

Great Ayton – Action for pollinators

Martin Allen – May 2019 (updated June 2019)

Overview

Great Ayton, as a picturesque rural village in North Yorkshire, has both a sizeable resident population and a substantial number of seasonal tourists and so its public spaces need to offer a distinctive and attractive streetscape for visitors and locals alike. Being a parish and having direct local control over public areas enables Great Ayton to offer ideas for the visitor and resident alike to help encourage a more biodiverse and resilient pollinator-friendly landscape, with a pollinator trail highlighting how a mix of both native and garden plants can be used to work together for the benefit of all.

It is worth thinking about planning massed plantings of key species throughout the village to create a visual spectacle at various times during the year. Suggestions would be Apple trees (also in gardens), cowslip (gardens and grassy areas) and meadowsweet by the river



Vision for public open space within the village

Aim to create resilient planting that is easy/simple to manage and diverse, such that there is always have something flowering no matter the future climate conditions, and to increase the available nectar and pollen resources from the present level.

To show how fruit and perennial vegetables can be grown comfortably with garden plants and wildflowers in a modern cottage garden style in keeping with Great Ayton's current picturesque reputation.

Planting that will prove attractive to local people and visitors alike and provide inspiration and ideas for local people to use within their own gardens.



Vision for the River Leven as it passes through the village

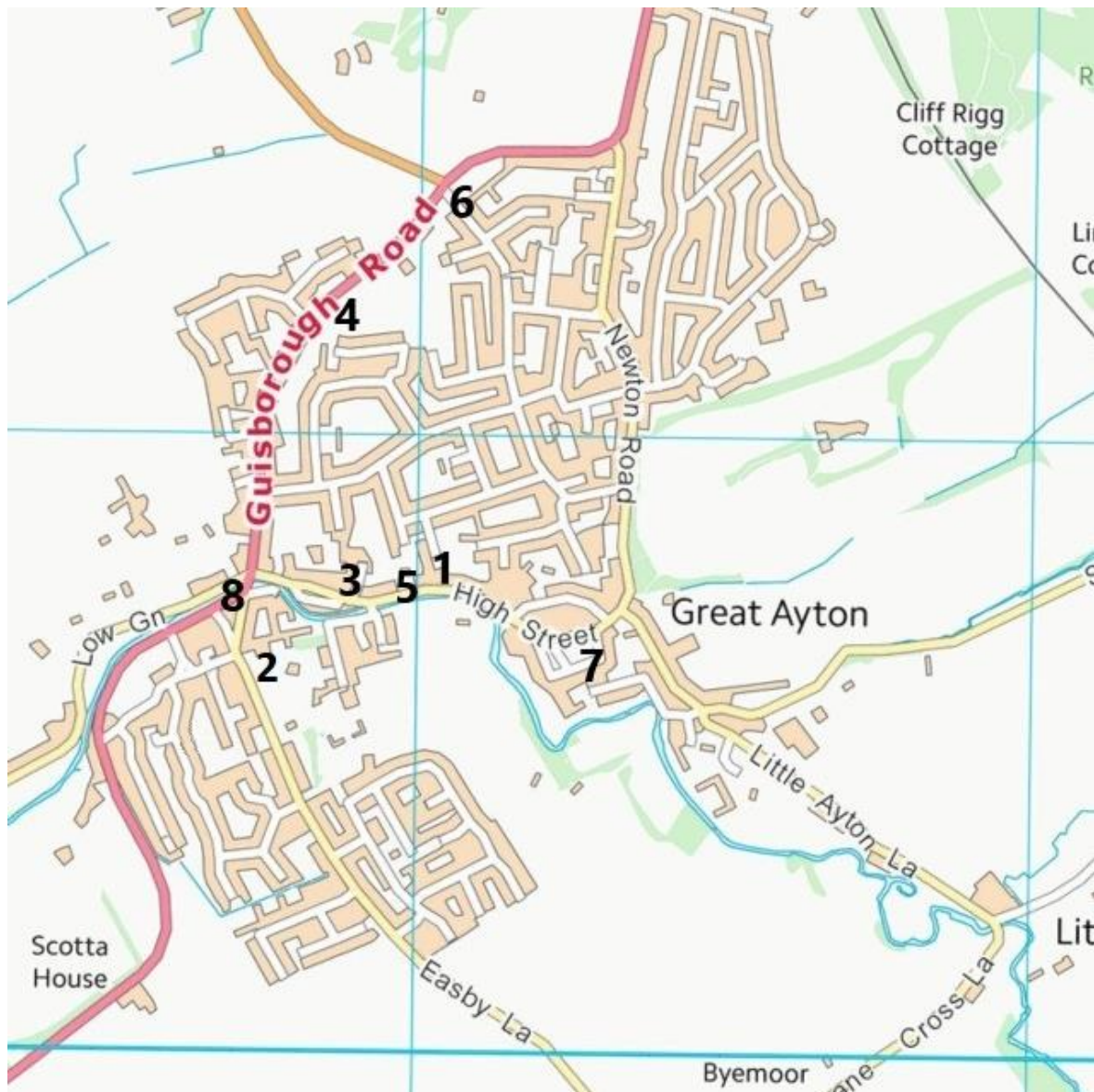
Aim to create native species-rich vegetation that attractively showcases all the most common wildflowers present in similar beck and riverside habitats within the River Leven catchment area and so promote awareness of/showcasing local flora and the benefits of encouraging it both culturally and for wildlife within the village.

Look to see if more water plants can be added within the river to add variety to the waterflow and help promote a more diverse habitat and work with Northumbria Water/the Environment Agency/Tees River Trust on improving water quality.



Great Ayton as depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1853, showing many apple orchards.

Map of Great Ayton



Key

1. Village Hall
2. Captain Cook Garden
3. Beech Close Corner
4. Cemetery meadow
5. Chapel steps
6. Camp Corner
7. High Green
8. River Leven

Priorities

1. Village Hall

To give a showcase for how you can manage a small public garden area growing fruit/perennial vegetables or herbs alongside perennial (or self-sowing annuals) flowers for pollinators, with an emphasis on looking good during the summer season when the village is most visited. It is important to add a wide variety of plants such that under any particular year's weather conditions at least some will flourish. (A similar garden style can be seen at the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust building in Margrove).



Garden flowers, fruit, herbs and wildflowers all growing happily together – photo taken in June

The **hall frontage** is perfect for plants which like hot sunny sites (and thought should be given to allowing some of the plants to self-seed into the pavement crack at the foot of the wall (as the hollyhock already has done). Existing planting is already very good here.

Fig/pear against the wall of the building?

To grow amongst the railings over summer - as they are pruned back every year they act like herbaceous plants.

Clematis 'Purpurea Plena Elegans' (double flowers, but good talking point)

Clematis × *triternata* 'Rubromarginata' (very free-flowering)

Aubretia (for hanging over the wall)

Perennial candytuft (for hanging over the wall)

Thrift

Iceplant

Dwarf globe artichoke

Fennel and bronze fennel

Common marjoram

Common thyme

Sea Holly (*Eryngium*)

Lesser Calamint

Alyssum (a white-flowered self-seeding annual, also good for honey-like scent)
One or two of the David Austin English roses
Lavender



Dry sunny area in May with Aubretia and Thrift flowering, Wildlife Trust, Margrove.



The same dry sunny area in August with Small Scabious and Marjoram in full flower.

The two side gardens can be used to show how to fill challenging areas easily with plants and even allow for training fruit on the fence.

Fence

Winter Jasmine

Honeysuckle (but placed well away from anything edible)

Japanese Quince

Clematis montana

Cordon fruit are a possibility here if that is something that you want to showcase.

Perhaps a thornless blackberry?

Climbing rose? Or a rambling rose with decorative rose hips later.

A semi-standard apple tree on a semi-dwarfing rootstock (MM106) would be possible here at the front near where the sycamore was removed. Another possibility here would be the Autumn-flowering Cherry tree which makes a good small tree.

Raspberry (red and yellow autumn fruiting)

Gooseberry (both this and raspberry have worked well at the Wildlife Trust)

Red Currant

Garden Strawberry

Good King Henry

Chives

Garlic Chives

Spearmint



Raspberries, gooseberries, white current, sage with tulips, chamomile and English marigold in the 'Berry nice area' at Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Margrove.



Rhubarb, Rosemary and an apple tree (right) growing with herbaceous flowers next to a small pond at the Wildlife Trust Garden, Margrove.

Leopard's Bane (*Doronicum*)

Many of the Hardy Crane's-bills (at the Wildlife Trust I bought a selection so that people could see how they performed)

Trailing bellflower

Japanese anemone

Common bistort

Dame's-violet

Mahonia

Lonicera x purpusii (a winter flowering shrubby honeysuckle)

for the more shaded areas try

Geranium phaeum

Epimedium rubrum

London's Pride

Oxlip

Welsh Poppy

Bastard Balm (*Melittis melissophyllum*)

Bergenia

Ferns

Astrantia (where it is damper)

Pulmonaria



Very small shaded garden with ferns, Pulmonaria, & Violets

The **steeply sloping bank** behind the hall would be best managed by either coppicing the existing trees every five or ten years (half after five years and then the other half five years after that) and underplanting with woodland plants or replacing the existing trees with named Hazel-nut varieties for cropping.

Wild strawberry

Bugle (purple-leaved forms)

Wood anemone

Primrose

Sweet violet

Spotted dead-nettle (*Lamium maculatum*)

Snowdrops

Forget me not

Woodruff

Great Wood-rush



Shaded area at the Wildlife Trust, Margrove



Close-up of above showing Primrose and Great Wood-rush in flower and Woodruff in bud.

2. Captain Cook Garden

A mix of cottage garden plants circa late 18th Century and plants from countries that Cook visited to represent his voyages. How they are planted depends very much on the space available and the amount of time available for maintenance which can be discussed in more detail. What follows are plant suggestions which would grow well and be appropriate to Great Ayton.

Cottage garden plants

Pot/English Marigold

Heart's-ease

Autumn cyclamen

Hyacinth

Astrantia

Columbine/aquilegia

Lily of the valley

Peach-leaved bellflower

Globe thistle

Mourning widow crane's-bill

Sweet rocket

Shasta daisy

Maltese cross

Hollyhock

Lungwort

Polyanthus

Cowslip

Sweet violet

Everlasting sweet pea

Espaliered pear tree? (would need someone to train this initially and maintain). There is an espaliered plum tree mentioned in the Valerie Hepworth research, but they are less commonly grown espaliered now.

Rosemary

Lavender

Sage

Southernwood

Rosa gallica 'Versicolor'

Rosa 'Tuscany'

Mock orange

Lilac

For the exotic plants

Phormium (New Zealand Flax)

Callistemon viminalis 'Captain Cook' <https://www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/94419/Callistemon-viminalis-Captain-Cook/Details> (Not sure how this would grow ...I've seen it only in the milder gardens of Middlesbrough.)

Hebe salicifolia

3. Beech Close Corner

The basic idea here is to have a large traditional apple tree that will last up to 100 years in the space that is now just mown grass. There are many additional options as to what could be created to make the space interesting and of interest to residents and visitors alike.

Plant an appropriate apple cultivar which will grow into a large and traditional tree (on M25 rootstock - source from Rogers of Pickering

<http://www.rvroger.co.uk/index.php?linksource=stockgroup&webpage=apples&listgroupfile=fruitandnuttrees&parentpagefile=opengroundfruit&season=MAIN&caller=Header>.

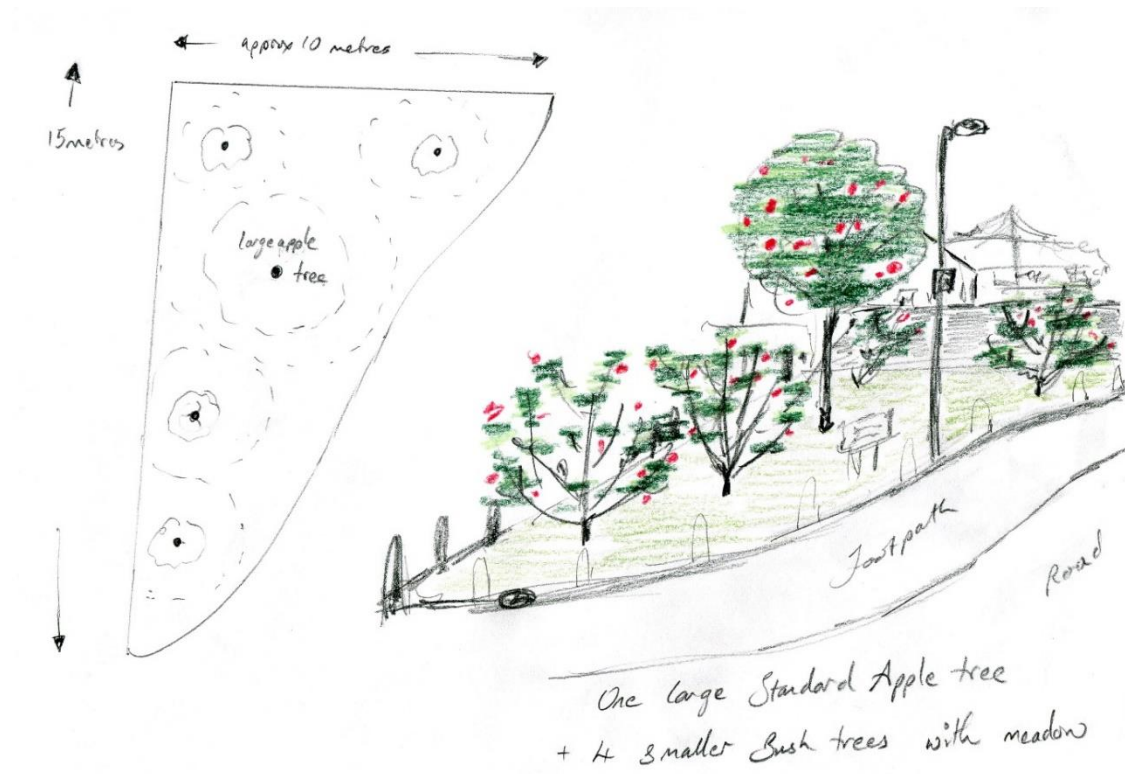


The tree next to the people is 80 to 100 years old in a community orchard in Reeth, Swaledale.



Heavy crop of apples which are collected made available for the community to use or juiced.

Add some smaller-growing apple bushes or semi-standard trees (on an MM106 rootstock) to make a small orchard and underplant with meadow or meadow-like flowers to be managed by cutting in the autumn and removing the cuttings. You can see in the photographs above that on one side of the large tree is a wildflower meadow; this is cut in the summer and then mown as normal (shown in the photo with the apples on the ground)



Plan of the above suggestion for Beech Close



Example of similar apple trees just planted at Skelton Community Orchard (but with an annual flower mix rather than a perennial meadow)

Note: Following consultation with Broadacres, who own the land, and the residents of Beech Close it was decided to go for 4 smaller-growing apple trees and a small-growing plum tree to make it easier to pick fruit and so that the trees don't grow too large. (June 2019)

4. Cemetery meadow trial

Leave an area uncut so that already existing wildflowers (oxeye daisy, common sorrel, bulbous buttercup, cat's-ear) can flower and their seed be collected. Leaving the grass longer and letting it flower will enable us to identify what grass species are growing here.

Mow regularly around the meadow area such that people can easily see that the uncut area has been left intentionally. On other projects I've worked on, a temporary laminated A4 sheet (tied to the gate) has been used to explain what is happening on site to people and could be considered here.



Linthorpe Cemetery, Middlesbrough, where the grass is cut and collected in late summer.

5. Chapel Steps

What can be done here depends very much on ownership of the adjacent land and permissions to carry out works on that land and to pin/attach climbing plants to the fence.

At a minimal intervention I would suggest planting/sowing honesty either side of the path as that would give the longest spread of interest over the year for the most minimal maintenance.

6. Camp Corner

Around the large oak tree to consider working with the members of Yatton House on planting Winter aconite, spring crocus and autumn cyclamen all of which can provide early colour and then when the leaves have yellowed the area can be mown as usual over the summer and autumn.

7. High Green – bulbs to naturalize.

Blue *Scilla bifolia* added at top corner strip to complement the existing naturalised winter aconites here.

Create a wide strip alongside the High Street of late spring flowering narcissus underplanted by wildflowers which flower whilst the narcissus leaves go yellow but the whole can be cut and removed by mid-July to leave an open mown green for events over the summer.

Narcissus poeticus var. *recurvus* (Old Pheasant's eye) later flowering and scented

Narcissus 'Actaea' similar to the above but slightly earlier

With cowslip

Bulbous buttercup

Meadow buttercup

Oxeye daisy

(some of which we may be able to collect seed from the cemetery this summer)



Massed Cowslips in Albert park, Middlesbrough

Future projects

8. River Leven to work with both the Environment agency to improve water quality and the River Tees Trust to create a more attractive but still safe environment for the River as it flows through the village. Key areas are alongside the road by suggest to the bridge. The corner before the second bridge and the area after the bridge to the foot bridge.

Remove (by de-turfing) the existing vigorous rank grasses that grow by river banks and add the following to existing wildflowers, and increase numbers of existing wildflowers by collecting seeds or cuttings of native plants within the River Leven catchment area. The de-turfing/planting/seeding can happen in dispersed patches so the change happens gradually over a number of years.

Inclusion of some low profile timber flow deflectors within the River Leven to help break up the water flow and provide different habitats for different plants.



Yellow Common Bird's-foot-trefoil and purple Selfheal on a road verge in Hemlington

Drier areas along the roadside

These areas will need to be mown periodically and perhaps in a patchy manner, so some areas are mown one fortnight and then the missed areas on the next fortnight to keep a continuity of flower throughout the village.

Common bird's-foot-trefoil

Red clover

Cowslip

Selfheal

Bulbous buttercup

Cat's-ear

Autumn Hawkbit



Cowslips on a road verge in Coulby Newham

Damp river edge

Here the plants grow taller (to thigh height) and require cutting back in most areas in the autumn – some areas left for insect hibernation.

Sweet Cicely
Great Bellflower
Great Burnet
Meadowsweet
Greater Bird's-foot trefoil
Meadow vetchling
Cuckooflower
Water Avens
Wild angelica
Ragged Robin
Bugle
Creeping buttercup



And in slightly drier areas
Common Knapweed
Meadow Buttercup

Common Knapweed, Meadow Vetchling, Great Burnet, Meadowsweet



Pink flowers of Ragged Robin with Meadow Buttercup and Sweet Vernal-grass

River edge

Marsh Marigold
Yellow Iris
Water figwort
Water Forget-me-not

In the river

Water crowfoot (there is some further down the River before it reaches the River Tees)



Marsh Marigold and Yellow Iris in a pond at Margrove.

6. Camp corner

More wildflowers as spectacle rather than the existing fairly-dull mown ryegrass. This could be massed spring cowslips (as present at Albert Park in Middlesbrough), buttercup meadow for summer, oxeye daisy meadow in early summer, late-summer flowering common knapweed/betony and low-flowering common bird's-foot-trefoil/autumn hawkbit/self-heal – perhaps even patches of all of them.



Massed Meadow Buttercup at King George V Playing Fields, Guisborough

Resources

Plants are chosen with reference to the RHS list of plants for pollinators

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>

Personal knowledge of local wildflower distribution (see also BSBI maps which show wildflower distribution here <https://database.bsbi.org/maps/>) and what grows reliably in gardens locally.

For historic plants the document “Hardy Plants and Plantings for Repton and Late Georgian Gardens (1780–1820)” by Historic England has a useful list which I’ve used

<https://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=16017>

This is apparently the drawing of the Cook cottage mentioned in the Valerie Hepworth research

<https://gottcollection.hepworthwakefield.org/theme/Captain%20Cook>

