

April 28, 2022: Laudato si' meeting, SMSJ School

Present: Anne Peplow (note taker), Liz Cullen, Anthony Brown, Katrina Harkin (Laudato Si Leader SMSJ), Phil Ryan

Apologies: Mark Wiggins, Malcolm Peplow, Grace Fellows & Zoe Mabbott

1. The Swift Project

Anthony had heard from Joe Howson about this. He confirmed that Salford Diocese in conjunction with the RSPB had undertaken several projects to encourage Swifts onto church land. Joe advised that due to a loss of habitat and fewer insects being available (an essential part of a swift's diet) the swift population was in steep decline.

The project works like this: -

A specialist from the RSPB would be asked to inspect our church buildings to identify places that could safely be used to house Swifts. For example, in Longridge a belfry was identified. Without any disruption to the use and fabric of the belfry, nest boxes were placed in the belfry which encouraged the swifts to roost. They accessed and egressed from the belfry via the louvres which were in situ. Swifts are very clean birds, and their presence did not have a negative impact on the building or its use. As the building was a Grade II listed building no screws or other fittings were used which might have damaged the fabric of the building. Prior to the introduction of the nest boxes the Swift Project obtained permission from the Council to ensure that everything was done in keeping with the building's Grade II status.

If we wish to proceed, we would require the approval of Fr. Paul. Anthony confirmed that he would speak to Fr. Paul before any steps were taken to move this project on. Subject to this, we would liaise with the Swift Project and arrange to have a site inspection carried out and take things from there.

2. School Garden Development Plan

Katrina gave a presentation on this Plan. She confirmed that she is looking forward to proceeding with this project. Her number one priority remains the safety of the children. Work is still needed of the paths and on the raised beds to ensure that they are child friendly prior to the children being allowed access into the garden. Katrina said that some saw dust has been donated which could be used to line the pathways to prevent trips, slips, and falls and to reduce any further deterioration of the walkways. In addition, the existing raised beds need be upgraded with wood chippings to make them safer, sturdier, and fit for purpose. Malcolm is to be approached to see if he can undertake the work needed to improve the raised beds. Katrina said that there was approx. £30 left over from the money raised for the skip hire that could be used to purchase the wood which was needed. Katrina confirmed that power is available in one of the porta cabins although this would need to be accessed via a key which Katrina has access to. Anne will speak to Malcolm about this and ask him to email Katrina if he can undertake this work as he would need to purchase the wood to proceed. Plants are needed Anne said she could supply Sunflowers and pumpkins together with some flower seeds which had been donated.

3. The skip

The skip which the school have ordered is in situ can will be there until 3rd May 2022.

4. Trees and other resources

Antony Brown says that 30 Rowen trees can be delivered in September; help will be needed to plant these.

Katrina has accessed the Woodland Trust website which is also a resource for free native trees

Anne said that Malcolm had previously approached the River Ribble Trust and that it too could be a source for free trees.

Anne said that she had seen an article in the 30th April 2022 Castle View which referred to various environmental projects being carried out and funded by the National Trust, Cumbria Peat Partnership & Lancashire Peat Partnership. Along with Bowland AONB various schemes were underway and that this might be a source of funding for the School Garden Development Plan.

Katrina also mentioned that there was a watercourse running through the land at the side of the Playing Field. Anne said that she and Malcolm had attended a short course run by Priority Habitats Training run by the River Ribble Trust. She said that they appeared keen to get adults and children involved in monitoring our natural environment. They too could be approached to see if they would be willing to give the school some tips on monitoring and taking care of its natural environment.

Anne was asked to speak to Arnold about the covered raised bed area at the back of the Presbytery. He confirmed that he was looking forward to planting some potatoes once he had the opportunity to do so.

5. Eco – bricks

Phil Liz and Anne said that they would meet at 3.30 on 10th May at the Church Garden to look at the ecobricks to see how many there are and whether they could be used to construct a bench in the school garden. Fr. Paul had previously confirmed he did not think that a structure in the Church Garden would be a useful addition and nor did he think that any use of the pews or statues in a pray garden would be beneficial.

6. The Big Plastic Count

This Eco project which aims to get School children engaged in reducing plastic waste runs weekly from 16 March to 22 May 2022. Children are encouraged to monitor their household plastic waste for a week. Anne and Anthony both confirmed that they were going to take part on an individual basis to simply monitor and hopefully reduce that amount of plastic waste in their households. See <https://thebigplasticcount.com/> for more details.

Next Meeting 9th June 3.30 at SMSJ's School enter via the Main Entrance.