

Winson Green In Bloom 2016



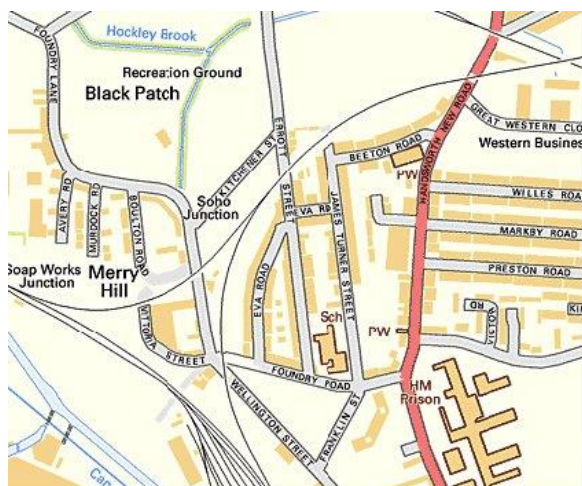
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1. Route

Winson Green In Bloom includes the following streets:

- Beeton Road
- James Turner Street
- Eva Road
- Perrott Street
- Foundry Road
- Handsworth New Road



The area includes Wellington Street Public Open Space which is a very popular play area for local children. It also includes some notable buildings including:

- Foundry Primary School – built in 1883 and now run by Oasis as an academy
- Handsworth New Road Secondary School – now BK House and a Grade II listed building
- Bishop Latimer Memorial Church – consecrated in 1904 and Grade II* Listed

Route

Start – Bishop Latimer Community Garden

- Left to Beeton Road
- Left to James Turner Street
- Right to Eva Road
- Left to Perrott Street
- Left to Foundry Road and the Prison Visitor's Centre

Return via Foundry Road, Eva Road and James Turner Street to Community Garden

2. Introduction

Winson Green is part of Birmingham's Soho Ward – an inner-city area to the west of Birmingham city centre. Although there are challenges to living in Winson Green, the area also has many assets including a young, diverse, multicultural community. Local residents especially value proximity to friends and family and local facilities such as shops, schools, Children's Centre, library, parks and places of worship. The multicultural nature of the community is also greatly valued as are the support networks, neighbourliness and sense of community spirit. There is a lot to be proud of in the area.



3. Events

IYN Awards 2015

Adella, Sandra and Sue, attended the It's Your Neighbourhood Awards event at Hogarth's Hotel in Solihull on the 29th September. After two years of achieving a Level 3 – Developing Award, we finally progressed to a Level 4 – Thriving Award, which was a delight to everyone involved.

The following evening on 30th September we had an event of our own at Bishop Latimer Church Hall to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution of all of the local people in making In Bloom a success.

Copies of the RHS and Heart of England In Bloom certificate with the "It's Your Neighbourhood Award of Level 4 – Thriving" were presented to the many people who made the achievement possible.



It's Your Neighbourhood Awards 2015

Community Workday

The autumn community workday at the Community Garden on Sunday 1st November gave the opportunity to present George and Wently with their In Bloom

certificates. It was a beautiful day to be in the garden and many tasks were completed including bulb planting; making an inventory of the tools in the shed; collecting and shredding leaves; clearing beds and much more.



Adella presenting a certificate to George



Sandra planting daffodil bulbs



Adella presenting a certificate to Wently

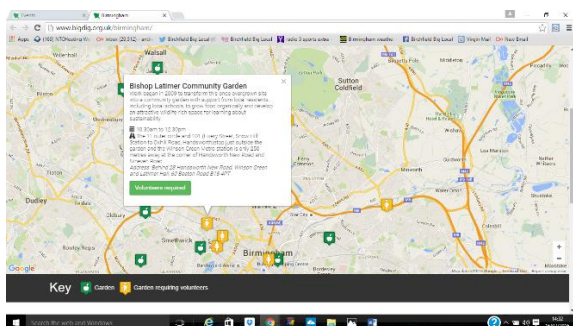
Big Dig Day

We held a Big Dig Day on Sunday 16th April. This was an opportunity for the community gardeners to prepare their raised beds for the new growing season. A team from BT Openreach joined us on the Friday to put up the fence panels that were blown down the previous month by Storm Katie! The team also added extra height to one of the raised beds to make it more accessible for one of the community gardeners.



Big Dig Day 2016

This was our entry on the Big Dig Day map of events, which aims to help people find local food growing sites and volunteer on the day - www.bigdig.org.uk/birmingham



Pastor Roger and Wife

Garden Open Day 2016



Neil from BT Openreach presenting a hanging basket to local residents

This now annual event was held on Sunday 5th June. We had superb weather and the event was well attended. Local residents were encouraged to bring their hanging baskets so that they could be re-planted and some new hanging baskets were available with a selection of plants for people to plant up and take away with them. There was also face painting for the children and food and refreshments for all.

BT Openreach provided an unusual perspective on the garden via an elevation platform – which some people were brave enough to experience, alongside the safety officer on board. Robin Russell, one of the IYN assessors joined us for the day and gave us some useful tips on composting.

The birds-eye view from the BT platform provided the opportunity to compare the garden now and in 2011, before the mature trees in the garden were pollarded.



Garden in August 2011 – from church tower



Garden in June 2016 – from BT elevation platform



Melva and Lorna making up hanging baskets

4. Community Gardeners

The community garden is blessed with a very active group of what we call community gardeners, some of whom have been involved from the beginning of the project in 2009. The community gardeners include people who attend the various church groups associated with Bishop Latimer, including the Community of Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church, LaPepinierePentecostal Church and the Anglican/URC congregation who now use Latimer Church Hall. The gardeners also include local residents.



Mike and Peter in the polytunnel

Community Gardeners – 2016

Michelle – Elim Pentecostal Church & Local resident
Sandra and Roy – Local residents
Mike – Local resident
Sue – Local resident
Pastor Roger and family – La Pepiniere
Andrew – Local resident
Miller and Lorna – Community of Hope
Gary – Local resident
Rhett – Community of Hope
Wenthy – Community of Hope
George – Community of Hope
Sonia&Jadah–Bishop Latimer United Church & Local residents
Joy &Tia – Bishop Latimer United Church
Melva – Community of Hope
Roshni – Bishop Latimer United Church
Barbara – Local resident
Teniesha – Local resident
Peter – Local resident



Gary harvesting Runner Beans

Governance

As well as tending their own raised beds the community gardeners also help to maintain the garden as a whole. Some gardeners have taken on particular responsibilities. For example, Gary has been developing the rockery in front of the polytunnel and has also planted pots and hanging baskets around the garden.



The Rockery – Gary's creation

The community garden is a project of Bishop Latimer United Church and therefore at present the members of the church council have ultimate responsibility for the garden. All funding applications for the work of the garden are completed in the name of the church. To develop the project – governance needs to be more in the hands of the gardeners themselves. To that end a committee has been formed and the first meeting was held on 25th November 2015. A link with the church council is still in place as one of the gardeners is also a Church Warden. The Community Minister and the Lead Gardner support the committee. Over the coming months steps will be taken to open a separate bank account for the garden and to explore the steps for forming a charity.

5. New Beneficiaries

Winson Green Pre-School (WGPS) opened in the church hall of Bishop Latimer United Church on 6th January 2016. The staff take the children on a regular basis to the Community Garden, which is just behind the hall, for their outside stimulation and to experience being close to nature. At Easter time WGPS held an Easter event on the Garden for the children and their families and great fun was had in the 'Hunt the Easter Egg'.

During this summer's school holidays, some portable fencing is going to be erected around the lawn area of the Community Garden, to enable the pre-school children to have greater freedom for play with outside toys, while being in a safe environment. The gardeners are turning one of the small raised beds into a sandpit for the children. On a recent visit from an Ofsted Inspector she commented that she felt that being able to play on the garden as opposed to a tarmacked area was by far the best experience for the children.

6. Garden Wildlife

From the beginning, promoting wildlife and sustainability have been important elements for the community garden. As the garden has matured so too has the wildlife associated with it.

Wildlife pond



RibbetRibbet!

The pond has been a great success in attracting wildlife. There is now a very healthy population of frogs in the garden which we hope are helping to control the slug population! The first spawn this year was recorded on 5th March which was a little earlier than last year (12th March) but a little bit later than 2014 (2nd March). For the record it was the 8th March in both 2012 and 2013.



Common Darter Dragonfly

Dragonflies continue to be attracted to the pond – especially in late July and August – but we have yet to find any dragonfly larvae. Species seen include: Common Darter, Broad Bodied Darter and Southern Hawker. Birds too are attracted to the pond; a pair of Mallard ducks regularly visit and Grey Wagtails have also been seen.

Big Butterfly Count

We take part in the national Big Butterfly Count which this year is from 15th July to 7th August. Last year's count included 7 species: Small Tortoiseshell, Small White, Large Skipper, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Comma, and Speckled Wood. Other species noted this year include Orange Tip, Common Blue, Brimstone, Peacock and Red Admiral.



Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly

Garden birds

The nest boxes are now regularly used by breeding birds. This year we once again had a pair of Blue Tits in nest box 6 next to the poly tunnel, and a pair of Great Tits in nest box 3. Other birds nesting around the garden included Blackbirds, Wren, and Robin. More unusual visitors this year have included a Ring-necked Parakeet. Buzzards have now become the most common bird of prey, with Sparrow Hawks and on occasion – a Peregrine Falcon.

7. BT Openreach and Birmingham Prison

The partnership with BT Openreach has continued throughout 2016. Volunteers have helped with maintenance tasks and construction projects at the community garden, and putting up hanging baskets in the neighbourhood. They have also been supporting Birmingham Prison. Openreach senior operations manager Neil Lehane is a member of the independent prison monitoring board and visits the prison regularly. Through his contact with the prison BT Openreach got involved in building an extension to the polytunnel there. With these facilities, prisoners have been growing plants for Winson Green In Bloom. In total 24 Openreach volunteers have provided more than 100 hours of voluntary support. Some of them returned for the family fun day in June – and brought with them an elevation platform so that residents could get a birds-eye view of the garden.



Extending the polytunnel at Birmingham Prison



Permaculture Garden at Prison Visitor's Centre



Putting up hanging baskets on Eva Road

8. Permaculture at Prison Visitor's Centre

Sam Ewell along with a group from Cincinnati Christian University and local residents have been using permaculture to transform part of the green space in front of the prison's visitor's centre into an "edible landscape." The group has used recycled materials gathered in the local area to create a garden with vegetables and flowers which has become a talking point for people visiting the prison and travelling along the busy A4040.

9. Work in the Wider Community

It has always been the aim of Winson Green in Bloom to reach out to the wider community and encourage local residents to take pride in the local area; be more responsible for the management of their domestic refuse; and to tackle the amount of fly tipping that takes place in the area.

A first important step was to have a greater sense of identity for the work of Winson Green in Bloom and so a logo was created following the celebration event in September.

Community Minister, Adella Pritchard sought meetings with various Council officers and began the conversations needed to bring about a successful working relationship between the City Council and Winson Green in Bloom.

The next step was to encourage some of the gardeners and local residents to meet on a more regular basis to develop an action plan in partnership with the Council. So

Winson Green In Bloom Action Group was formed or IBAG for short!!

An initial meeting in September with two Council officers was very fruitful and an arrangement was made to do some joint work involving the Council's Fleet & Waste Department and the Council's Waste Enforcement Team, by doing a litter-pick/street clean up. However, we then became aware that the three local Councillors had planned a very similar event and were asking for our support in their activity. We did support the event and consequently we asked for an evaluation meeting afterwards which produced some further points of action, one of them being to try and work with members of the newly arrived communities in the neighbourhood. In addition, the IBAG volunteers were able to meet other council officers –the Place Manager and the Street Scene Coordinator.

In January the Street Scene Coordinator and some of her team began a pilot project in the Winson Green In Bloom area. It ran for 3 months and she also had funding for an interpreter to help with the various Eastern European languages spoken by residents in the neighbourhood. The IBAG volunteers were able to feed in further thoughts for the future needs of the community e.g. the introduction of large area bins and a second round of consultation letters to explore if residents without wheelie bins would like them.

We now have a good working relationship with the Street Scene Co-coordinator, her colleague the Tenant Support Officer and more recently have begun to form a working relationship with a neighbourhood officer from Midland Heart Housing Association as a good proportion of the

social housing in the area is owned by Midland Heart. We were also invited to attend the Council's Estate Walkabouts in May which enabled us to recruit yet more volunteers.

With the resources and information sharing that has taken place with the Council and Midland Heart we now have letters that can be easily copied and given out to residents when we want to hold community clean up days and have the letters in 6 different community languages.



Out and about for Good Neighbour Week

At the beginning of June, we held our Annual Good Neighbour Week as part of preparations for the launch of In Bloom and were able to have further conversations about the work of In Bloom and recruit residents to join the Action Group. It has become clear from that week's activity, that the work of Winson Green in Bloom can easily become a year-round project creating opportunities for the residents to get

involved in more mini walkabouts, thereby developing relationships between neighbours and creating better community cohesion in the fight against fly tipping and encouraging greater pride in the local environment. During this week, two large bins were installed at the corner of Eva Road and Perrott Street. A further two bins will be installed in the near future.

Future plans for IBAG

- To increase the membership
- To hold more community walkabouts
- To organise other community activities that bring people together so they get to know one another better – e.g. Community Walks led by Run Birmingham
- To run training courses in partnership with organisations e.g. basic DIY, tenants' rights & responsibilities
- To provide further volunteer opportunities

Timeline of Activity

Date	Description of meeting
September 2015	Meeting with a senior Fleet & Waste inspector and a waste enforcement officer
Early October	Meeting with Place Manager and Street Scene Coordinator
28.10.15	Joint Community Clean-Up Day
17.11.15	Community Clean Up Evaluation Meeting with a local councillor, IBAG volunteers and Street Scene Coordinator
24.11.15	Soho Ward Meeting
(Jan to March)	(Street Scene's Soho Ward Pilot project)
23.03.16	First In Bloom planning meeting
27.04.16	Second In Bloom planning meeting
18.05.16	Third In Bloom Planning Meeting
20.05.16	Latimer Estate Walkabout
31.05.16 to 04.06.16	Good Neighbour Week
05.06.16	Garden Open Day & Launch of In Bloom 2016, with support from BT
12.07.16	Walk about between IBAG, Council & Midland Heart Housing Association
12.07.16	BT Volunteer Day on the Community Garden and putting up hanging baskets around the community.