

The Barrowden wildflower / dog walking area

The area above the Barrowden allotments has become a haven for both local people and wildlife and more recently a flood attenuation scheme for the properties of Hey Court.

Currently the grass and wildflower areas are managed by a small team of resolute volunteers that hand scythe and remove the hay at the appropriate times of the year. However, managing the grassland in the flood relief area is proving problematic.

It is completely understandable that the works to dig the trench and attenuation pond were undertaken in a rush to alleviate the threat of further flooding, but the site is now a danger to dog walkers and wildlife as well as difficult to manage as a wildflower area.

The ground has been left very uneven and the trench and bank are a potential 'leg breaking' hazard, hidden as they are, by nettles and thistles. Any poor wild life creatures falling in would also struggle to escape.

To ameliorate the situation, the volunteer group would like to propose the following actions.

- The flood attenuation area is reprofiled. The lumps and bumps levelled, the trench and bank reshaped with shallow slopes whilst, still maintaining their overall flood storage capacity.
- The purchase of a petrol-powered reciprocal scythe to allow the cutting of the hay meadow by the volunteer group. The scythe would also enable other greens and verges within the village to be managed as wildflower meadows.

The cost of digger hirer and operator to undertake the reprofiling works has not been estimated but should be lower than the cost of the original works.

The cost of the mechanical scythe is approximately £1,600 plus a further £300 for fuel and servicing. Going forward a small income could be generated for the fuel and servicing by hiring out the machine with a trained volunteer operator to villagers wishing to have their "No mow May" meadow cut. Storage space has been offered by the cricket club.

These costs certainly fall within the category of 'infrastructure' and therefore could be fully funded by the recent S106 monies.