

### **Richmond Meadows**

We have established a number of flowering Meadows around the borough over the last few years. Some of these have been Annual Meadows, which last for one growing season, but the majority have been Perennial Meadows, which will last for many years to come. The Meadows, which are wonderful for wildlife, have been designed to produce lots of colourful flowers over as long a period as possible. The grass content varies between the different seed mixes, with some Meadows including grasses and others being composed purely of flowers.

### **The Annual Meadows**

Poppy Meadows have been sown at various locations around the borough to commemorate those who lost their lives or who were affected by the First World War. We sowed the first Poppy Meadows in 2014 and will continue to sow them until 2018, to reflect the length of World War 1.

Although Annual Meadows technically only last for one year, there can be a degree of self-seeding which allows the Meadow to regenerate by itself in future years. The amount of self-seeding depends on weather conditions (warm, dry weather is required to ripen the seed) and the level of weed seeds naturally present in the soil. Poppies only flower for a few weeks in mid-summer, so we have included Coreopsis in the seed mix, which is a yellow daisy flower that will add colour in late summer.

#### **2014 Poppy sites which have successfully regenerated:**

- Hampton Common (Oak Avenue entrance)
- Old Deer Park

#### **2015 Poppy sites:**

- Crane Park, in association with Trafalgar Junior School (Meadway entrance)
- Heathfield Recreation Ground, in association with Heathfield Junior School
- Radnor Gardens
- North Sheen Recreation Ground

### **The Perennial Meadows**

Richmond have been experimenting with a range of Perennial Meadows and we have established them variously from seed, from pre-germinated mats and from small plants. Most of the Perennial Meadows include both native and non-native plants, so for this reason we refer to them as Urban Meadows. Perennial Urban Meadows can be seen at the following sites:

#### **Perennial Urban Meadows established from seed**

These Meadows are coming to the end of their second growing season. A specialist company called Pictorial Meadows sowed the seed and will continue maintaining the Meadows for us until the end of 2015. Different seed mixes have been sown at each of the sites.

- Crane Park (at two separate areas by the Hospital Bridge Road roundabout)
- Vine Road Recreation Ground

- Pesthouse Common

We have also sown a small Perennial Native Meadows at:

- Kneller Gardens
- Ham Village Green

#### Perennial Urban Meadows established from pre-germinated mats

These 'mats' are a new way of growing Meadows. They were supplied and laid, in a similar way to lawn turf, in October 2014 and can be seen at:

- Mortlake Green
- Manor Road Recreation Ground
- Murray Park

We also laid mats of purely native species at:

- Carlisle Park

#### Planted urban meadows

These look different to the Meadows established from seed and mats, as there are fewer plants per m<sup>2</sup> but the individual plants are larger. Grasses are an important component of these Meadows, making up one third of the mix.

Planted urban meadows in their second year can be seen at:

- Small Profits Dock
- Terrace Gardens (the newly terraced beds at the far North East entrance off Richmond Hill)

Planted urban meadows in their first year can be seen at:

- Gothic Gardens
- Nelson Road (junction of Warren Road).

Future planted urban meadows will be established in autumn 2015 at:

- Heathfield Recreation Ground
- Radnor Gardens

### **Threats to the Meadows**

#### Climate

We are living in changing and unpredictable times for public Parks as well as private Gardens, and are experiencing extraordinary weather patterns on a regular basis. What this means is that weather conditions in certain years will favour certain species over others, so the dynamics of the Meadows may change from year to year, but this should be considered part of their natural beauty. It is our intention to manage them in as sustainable way as possible, but if we experience very hot, dry or windy weather at crucial times of the growing season, we will irrigate the Meadows if necessary, and if the Meadows become stressed or vandalised, we may have to cut them down early, to enable them to recover and flower as intended in successive years.

### Vandalism/Trampling

The Meadows are very resilient, but they are all vulnerable to trampling by humans and animals. If areas of Meadow become trampled when the plants are young, the ground becomes compacted which deters plant growth, and this can have a long term impact on the success of the Meadow.

If the Meadow are trampled when the plants are in full growth, the flowers will remain flattened on the ground, which not only takes away the beauty of seeing them growing and flowering for that summer, but also prevents the flowers underneath from growth up. The effects of trampling Meadows when in full flower are unlikely to be permanently damaging, but it may mean we have to cut the Meadow down several months earlier than intended which will be a loss both to humans and to wildlife.

It has been necessary to protect many of the Meadow areas with temporary fencing, but we would prefer not to have to use this. We would ask that everyone respects the Meadows and allows them to be appreciated by everyone.