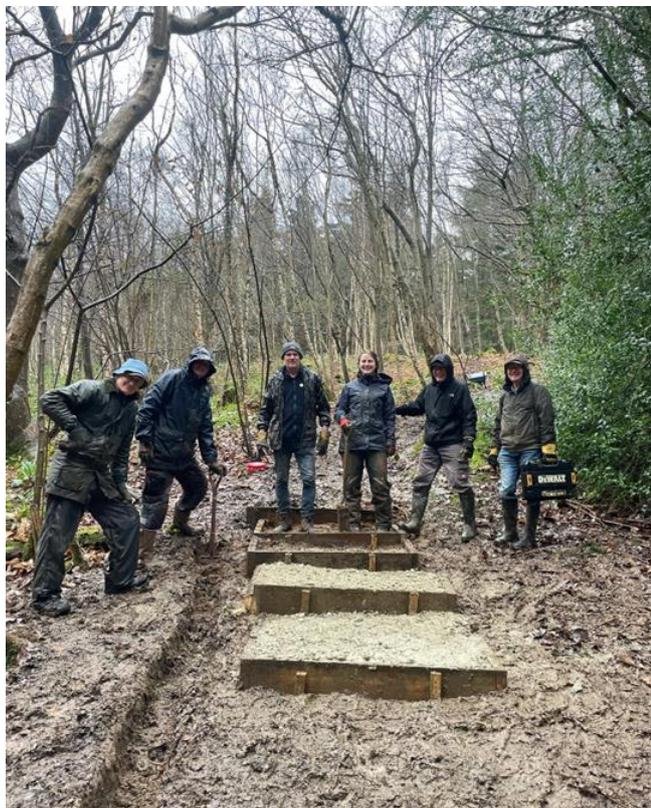
KHWP, one of our key partners, is an organisation running a range of conservation projects in the High Weald landscape. Their practical volunteering sessions range from coppicing, hedge laying, tree planting and woodland management to survey work, meadow management, fencing and boardwalk construction. KHWP works with local communities, schools and landowners in conjunction with volunteer groups and local authorities. KHWP manage a few sites in our town, e.g.:

Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve

This reserve consists of ancient woodland, meadows, species-rich hedgerows, and ponds. It is an important site for threatened birds (skylark, song thrush), and amphibians. KHWP deliver regular volunteering sessions on the site, including hedge laying, meadow management activities and education access visits.

Hilbert Woods Local Nature Reserve

Hilbert Woods is an urban reserve within Grosvenor and Hilbert Park, and it is managed jointly by the KHWP and TWBC. It consists of coppiced woodland, bluebell areas, medieval wood banks, stream, open grassland dotted with wildflowers and a boardwalk, built by volunteers.



KHWP volunteers installing steps at Snipe Wood.

KHWP session at Hilbert Woods.



- **Tunbridge Wells Community Nature Reserve (by KHWP)**

The Community Reserve a network of small, wildlife-friendly spaces in local people's back gardens, allotments, window boxes and balconies. Each member is asked to allocate at least two-square meters of their land for any kind of wildlife-friendly features they might want to have. <https://www.facebook.com/TWCommunityNatureReserve/>

- **Tunbridge Wells Common Conservators**

Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons are set up as a charitable trust to manage the common and to conserve its natural heritage. Located close to the town centre and extending into the countryside, the 256 acres Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons provide an important refuge for wildlife within the urban area. Unlike most public open spaces they have never been cultivated or landscaped.

Over the past year the following activities took place:

- Adoption of new Ecological Management Plans
- Work to enhance accessibility with two new all abilities paths on Rusthall Common
- Sussex Lund funded work on our Victorian Terraces, to introduce new glades and clearances for safety, aesthetic and ecological benefit

- Work to reveal more of the rock features, supported by a community archaeological team
- Increase in volunteering sessions, we now hold weekly Ranger volunteering sessions with projects linked to the Ecological Management Plan
- Installation of dormouse boxes for surveys this season
- Bat survey underway on Tunbridge Wells Common
- Review of mosses and lichens on our rock features
- Changing the grass cutting regimes due to outcomes of the ecological survey data, eg a nationally scarce chamomile was found on the lower cricket pitch



Accessibility work at the Rusthall Common



Sussex Lund funded clearance



Rock outcrop revealed



Volunteers at the Common

- **Parks & open spaces – natural meadows**



Wildflower meadow at Calverley Groudns this spring

In 2012 we established new meadow areas in several of our parks and open spaces. This approach has also been taken for many of the verges around the common and is publicised to the public. Over the past two years grass areas at Calverley Groudns benefited from additional wildflower plug and seed planting, supported by the Sussex Lund funding.

Most of the areas currently support a range of native wildflower species like Pignut, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Bugle and Knapweed. A wide variety of insect species have already been spotted on the meadow, including nationally scarce Long-horned Bee and Tachinid Fly, White-tailed Bumblebee, White-bellied Mining Bee, Buff-tailed Mining Bee, Hawksbeard mining Bee, Ivy Bee, Purple Hairstreak butterfly, Bronze Furrow Bee, Red-horned Nomad Bee and Green-eyed Flower Bee. Dr Ian Beavis keeps monitoring meadow areas in our parks, then recording his findings and posting them on his very popular social media site (*Twitter/X @iancbeavis*).

- **Tunbridge Wells Cemetery – Green-winged Orchid and Waxcaps**



TW Cemetery grounds have been designated Local Wildlife Site for their fungi population and appearance of the Green-winged Orchid. 2019 brought great discovery of Autumn lady's tresses Orchid.

We have taken action to protect and enhance areas where significant numbers of waxcaps and the orchids have been found. Mowing of orchids areas is periodically ceased to let them flower and seed.

Grass arising are removed after each mow from fungi-rich areas to keep nutrition levels low.

Green-winged Orchids at TW Cemetery



Fungal Walk at the Tunbridge Wells Cemetery (photos by Friends group)

b. Resource management

- **Recycling**

Within the Bloom partnerships in the town we promote and encourage local groups to recycle and minimise waste. When judging gardens in our local competition we also consider recycling - within the Allotments and School categories this is a significant element of the scores.

TWBC campaigns to increase participation and recycling rates with promotional literature, schools presentations and other events.

Our new eight-year recycling, waste and street cleaning contract with **Urbaser Ltd** started in the spring 2019. The contract, which TWBC have awarded in partnership with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, means an improved recycling service for residents across both boroughs.

According to statistic on waste management by local authorities in England, provided by Department for Environment, the official England waste from households recycling rate for 2022-23 was 43.3% Over the past year as a community we have achieved an **overall recycling rate of 52%**.

- **Water usage**

Gardening methods used by us are designed to help the community see what can be achieved by the correct choice of plants, techniques and practices. These include mulching, soil conditioners, correct timing and design. Watering of newly planted trees only takes place during prolonged dry spells. Our hanging baskets, barrier troughs and three-tier planters are equipped with self-watering systems.

- **TWBC Climate Action**

In 2014 TWBC has approved its Climate Local commitment for delivery. It includes actions to support residents to save money on energy bills, attracting new jobs and investments in green industries, supporting new sources of energy, managing local flood risk and protecting local

natural environment. TWBC declared Climate Emergency in July 2019 and have set a commitment to become carbon neutral council by 2030.

TWBC Climate Action website launched last year. This interactive site provides information on the council's response to the climate emergency and advise on what action can be taken by residents and businesses to help the borough to become carbon neutral.

www.twbcclimateaction.co.uk

- **Sustainable Parks**

Sustainability is a key objective for TWBC Parks and opportunities are taken wherever possible to ensure green options are considered. TWBC Parks team along with Tivoli are fully committed to environmental management of the parks through management in an environmentally sensitive way. All actions are considered to minimise any adverse impact on the parks and to manage the conflicting demands of access to the sites.

Examples of sustainable initiatives in our parks:

- Green waste composting bays at Dunorlan Park, Hilbert Park and TW Cemetery
- Mulching programmes using compost produced from the household green waste
- EV van, and electric ATV used currently by Tivoli staff, other electric machinery options are being considered
- EV van used by Tivoli sports pitch team
- Floral containers with water reservoirs
- Significant reduction of bedding schemes, use of sustainable and drought tolerant perennials
- Use of peat free planting mediums (this is also expected from our plants suppliers)
- Cooperating with local gardening groups and businesses to recycle pots and trays
- Our plant suppliers, How Green Nursery and Palmstead are now reusing their pots and trays.
- Instead of using plastic wrapping on the plant trollies, How Green use a mesh zip cover that can be reused repeatedly
- Minimising waste – left over plants are given away to local communities
- Reducing CO2 emissions with vehicle movements in parks kept to a minimum



Plastic pots and trays used in our planting projects find home at the community or are returned to the plants suppliers for recycling (photo by KHWP)

c. Local environmental quality

TWBC Street Scene team, together with the waste contractor Urbaser, take care of cleanliness of the town. This includes removal of litter and fly-tip, dog fouling and graffiti. TWBC Parks team deal with littering and dog fouling issues within parks of Tunbridge Wells, with support of Tivoli.

- **Abandoned Vehicles**

Members of the public can report to the Council vehicles which they believe to be abandoned, checks are made, and notices posted on the vehicles. If no contact is received regarding the vehicle, the vehicle is removed within seven days.

- **Graffiti**

Graffiti is removed from public areas by TWBC contractor – Urbaser. Where graffiti is obscene or offensive it is removed urgently. Businesses are encouraged to remove graffiti from their properties and graffiti kits can be lent out to assist with the removal.

- **Fly Tipping**

Fly tipping is removed as soon as it is reported or, pro-actively, if seen by either a Bloom campaigner or TWBC staff. Where there is evidence amongst the rubbish and the culprits identified, the offenders are taken to court and fined.

- **Littering**

Fixed penalty notices are issued by the Council's Street Scene Enforcement Officers if members of the public are seen dropping litter or cigarette butts. Litter is removed quickly to prevent accumulations.

- **Dog Fouling**

TWBC Street Scene Enforcement Officers carry out patrols both on street and in the parks to encourage dog owners to clear up after their animals. Fixed penalties can be issued if dog faeces are not cleared by the owner.

d. Local heritage

Royal Tunbridge Wells –a historic spa town - has a wealth of built heritage; with its combination of buildings, green spaces, springs and hilly landscape creates a strong and unique character. Set amongst a rich heritage of orchards, hop farms, vineyards, market towns, iron production and cloth weaving, the Tunbridge Wells borough possesses a fascinating depth of history and heritage.

The region boasts 25 areas of conservation status meaning the structures and land are protected for posterity and to be admired by many more generations.

Long before the days of formal Bloom national competitions, people of Tunbridge Wells town have been running schemes to promote high quality gardens. For over a hundred years, local government has played its part in creating floral displays to beautify the town centre and sites like the historic Pantiles, as well as maintaining the heritage of public parks.

Our town has great examples of historic parks and open spaces that still play an important part within the town centre and neighbourhoods. Protection and enhancement of existing heritage

character is an important objective of management plans for each site; so is conservation of existing wildlife habitats and protection of trees from loss or inappropriate removal.

e. Pride of place

Street furniture across the town is being maintained by TWBC Street Scene team. This includes a regular painting programme and rationalisation of street “clutter” and design. The signs and most of the lampposts are responsibility of Kent County Council.

Recent improvements in town and parks:

- **The Amelia Scott**

After two years of building work the new arts and heritage centre has been opened in April 2022. The Amelia Scott building and the cultural centre within are both named after the early 20th century campaigner for women’s suffrage. A new garden has been created in the building’s courtyard. Movable planters have been built by Sherwood Men’s Shed. The garden is now maintained by volunteers.

- **Town centre**

Improvements to the streetscape by the Museum, Town Hall and The Cenotaph were completed in 2021. BID and Economic Development team secured funding for new planters in the town centre, these were installed in spring 2023. Funding options for further improvements (e.g. new street planters) are being explored.



- **Restoration of Love Fountain**

Green Doulton fountain, gifted to the town in 1920 by local businessman Joseph Horatio Love, has been refurbished in autumn 2022, thanks to the combined efforts of TWBC Parks, the Charity ‘Refresh Tunbridge Wells’, the Friends of St John’s Park and Meadows, Chilstone, and financial contribution for the developers (McCarthy and Stone).

- **Drinking water bottle refill stations**

Following the success of the installation of a drinking water unit at Dunorlan Park, three further units were installed at St John’s Rec and The Grove playgrounds and at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park (funded by the Friends). One other unit, funded by the Friends of Calverley Grounds, is currently awaiting installation.

*Restored Love Fountain at St John’s Recreation Ground
(photo by Friends)*

C. Community Participation

a. Year-round community participation, development and continuity

We feel that the highlight of our campaign is community participation; below a fracture of what was achieved over the past year:

- **Friends' groups**



Over the years we have developed a good working partnership with parks friends groups. Currently we cooperate with Friends of Dunorlan Park, Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park, Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery, Friends of Calverley Grounds, Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery, Friends of The Grove, Friends of Trinity Churchyard, Friends of St John's Rec, and Friends of Hawkenbury Rec.

Support of our Friends groups is fantastic. Besides helping with various gardening projects, Friends keep fundraising and organising events, guided history and nature walks, open air concerts and plant and craft sales etc.

We estimate that over the past 12 months in total all the Friends group contributed 5144 hours to our campaign.

Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery

- **Volunteering with Kent High Weald Partnership**

KHWP delivers volunteering projects on various sites across the town and the borough of Tunbridge Wells. This includes Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve, Hilbert Woods Local Nature Reserve, Sherwood Lake, Southwood Road Rec, Reynolds Lane Local Wildlife Site, Dunorlan Park, Woodbury Park Cemetery, TW Cemetery and Crematorium, Tunbridge Wells Commons and also smaller community areas. Over the past 12 months they contributed 2230 of volunteering hours.

- **Community Payback Scheme**

Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company Ltd provides community payback services across the region for service users who are sentenced to an unpaid work

requirement. Following the success of community payback at Dunorlan Park, the Crematorium grounds and Calverley Grounds and The Grove, the group helped over the last year sessions with clearances at TWBC managed allotment sites. This summer, park furniture maintenance sessions will take place at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park. From July 2023 until June 2024 the group contributed 1638 hours.

- **Sherwood Men's Shed**

Sherwood Men's Shed is a group working on a range of DIY projects for the local community. They created some of the planters and benches used for Bloom projects, including the planters for the Amelia Scott courtyard and planters for Chapel Place and Monson Road businesses.

- **The Camellia Garden**

Back in the winter, Friends of Dunorlan Park have been awarded collection of Camellia plants through The International Camellia Society. Friends' committee member David Molloy, a long-standing member of The International Camellia Society, applied for the funding on behalf of the Friends. In result, nearly 60 of Camellia plants have been donated to the park. Camellia garden has been planted by Monday Volunteers in December 2023 in a cleared section of the Long Border. In June, Mrs Pat Short at the Camellia Society visited the garden and did a talk on Camellias at the Volunteers' Week event.



Delivery of Camellia plants to the depot



Volunteers enjoying cup of tea after completed Camellia planting

- **Love Where we Live – keeping neighbourhoods litter free**

Working with the TWBC 'Love Where We Live' campaign we offer local community groups the use of equipment to hold clear-ups in their area. Street Scene team deliver the equipment prior to the clearance and collects the rubbish after the clear up. Over the past year Street Scene team supported 12 major litter picks across Tunbridge Wells town and the borough, with eight more booked for this summer.

- **Hospice in the Weald - Open Gardens**

Open Gardens is an annual community fundraising initiative that is fun for plant enthusiasts and raises money for the Hospice in the Weald. Our previous Royal Tunbridge Wells Open Gardens tours were great – we have raised nearly £5000 for the Hospice so far.

This year RTW in Bloom committee have decided to take a break from the event and to focus on seeking new gardens willing to participate in Open Gardens 2025.

b. Communication and education

- **Bloom launch**

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2024 was launched in April over two events at the town centre. Bloom committee members were giving away plants and seeds and encouraging residents to join the Bloom campaign. Our colleagues at KHWP were actively taking part in the event, promoting volunteering, Tunbridge Wells Nature Reserve project and sustainable gardening and nature conservation.

- **Tunbridge Wells Literary Festival**

In May our team took part in the Literary Festival at Calverley Grounds by promoting Bloom campaign to the younger audiences by giving away plants and gardening kits for children.

- **RTW in Bloom Competition**

Our internal Bloom competition is taking place again this summer. Over past years we have seen a significant increase in the number of entries over all categories; this is the result of an active promotion by the Bloom committee: launch events, social media posts, website, press articles, posters.

Every year since launch of the RTW in Bloom we organise an Awards Ceremony in the autumn when we celebrate our community and achievements of all involved. This October we will celebrate the awards at the Assembly Hall Theatre.

- **Blooming Schools**

School Garden competition is open to all schools across Tunbridge Wells and we are pleased that nine schools have entered this year, including two pre-schools. We sent our Bloom literature and information on the S&SEiB environmental challenge and the RHS School Gardeners to all schools at the start of the year, to encourage teachers and children to get involved in horticulture.

Our portfolio would not be complete without a special mention of two amazing schools - Oakley School & Meadows School (Barnardo's) - with dedicated teachers and wonderful children who love their gardening and spread that message around our town.

- **Art competition**

Six years ago we initiated the Art competition for children, encouraging children to explore different art media to produce exciting posters on wildlife. This year our focus is on **Mammals**.

- **Blooming Marvellous Photo Competition ‘Portrait of a Wildflower’**

Our annual photo competition is running since 2018 and it is open to both adult and children. In the winter winning photographs of **Wildflowers** were displayed at the Royal Victoria Place. Subject of this year photo competition is **‘Leaves’**.



‘Portrait of Wildflower’ photo exhibition in RVP this winter Photo competition judging – a heated discussion!

- **Volunteers’ Week Celebration**

In June, together with KHWP, we organised traditional Volunteers Week celebration to thank our volunteers for their hard work and commitment. Event included talks by guests from Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons, Tunbridge Wells Fairtrade Town Group and International Camellia Society; there was a Quiz with prizes, BBQ and a pond dipping session with Dr Ian Beavis. It was a successful event with over 50 participants.



Camellia talk by Pat Short at the Volunteers Week event



KHWP in charge of the BBQ!

- **Friends**

Friends’ groups in our parks and open spaces are a very important channel of communication with the residents of the town. We rely often on their networks to pass information on our plans and projects to the wider audience. It works both ways – Friends often pass feedback and messages from the public to us.

- **Local Press**

This year we had a lot of support from local press who kindly include articles about our campaign – mainly Times of Tunbridge Wells. We receive on-going support from editors at the Local Magazine.

- **Social media**

Over the past year number of social media followers increased significantly – currently we have 1000 followers on Facebook and 802 likes of the page, 799 followers on Twitter and 624 on Instagram.

c. Funding and support

Aims of RTW in Bloom campaign would not be possible without support from **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**, mainly the Parks, Environment and Street Scene departments and our Councillors.

Coolings Garden Centre is generously supporting our campaign year by year, providing vouchers for the entrants and winners of the local Bloom competition.

RTW in Bloom gives an excellent opportunity to promote local business while helping to keep the town blooming. Everyone can get involved by sponsoring a planter or becoming a major sponsor.

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom funding			
Cash funding	Value in £	Estimated value of Volunteer work (calculated at the current National Minimum Wage at £11.44)	Value in £
TWBC Grant	10,000.00	RTWiB Committee	10,296.00
Coolings Garden Centres	3,000.00	KHWP	25,511.00
Donations received at the launch	345.65	Love Where We Live clean ups	2,000.00
		Parks Groups & Parks Volunteers	58,847.00
		Community Payback	18,738.00
Subtotal	13,345.65	Subtotal	115,392.00
Total estimated value of RTWiB campaign	£ 128,737.65		

4. Conclusion

We are proud of our overall achievements in the past 12 months. We recognise importance of high horticultural standards, sustainability, community and local heritage in making the Bloom campaign successful.

In future:

- We will continue to build on our relationship with local communities and businesses, to enable installation and maintenance of more sustainable floral displays in town;
- We will continue our successful local Bloom competition and will aim to include more schools;
- We will develop a seed swap scheme for benefit of the local growing community;
- We will keep developing sustainable practice across our campaign;
- We will work towards developing gardening volunteering scheme in our town further, so that our major parks and open spaces have regular sessions accessible for all;
- We aim to be involved in future town-scaping project, to ensure there is always a space allocated for a garden.



*RTW in Bloom Chairman David planting away!
Grounds*



*The Inner Wheel bulb planting session at Calverley
Grounds*



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM



Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park



Monday Volunteers at Dunorlan Park



Friends of The Grove



Gardeners at the Amelia Scott courtyard



At the Bloom launch event 2024



Friends of TW Cemetery



KHWP gravel garden project at Dunorlan Park



KHWP replacing fencing by Dunorlan dipping pond



Planting of Carrs Corner through



Planting of winter/spring displays for the town centre



Monday Volunteers at Dunorlan Park celebrating their awards

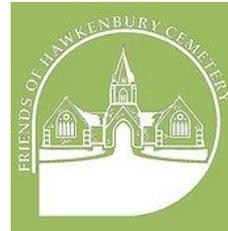


Waterfowl at Dunorlan Park

5. Our Sponsors and Partners



Kent
HIGH WEALD
protect / explore / enjoy



OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Times

HAWKENBURY
VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

ROYAL VICTORIA PLACE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS