

Risk Assessment – Volunteer Wildflower Plug Plant & Bulb Planting

Activity: Planting wildflower plug plants and bulbs on grass road verges around Verwood

Location: Various road verges within Verwood, Dorset

Date: October (exact date to be confirmed)

Organiser: Verwood & District Horticultural Society

Participants: Volunteers

Review Date: Prior to event and immediately if conditions change

Activity Description

Volunteers will work in small groups planting native wildflower plug plants and spring-flowering bulbs into grass verges adjacent to public roads. Work will be undertaken using hand planting tools supplied by the organisers, together with any personal gardening tools brought by volunteers if suitable.

Volunteer Participation

- Participation in this activity is entirely voluntary. Volunteers take part at their own discretion and are responsible for deciding whether they are fit and able to undertake the tasks involved.
- Volunteers should follow the instructions provided, wear suitable clothing and footwear, and take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others.
- Volunteers are responsible for any personal belongings they bring to the event. VDHS cannot accept responsibility for loss of or damage to personal property.
- Volunteers should immediately report any hazards, accidents, injuries, or near misses to the event organiser.
- While VDHS will take reasonable steps to identify and manage risks associated with the activity, participation is at each volunteer's own risk.

Risk Assessment

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Harm	Risk Controls	Residual Risk
Moving traffic adjacent to work area	Volunteers, road users	Collision with vehicles	Planting to take place no closer than 50 cm from the kerb edge . Volunteers instructed to remain aware of traffic at all times. Work only on grass verges where safe access is possible. High-visibility jackets to be provided where available and strongly encouraged. Team leaders to monitor safety continuously.	Medium
Crossing roads between planting locations	Volunteers	Collision with traffic	Volunteers instructed to cross only where safe, using pedestrian crossings where available. Groups to remain together where practical.	Low
Uneven ground, rabbit holes, hidden obstacles	Volunteers	Trips, slips, sprains	Volunteers advised to wear sturdy footwear with good grip. Work areas checked visually before starting. Volunteers encouraged to work carefully and report hazards.	Low
Wet grass, mud and slippery surfaces	Volunteers	Slips and falls	Appropriate footwear recommended. Volunteers advised to take extra care during wet conditions. Event leader may suspend work if conditions become unsafe.	Low
Manual handling and repetitive bending	Volunteers	Back strain, muscle strain, fatigue	Volunteers encouraged to alternate tasks, take regular breaks and use correct lifting techniques. Demonstrate comfortable planting positions where possible. Volunteers should only work within their own physical capability.	Low
Use of planting tools (dibbers, trowels, bulb planters, etc.)	Volunteers	Cuts, puncture wounds, bruising	Safe use demonstrated before work begins. Volunteers instructed to carry tools pointing downwards and leave tools safely on the ground when not in use. Damaged tools removed from use. Gloves recommended.	Low
Dog fouling, discarded needles or other hazardous waste	Volunteers	Infection, puncture wounds, contamination	Volunteers should not attempt to remove or handle discarded needles or other hazardous waste. If dog fouling, needles or other hazardous material is found where planting is planned, volunteers should avoid the area immediately, mark the location (e.g. with a spare cane, flag or other visible marker if safe to do so) to alert other team members, and leave that section unplanted. The designated team leader should be informed and, where appropriate, report the hazard to Dorset Council. Disposable gloves and hand sanitiser should be available for general hygiene, but gloves must not be relied upon to protect against needle-stick injuries. Volunteers should wash or sanitise their hands before eating or drinking.	Low
Weather (rain, cold, wind)	Volunteers	Cold stress, discomfort, slips	Volunteers advised to wear weather-appropriate waterproof clothing and warm layers. Event may be postponed or stopped during severe weather or high winds.	Low
Unexpected warm weather	Volunteers	Dehydration, heat exhaustion	Volunteers encouraged to bring drinking water and remain hydrated. Regular rest breaks encouraged. Sun protection	Low

Hazard	Persons at Risk	Potential Harm	Risk Controls	Residual Risk
			recommended if conditions are unusually warm.	
Fatigue	Volunteers	Reduced concentration leading to accidents	Volunteers encouraged to take breaks and stop work if tired. No expectation to continue beyond personal capability.	Low
Vehicle parking	Volunteers	Traffic hazards while arriving/leaving	Organisers will recommend suitable safe parking locations away from busy roads where possible. Volunteers reminded not to obstruct highways or residents' access.	Low
First aid incidents	Volunteers	Minor or serious injury	At least one first aid kit available. Each team to have a responsible volunteer briefed on emergency arrangements and carrying a fully charged mobile phone. Emergency contact details available.	Low
Medical emergency	Volunteers	Serious illness or injury	Team leaders briefed on emergency procedures and nearest Accident & Emergency department. Emergency Services contacted immediately via 999 where required. Volunteers encouraged to inform organisers confidentially of relevant medical conditions if they may affect participation.	Low
Multiple teams working separately	Volunteers	Delayed response in emergency	Each team to have a designated responsible volunteer with mobile phone. Teams provided with organiser contact numbers and meeting arrangements. Teams to report completion of activities.	Low
Lone working	Volunteers	Delayed assistance	Volunteers should work in pairs or groups. No volunteer should work alone at isolated locations.	Low
Public interaction	Volunteers, members of public	Distraction or conflict	Volunteers to remain courteous and avoid obstructing footpaths. Team leaders to manage any issues and stop work temporarily if necessary.	Low
Dogs and dog fouling	Volunteers	Infection, slips	Gloves recommended. Volunteers to avoid contaminated areas and wash hands before eating. Hand sanitiser recommended.	Low
Insects, stings and plants	Volunteers	Allergic reactions, minor injuries	Volunteers to wear gloves where appropriate. Any known allergies should be disclosed confidentially to team leaders. Emergency medication (e.g. inhalers or adrenaline auto-injectors) remains the responsibility of the individual volunteer.	Low
Litter or hidden sharp objects	Volunteers	Cuts or puncture wounds	Volunteers instructed not to handle hazardous waste. Hazardous items reported to organisers or the local authority. Gloves recommended.	Low
Biosecurity	Environment	Spread of invasive species or plant disease	Only approved plants and bulbs supplied by organisers to be planted. Excess material disposed of appropriately.	Low
Poor communication	Volunteers	Confusion during emergency	Mobile phones fully charged. Team leaders hold organiser and emergency contact numbers. Agreed meeting point established if required.	Low

Control Measures

Before the Event

- Volunteers receive a safety briefing.
- Demonstration of safe use of planting tools.
- Teams allocated with a designated responsible volunteer.
- Planting locations assessed for suitability.
- Safe parking locations identified.
- First aid kit checked and available.
- Emergency contact list prepared.
- Weather forecast monitored.

Parking

- Volunteers wishing to drive to the planting site should park safely, not obstructing drives, junctions, or introducing risk to the working party or other road users.
- The VDHS are not responsible for any loss or damage to personal property.

During the Event

- Volunteers wear suitable clothing and sturdy footwear.
- High-visibility jackets worn where available.
- Volunteers remain at least **50 cm from the kerb** while planting.
- Regular breaks encouraged.
- Drinking water brought by volunteers.
- Work stopped if weather or traffic conditions become unsafe.
- Team leaders maintain regular contact with organisers.
- Where possible, cones / warning triangles will be placed at either end of the work areas to highlight the hazard to road users.

Hazardous Waste Procedure

If volunteers discover dog fouling, discarded needles, broken glass or any other hazardous material:

- **Do not touch or attempt to remove it.**
- Move away from the immediate area.
- Mark the location, if it is safe to do so, so other volunteers avoid it.
- Inform the designated team leader.
- Skip planting in that location and continue elsewhere.
- The team leader should report the hazard to Dorset Council where appropriate.
- In the event of a needle-stick injury, encourage the wound to bleed gently, wash thoroughly with soap and water, cover with a waterproof dressing, seek immediate medical advice (NHS 111 or the nearest A&E as appropriate), and report the incident to the event organiser.

Emergency Arrangements

- Emergency Services: **999**
- Responsible volunteer in each team carries a fully charged mobile phone.
- First aid kit available.
- All incidents, however minor, should be reported to the organiser.

Nearest Accident & Emergency Department

- Royal Bournemouth Hospital, Castle Lane E, Bournemouth, BH7 7DW
- Alternatively, if advised by emergency services, Salisbury District Hospital may be appropriate depending on location and traffic conditions (SP2 8BJ)

Children

- Children are the responsibility of their parent/guardian, and should be supervised at all times by their parent/guardian.
- Max 2 children per adult.
- Activity not suitable for under 5's.

Welfare

- Volunteers should bring:
 - Drinking water
 - Weather-appropriate clothing
 - Sturdy footwear
 - Gardening gloves (recommended)
 - Any required personal medication
- Toilet facilities are **not available on site**.
- The nearest public toilets are located in **Verwood town centre at Ferrett Green**.

Volunteers Should Not Participate If They

- Feel unwell on the day.
- Have an injury that may be aggravated by bending or digging.
- Are unable to safely work near roads.
- Are under the influence of alcohol or drugs that may impair judgement.

Environmental Considerations

- Minimise disturbance to existing wildlife and vegetation.
- Avoid damaging tree roots or existing planting.
- Remove all equipment and litter on completion.
- Respect residents and other users of public spaces.

Overall Risk Rating

Overall residual risk: Low, provided the control measures described above are implemented and supervised throughout the event.

Prepared by:	
Date:	
Reviewed by:	
Signature:	