

## **Article for the Golden Cap magazine:**

### **Charmouth keeps blooming**

The challenging weather during the winter and Spring has been especially testing for gardeners, exacerbated by the proliferation of slugs and snails! Undaunted, there have been further initiatives designed to enhance the appearance of Charmouth and increase its biodiversity, inspired by entry in the South West in Bloom competition. Though it is not the competitive element but the thematic structure provided by the organisers, the Royal Horticultural Society, which has been the main motivation.

Over the last couple of years, projects have included bulb and hedge planting, creating a community orchard in the playing field, revamping the Jubilee Garden and adding to the planters at the top of Lower Sea Lane in the centre of the village. This has been facilitated by the Parish Council allocating a more substantial budget and other organisations in the village have taken initiatives too. Particularly impressive is the Mary Anning garden and community orchard at the school. Wildflower seeds have been sown too, both by Highways around the verges at the western entrance to the village and at a number of other sites thanks to seeds donated to the library to commemorate the Coronation.

These projects have helped to fulfill one aim of the Charmouth in Bloom scheme, notably creating more colour in each season. At least as, or even more important, is another aim to increase biodiversity in the village; the desperate need for greater priority to be given to this goal has been highlighted by the dramatic decline in insect numbers, as demonstrated by various citizen science reports.

These aims are dependent on the third, namely to encourage a skilled team of volunteers to maintain the planting and cultivate environmental awareness. One very practical and vital contribution has been to water the trees planted over the last 18 months, a necessity exacerbated by the droughts and stressing the importance of conserving water at every opportunity. For example, have you invested in a water butt? Also teams of volunteers armed with hoes and brooms weed the most used pavements in June and July.

As well as the physical labour volunteers are providing, we are blessed by having some residents who are really tuned into and knowledgeable of aspects of the local natural history. One such is Alan Smith who has written a description of the more common birds to be seen around Charmouth; have a

look under the 'Good for Charmouth' tab on the Parish Council's web site to find this as well as details of the Environment Group's activities. And we would be delighted to receive more contributions about the flora and fauna of the village. Meanwhile, updated information plaques are being installed at the foreshore and in the centre of the village.

For the environment, no cliché is more true than 'many hands make light work' so we would be delighted to welcome new members to our working parties.

Charmouth Environment Group