

Usk in Bloom - Spring 2017

Spring has sprung across the whole of Usk! We have been treated to a traditional but enormous splash of yellow in March with the replanting of 1500 tete a tete daffodils in November. This has been complimented by the deep purple crocus bulbs planted opposite Usk School as part of a joint initiative with The Rotary Club of Usk and the National Purple form polio campaign. They also featured prominently in Twyn Square around the new wishing well and the "Usk Bed" in front of the Curtain Shop. A big thank you to Usk Cricket Club's groundsman Chris Morse for helping preparing the ground and holes to plant the crocus bulbs thanks to the use of the "aerator".

One of the major fund raising events was held at the Nags Head on 23rd March. The Annual Auction has been the traditional launch pad for the Spring and Summer work where over 90 lots were donated by local business and friends and were professionally and humorously auction to 40 friends by local auctioneer Chris Brain. After Heather Sterry from the much missed HSBC Usk Branch had tallied and counted the bids and donations over £6,000 was raised in just 2 ½ hours. An incredible result! A special thank you to Heather, Simon, Sue and Staff at the Nags Head, Chris who completed the task without a break and of course those who donated and bought.

The long winter planning period is now becoming an actual reality and we start thinking of preparing the summer displays reminded of the delights that await by the Usk Open Garden leaflets landing on our doormats. Always the last weekend in June (24th / 25th this year) the event goes from strength to strength.

Behind the scenes much is happening also. For 2 years we have been planning a new garden at the entrance to the North Car park (GP Surgery). We have made some temporary measures to tidy up an area that has for too long gathered weeds, litter and dog poo. . We've teamed up with The Usk Girl Guides who are this year celebrating their 100th consecutive year of guiding! An amazing feat that carried on during the World War II. We have been awarded a £500 grant from the RHS as part of the Greening Grey Britain Campaign and subject to other grant funding we are aiming to have a DIY SoS style weekend where the area will be dug, paved and planted prior to Open gardens weekend. The Garden will be a mix of perennial and pollinator plants with 2 benches placed to also peaceful contemplation for all those who will stop and admire. Keep your eye out for more news around the Town or on our Social media outlets for the launch date details.

As part of keeping Usk tidy and raising awareness of the litter issues around the Town, it became apparent that the approaches to Usk were in an appalling mess. Two of our volunteers collected 21 bags of "litter" in one layby and our Council wrote to the Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones expressing concern about the visitor impression as being "Rubbish tip Wales". This drew an immediate response as all the laybys were quickly cleaned. Thank you to everyone who took part. We hope to make this a regular event (or not if the campaign is successful!).

We look forward to participating in the Usk Local Pageant on 16th July.

News hot off the Press is that we have been shortlisted to feature in a new 15 part BBC2 TV series "Blooming Marvellous" that follow communities as they prepare for competition judging. Fingers crossed we get into the final 15!

Finally a quick reminder the colour scheme this year is Purple, yellow and white. Usk in Bloom are always looking for new volunteers whether in a gardening capacity or administration. Our secretary position has become vacant and if you could help out (just minute taking) or have green fingers, please do get in touch via uskinbloom@gmail.com or ring / text our Chairman Tony Kear on 07824810182.