

## **Article for Shoreline:**

### **Charmouth keeps blooming**

Since 2023 has been a great year for roses, you will have noticed that gardens in the village have both looked and smelt especially glamorous. To complement this, there have been other initiatives designed to enhance the appearance of the village and increase its biodiversity, inspired by entry in the South West in Bloom competition. The judges visited on 6<sup>th</sup> July and we are hoping to at least equal the Silver Gilt award of 2022.

Projects have included planting a community orchard in the playing field, revamping the Jubilee Garden and adding to the planters at the top of Lower Sea Lane and encouraging fresh growth in the reed bed. 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.

Further work is planned for the autumn, including hedge planting around the bowling green and more bulb planting. This will help 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 increased priority to be given to this goal has been highlighted this year by the dramatic decline in insect numbers.

These aims are dependent on the third, namely to encourage a skilled team of volunteers to maintain the planting and extend environmental awareness. A 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 weeded the most used pavements at the end of June.

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.

For the environment, no cliché is more true than 'many hands make light work'.

Charmouth Environment Group