



**The construction of a Community Garden
overlooking the Muslim graves at
Ramsey Road Cemetery, St Ives, Cambridgeshire**

**ST IVES IN BLOOM /
ROYAL HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY
“CONNECTED COMMUNITIES”
PROJECT**



1. Inspirations

It was on a busy March morning in 2022, when we were celebrating “greening the grey” in Kings Hedges, a small out of town shopping area in

Getting to know the community in March 2022.



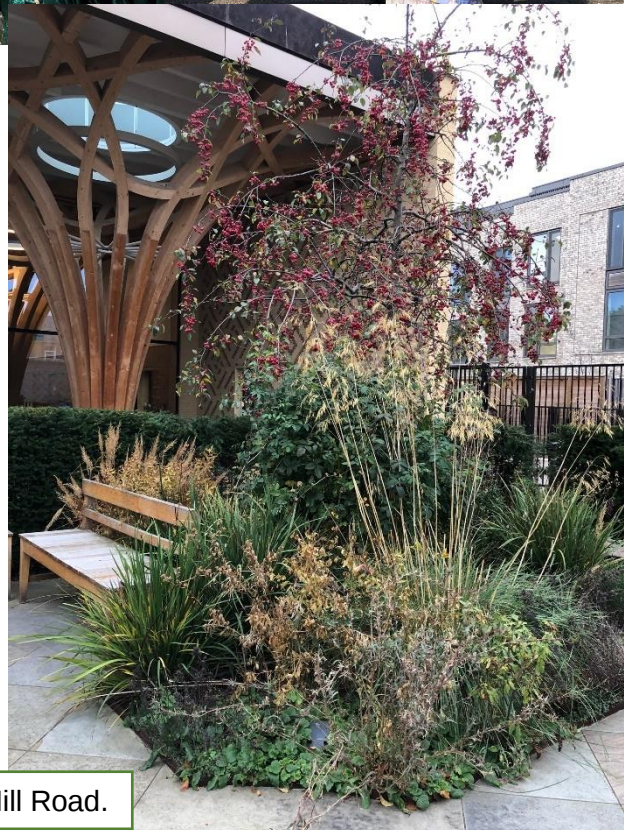
St Ives, that members of St Ives in Bloom were encouraged by the Mayor and by the local people to think of ways of engaging the Islamic community in a new gardening project.



Between the ‘green’ dances, we talked to Town Councillor Shariqa Mokbul and St Ives Mayor Pasco Hussain about whether they would like to be involved, and about the inspiration we had found in the garden at the entrance to the new wood-built Mosque in Cambridge.



The garden of the Cambridge Mosque on Mill Road.

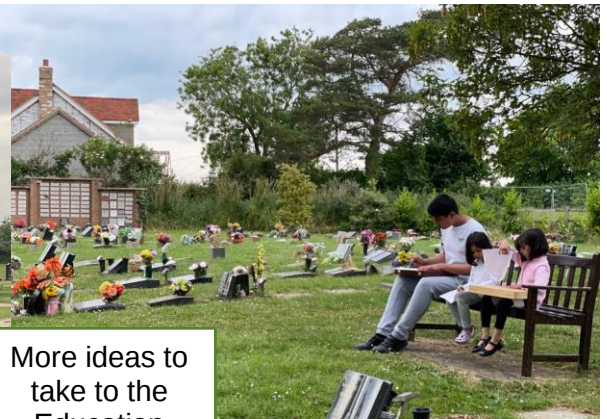


2. Planning at the Cemetery, from November 2022 and final costs

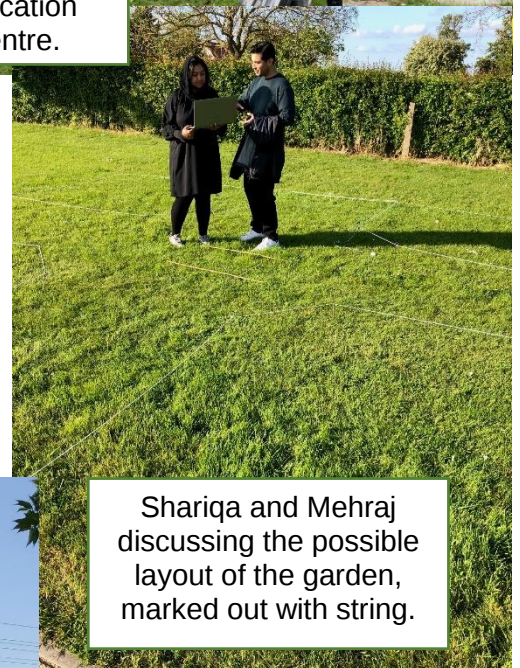
We had recently planted up an Italian style garden in front of the Mausoleum built for the Italian community at Ramsey Road Cemetery. We now envisaged an Islamic-style 'Paradise' garden, intended for reflection and contemplation, overlooking the area set aside for Muslim graves. We had received support for the idea from the Anglia in Bloom judges and then, at a meeting with the Clerk to the St Ives Town Council in November 2022, were encouraged to submit our application for the "Connected Communities" grant. Our aim was to work with people of the Islamic faith living in St Ives: in particular with those bereaved families whose loved ones are buried in the Muslim area of the cemetery.



More ideas to take to the Education Centre.



After receiving the grant at the end of January, preliminary design ideas, discussed the previous summer with Shariqa and Pasco, were debated with members of the local Mosque and the Islamic Prayer and Education Centre, with the input of our new project leader Mehraj Ahmed.



Shariqa and Mehraj discussing the possible layout of the garden, marked out with string.



The site identified at a meeting with the Council in June.

However, our optimistic plans for planting on the site in May were delayed through the spring and summer as we waited for Councillors to complete the process of agreeing to the project. In June a new, rather overgrown, site was identified, meaning some modifications had to be made to the original plan.

RAMSEY ROAD CEMETERY

Summary of meeting on 13th June between representatives of the Town Council and St Ives in Bloom to agree the siting of the proposed Islamic style contemplative garden.

St Ives in Bloom

1. St Ives in Bloom have received a connected communities grant of the £2,500 for this project from the Royal Horticultural Society at the end of January.
2. The Town Clerk has a copy of the Welcome Pack which contains all the details of the grant itself. It has already been paid into the St Ives in Bloom account.
3. Any extra costs will be met by fundraising from within the Muslim Community, as it is a condition of the grant that St Ives in Bloom volunteers are working with people from a community that is not usually involved in its gardening projects.
4. The grant must be spent and the project completed by the end of this year.
5. The design has been completed by and assessed for viability by gardening experts. The main garden is to be made of four raised beds that will allow a greater range of suitable plants to grow and make it easier to maintain.
6. There will be a path between the beds wide enough to allow wheelchair access.
7. Maintenance of the garden will be carried out by the community.

The Town Council

1. The Town Council have identified a space to the left of the main roadway into the Cemetery, which is at present full of brambles and thistles.
2. It is agreed that the Town Council maintenance team will remove three posts and concrete, and clear and rotavate an area 6 and a half metres square ready for the garden to be installed.
3. The garden will be installed and planted up on Saturday 28th October. This will be arranged by St Ives in Bloom together with volunteers from the Muslim community, with permission from the Town Council for the gate to be unlocked for deliveries on Friday 27th October.
4. The Town Council have agreed to remove the gateposts and three fence posts and clear the area by September, to give time for supplementary clearing of persistent weeds before the garden is constructed.
5. St Ives in Bloom will carry out a risk assessment.
6. St Ives in Bloom have public liability insurance to the value of £5 million.

There were compromises to be made, as the high cost of paving meant we settled on a turf path between the four raised beds, but aesthetics overcame both construction and cost challenges when it came to creating an octagonal setting for the water feature.

Once the site was agreed, our volunteer construction workers and expert gardeners could take charge of the decision making, and we had a meeting at the end of July to finalise the timetable and start to allocate the grant. Committee member Phil Davis, together with Raj, agreed to be Project Leader for the build.

St Ives in Bloom



AGENDA for MEETING

Morrisons Community Room, St Ives

Tuesday 25th July at 7pm

There were many ideas to be discussed and agreed.

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Hattie to summarise progress of "Connected Communities" project so far.
- b. Shariqa to explain planned siting of the garden, and commitments made by the Town Council.

2. PLANTING

- a. Raj to introduce his design and plans for planting.
- b. Discussion of plant choices.
- c. Timetable for order and purchase of plants.

3. CONSTRUCTION

- a. Discussion of plans for construction of raised beds.
- b. Discussion of materials and equipment needed.
- c. Timetable for order and purchase of materials and equipment.

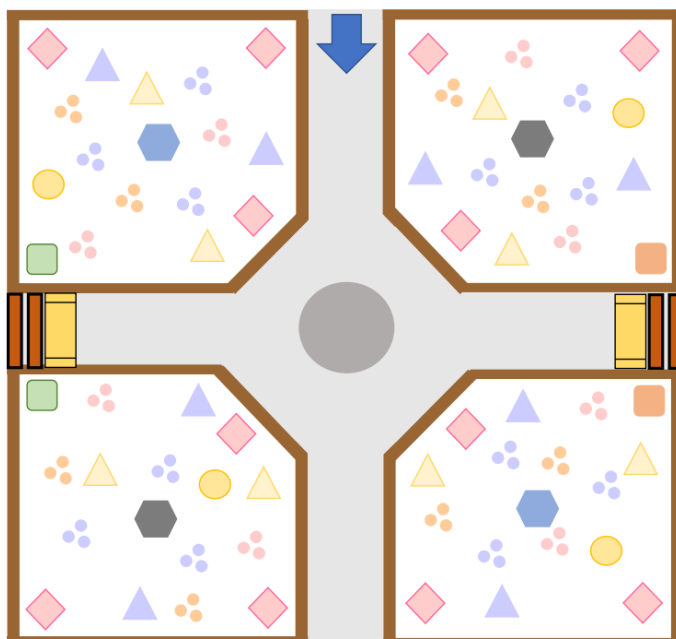
4. FUNDING

Shariqa to explain her plans for community fundraising.

5. ACTIONS

A list of timetabled actions to be drawn up.

OPTION 1 – 6.5m x 6.5m



KEY	
	Olive tree
	Tall grass (<i>Miscanthus Sinesis</i>)
	Roses
	Jasmine
	Honeysuckle
	Arum Lillies
	Poppies
	Salvia Amistad
	Agapanthus
	Spring bulbs (tulip/ daffodils/ crocus)
	Camassia
	Bark
	Timber border
	Pergola/arch
	Bench
	Shingle path
	Water fountain

Draft plans presented to the council and discussed at meetings with St Ives in Bloom.

Robin Bletsoe, one of the expert gardeners in St Ives in Bloom, discussed the design and intended flower purchases with Mehraj. Some compromises were again necessary as the site is rather windswept and unfortunately Shariqa's wish for lemon and pomegranate trees had to be vetoed! Over the summer, Robin put in orders for the specialist roses and bulbs and organised the October and spring purchase of other plants from local nurseries. We had a follow-up meeting with the Town Council on 27th July, when they promised they would complete clearance of the site by mid-September, including removing the leftover stumps of leylandii.



Work still in progress – it will look good in the end!

Meanwhile, Phil, Shariqa and Raj decided on designs and sourced materials for the construction of the garden. Shariqa started her fundraising campaign among members of the Muslim community. This allowed for our purchase of the water feature, benches and arches to add to the impact of the garden.

Item	Quantity	Cost
Plants		
European olive	2	£ 180.00
Miscanthus	4	£ 35.82
Jasmine Officinale 'Devon Queen' or similar	2	£ 17.91
Honeysuckle	2	£ 17.91
Lonicera periclymenum 'Sweet Sue' white or similar (2-3 litre pots)		
Salvia 'Amistad' (2 litre pots)	24	£ 68.40
Agapanthus 'Summer Love White' or similar (2-3 litre pots)	8	£ 86.40
Icelandic poppy 'Papaver nudicaule' (2 litre pots)	24	£ 68.40
Peace lily	8	£ 71.64
Rosa 'Hebe's Lip' (bare root)	6	£ 281.05
Rosa 'Jacques Cartier' (potted)	6	
White tulips	100 bulbs	£ 190.41
White daffodils	120 bulbs	
Crocus sativus	125 bulbs	
Camassia	36 bulbs	
Camassia	36 bulbs	
Total for plants		£ 1,017.94
Water feature		
Birdbath	1	£ 120.00
x1 slab for birdbath	1	£ 21.59
Fixings for birdbath		£ 32.40
Length of 3x2		£ 4.30
Stakes		
Stakes for olive trees	2	£ 8.98
Raised timber beds frames		
Timber sleepers	n/a	£ 1,239.18
Fixings for build: pipe, fixing for water feature, wood screws	n/a	£ 349.98

Compost/soil + decorative bark + turf	Soil + decorative bark + turf	8 bags topsoil and 4 bags green compost + 1 bag decorative woodchip + turf	£ 794.54
	Extra x4 bags of soil		£ 189.98
Seed and lawn feed			£ 10.00
Arches	x2 arches		£ 435.00
	x2 benches		£ 398.00
Bench	Slablay	3 bags cement	£ 30.00
	Slabs	6 slabs	£ 200.00
Commemorative plaque			£ 92.10
Name plate			£ 90.00
Misc	Water		£ -
Total for materials			£ 4,016.05
TOTAL		TOTAL COSTS	£ 5,033.99

Funding available from RHS £2,500
Fundraising from community £ 1,730.00
Overbudget £ 803.99

Fundraising	Amount	Specific item (for certificates)	Accounted for?
Dinara Ahmed	£ 25.00	Rose	STIIB account
Meherun Nessa	£ 25.00	Rose	STIIB account
Dilraj Ahmed	£ 25.00	Rose	STIIB account
Tahsin Ahmed	£ 25.00	Rose	STIIB account
Toslima Ahmed	£ 25.00	Rose	STIIB account
Aniga Mokbul	£ 25.00	Rose	STIIB account
Fareha Uddin	£ 50.00	n/a	STIIB account
T&T taxi company (Tareq Ahmed)	£ 500.00	Bench	STIIB account
Squash basket at Friday prayer	£ 250.00	n/a	STIIB account
Eid raffle	£ 80.00	n/a	STIIB account
Dhaba	£ 100.00	x1 Olive tree	STIIB account
SAM taxi - Babor Ahmed	£ 200.00	n/a	STIIB account
Montaz Restaurant	£ 250.00	Bench	STIIB account
Tanina	£ 25.00	n/a	STIIB account
J Crang	£ 100.00	n/a	STIIB account
Cheque	£ 25.00	n/a	Cheque w/ STIIB
TOTAL	£ 1,730.00		

Budget tracker

Raj kept an eye on the project costs with a spreadsheet tracker, and was able to finalise the spreadsheets with our Treasurer at our last planning meeting on 26th October, when all donations and costs were shared and included in the St Ives in Bloom budget record.

3. The Build

What started as plans for a build day on Tuesday 3rd October, in fact became a build week! The sleepers were delivered on Monday 2nd October, ready to be sized and cut where necessary.



Sleeper delivery

The measurements for the garden were laid out, and everything prepared for the build day on Tuesday 3rd. Councillor Pasco Hussain had promised to come along with “muscle” (this turned out to be six men from the Mosque) to help carry the sleepers and construct the garden. Experienced St Ives

in Bloom volunteers were identified and asked to help, risk assessments had been drawn up for all the work days and, importantly, Shariqa organised food from the Montaz restaurant to keep the workers going! Meanwhile, plans were made for our usual St Ives in Bloom volunteers to clear a new border area in the background of the garden, out of the way of any construction risks.



Left: risk assessment

Above: Phil shows Shariqa the scale model of the build.

St Ives in Bloom

RAMSEY ROAD GARDEN PROJECT

2nd/3rd October 2023, 9.30am to 2pm; building raised beds

- Members of the Build Team will be onsite from 8am on 2nd October to receive delivery of the sleepers and from 9am on 3rd October to prepare for the volunteers' arrival.
- Those volunteers who come in their cars will be asked to park in the car parks at the back of the cemetery, so that they are not in the way of visitors to the graves.
- Volunteers will be made aware of the risk assessment and mitigations – only volunteers experienced in building work will be present.
- The project leaders will start the session by reminding volunteers of the sensitivity of the site and the need to be aware of the feelings of visitors to the graves.

RISK ASSESSMENT 2nd/3rd October 2023

Activity	Risk	Mitigation
Cutting the sleepers (2 nd Oct)	Risk of cut injury	Qualified participants only will undertake sawing the sleepers in an area of the site away from other volunteers or the public. They will wear heavy duty gloves and boots.
Delivering and moving the sleepers (Delivery 2 nd Oct, moving 3 rd Oct)	Volunteers or passers-by injured by delivery lorry. Risk of dropping onto a limb or foot	Delivery will be arranged for before 10am. If it is late, volunteers and any visitors to the Cemetery will be instructed to keep away from the lorry. There will be three volunteers per sleeper, and the Build Team will ensure that the route is cleared in advance, with no trip hazards. Participants will wear heavy duty gloves and boots.
Joining the sleepers	Risk of cut injury	Participants will wear heavy duty gloves and boots and only those who are already experienced at drilling safely will undertake this part of the build.
Lining the raised beds	Risk of cut injury	Cutting and stapling the lining will only take place when the raised bed has been completed and the other tools have been removed.
Positioning and securing the water feature	Risk of dropping onto a limb or foot	There will be three volunteers to carry the water feature, and to fix it in place. Participants will wear heavy duty gloves and boots.
Outdoor weather	Cold and wet or Dehydration	Participants will be reassured that they can finish at any time if they are too hot or cold. There will be drinks available and a break arranged.

Risk: Spread of Covid 19.

The following mitigations are in place at all StIb events:

- You can volunteer if you're well and nobody in your household has coronavirus symptoms.
- You must follow social distancing guidelines: it is advisable to try to limit the number of people you work with and to work side by side to reduce the risk of infection.
- Wear gloves to prevent infection.



Right and below: The site of the flowerbeds has been marked out – the problem is making sure they are all level.



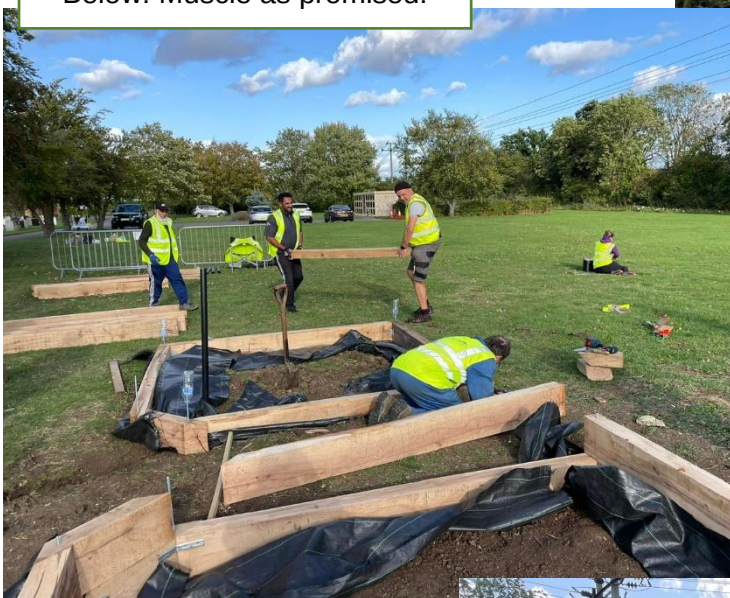
Mid-morning break.



Left: Raj saws the bolts for the raised beds to length, while behind him the St Ives in Bloom volunteers start on clearing the border bed.

Below: Positioning the first bed along the marked out square.

Below: Muscle as promised!



Below and right: Have we got it level?



It was a very busy day, but thanks to our volunteers staying on to help into the afternoon, just a few volunteers were able to finish off on Wednesday morning, ready for the delivery of compost, topsoil and grass turves. Phil cut and laid the turves between the beds.

Right: digging out the level space for the first raised bed.



Left: Group photo. Having a break – at least this bed is perfect! Just three more to finish....



Below: At last the end of the day on Tuesday.



The Mayor (below centre) came to help on Thursday....



Right: The topsoil and compost was delivered - but the lorry couldn't reach to fill one of the beds. We had to call on the volunteers to come again the next week to mix and spread the compost and topsoil.





Wednesday 11th October: The soil is spread with time to settle before our Planting Day at the end of the month. Phil is watering the new grass turves every day.

Phil and Raj now have to get an octagonal base for the water feature and the feature installed.



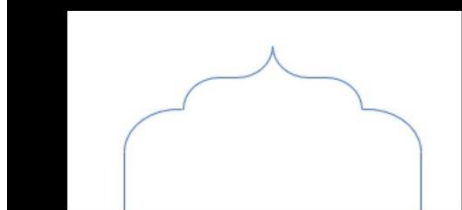
Publicity posters at the cemetery (left) and in the mosque (right).



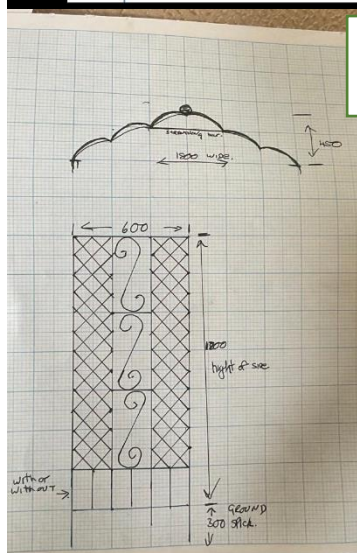
Admiring the installation!



The arches must also be made to the design and the finished product delivered and made safe. At last, all is ready for our community morning on Sunday 29th October. Some plants are collected from the nursery on 28th October, while others have been nurtured at home since delivery. The flowers are all in peaceful shades of blue, white and pink, and are all part of a pollinator-friendly design.



Arch designs



4. Planting Day

Our aim is to see members of the whole St Ives community enjoying a beautiful area of the cemetery, working together to plant and maintain this Islamic-style Garden. We have begun to achieve this with a successful Planting Day on Sunday 29th October.



Testing out the newly constructed bench

Left and below: First job before all the other volunteers arrive, the plants are delivered and Robin, Raj and Phil centre and plant the olive trees.



Below: Then it's the turn of the roses.



The garden is carefully planted, with other activities planned for volunteers when that is finished.



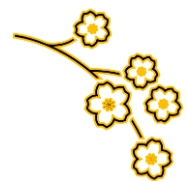


Our Project Leaders taught us the name of the design – we were planting up a Charbargh. We made certificates for those who had donated money for the roses, benches and arches.



St Ives in Bloom 2023

THANK YOU for your
DONATION towards
the **CHARBARGH**



“connected communities” garden



Above and above right:
Robin and Josh sort out
how to plant and
encourage the
honeysuckle and jasmine.



Right: Our youngest
volunteer helps to dig and
plant the crocus bulbs,
with only a little help from
our Treasurer, Sarah.



Below: Our other young
helpers decide to make
flowers out of card
before planting the
pansies and sprinkling
the wildflower seeds.



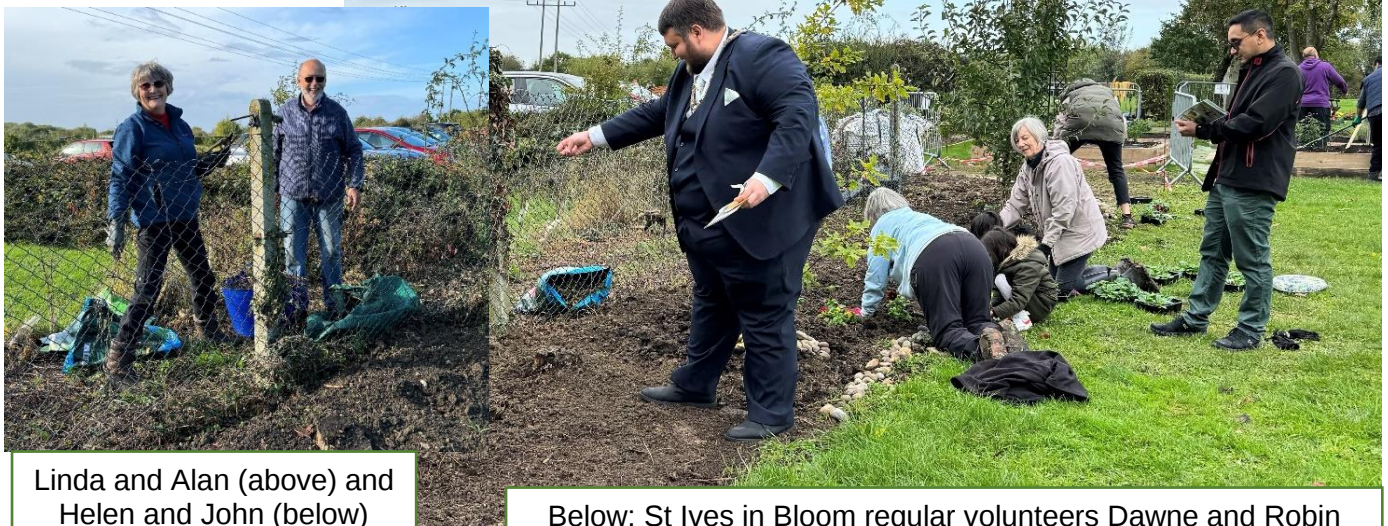
Left: The St Ives in Bloom group get the new border bed raked ready for wildflower seeds, and train the dog roses along the fence.



Right: Beccy builds a wildlife habitat.



Below right: Children help plant pansies, while the Mayor helps to sow the wildflower seeds we had been given by Waitrose.



Linda and Alan (above) and Helen and John (below) join the work to make another new flowerbed.

Below: St Ives in Bloom regular volunteers Dawne and Robin tidy up the dahlias at the new flowerbed by the entrance gate.





We managed to get a group photo before the rain arrived and, more importantly, we were able to eat our lunch under the trees!



We are now hoping to continue the links and friendships made through the need for continuing garden maintenance and, in particular, the planting of salvias in the spring. We are really hoping to get people who started with St Ives in Bloom on this project, to work with us again in the other areas of improvement within the cemetery. We have our volunteer work parties timetabled, and have been talking to Pasco, Shariqa and Raj about undertaking further collaborative projects in 2024, providing new volunteers with other gardening opportunities.



Our new garden came in quite close to the projected cost of £5000, and the Muslim community were able to add to the funds from the Connected Communities grant. St Ives in Bloom have been able to contribute the £800 over budget, but donations are still coming in to 'sponsor a rose' or similar. The project was insured within our annual liability insurance.



Hattie (centre) Secretary of St Ives in Bloom, with her gift of roses. The Mayor and Shariqa, Raj and many of the helpers on the day.