

MEADOWS NEWSLETTER



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What's going on?

Welcome to our first newsletter about The Meadows Rejuvenation Project. Following several consultations with residents the focus of the project is clear: to enrich the landscape for both residents and wildlife. The 5 acre site has not been properly mown or maintained other than to retain the footpaths in 20 years. An ecological assessment found the site to be species-poor, dominated by vigorous competitive grass species and lacking in flowers due to this lack of care.

The proposed design will see the historic site rejuvenated. The central aim is to reinstate large areas of wildflower meadow, alongside a mown, community space and tree planting. Other improvements will include:

- ◇ Upgrading the main paths, making them wider and accessible.
- ◇ Creating a new pathway from the SE-NW
- ◇ Creating swales (marsh areas) to improve drainage and encourage increased wildlife.
- ◇ Enhancing the scrubland to the west.
- ◇ Improved seating

This newsletter will keep you informed, allowing you to keep up-to-date with the highs (and lows!) as the scheme progresses.

Pictorial Diary

March/April 2024



Images © Laura Mitchell

Archaeology: Part 1



Background | The Meadows has previously been subject to a Lidar survey and assessed by aerial photography, but the site was first physically assessed by the Wirksworth Archaeological Society between July 2020- Nov. 2022.

The Meadows was originally a much larger field than now: most fields around the town were walled into smaller units in the late Georgian age. "Meadows" is first mentioned apparently as "Meadow Wall" in 1420. In this case it is not known whether "wall" refers to an actual wall or it may be a dialect corruption of "well" (originally meaning spring). It was first mapped in 1821. The first Tithe Award of 1837 calls it Meadow Croft, this would have differentiated it from the Great and Little Meadows, which were where the Yokecliffe estate now is.

The main archaeological findings by the Society were in the woodland to the north-east of the field and these were only found when a trial trench was put into an adjacent ditch. The presence of the wood made the excavation exceptionally difficult as it contained mature trees which could not be removed. Here the remains of a Late Saxon / Saxo-Norman croft were discovered (a small cottage and yard). In many respects this is unusual, as small domestic buildings of this date appear to be very rarely reported. The croft, which has clay floors and rough stone walls, appears to date from the middle tenth century and continued in use, given the pottery finds, until the last quarter of the thirteenth century, at which point the pottery record, which is resolutely domestic, comes to an abrupt end.

(To be continued)

Information & photographs courtesy of Anton Shone.

Next Steps:

The Town Council is currently in the process of appointing a contractor to carry out the major works to The Meadows in the late Summer/ early Autumn. More will be revealed in our May newsletter.

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