

Portfolio for The Triangle (A6 – Chevin Road junction, Milford) entry for East Midlands In Bloom “It’s your neighbourhood” entry 2017

In 2007 a group of garden enthusiasts in Milford got together with the aim of making the village a better place through volunteer gardening projects and formed a group called “Blooming Milford”. Over the next 10 years we have done many projects, planting over 6000 bulbs in the verges along the A6 in the village, planting clumps of bulbs in the village play area and along Wood Lane off Sunny Hill, creating a garden round the telephone box on the A6, setting up communal herb planters and putting up bird boxes and creating a wildflower garden in Hopping Mill meadow and most recently joining forces with the Millers Way garden group to create (over several years) an extensive wildflower meadow by the Derwent. Our most ambitious project to date though has been the renovation and upkeep of The Triangle, the piece of land owned by Belper Town Council on the junction of the A6 (Derby Road) and Chevin Road. This has for many years (continuing to the present day) had a large, bright and colourful bedding plant border all the way along the A6 with both winter and summer bedding, provided by Belper Town Council, but the land behind it had become a little neglected. So, in 2012 a partnership was set up between the Blooming Milford Group and Belper Town Council to improve the land behind the bedding border. This has been highly successful and continues to the present day. It started in 2012 with Blooming Milford providing and filling two herb planters, along with professional signage, for The Triangle.



*Newly planted herb planter
May 2012*



*Blooming Milford herb
planting team May 2012*



*Professional signage for planters
May 2012*

In 2013 it was decided to go a step further and plant up a community orchard on The Triangle free for the village to use. Up until this point all the projects undertaken by Blooming Milford had been funded by a sale of plants from members gardens at the annual Milford village May Fair, but the community orchard was a much bigger undertaking than they’d ever attempted before, so it was decided to try and gain sponsorship for the project from local businesses to cover the £250 proposed costs. This was considerably more successful than anticipated, since a total of £480 was raised, including a very generous £350 from local employee Lubrizol Ltd. This enabled much larger fruit trees than had been originally proposed to be bought, more generous chipped bark areas under the trees for easier picking and a greater variety of “bee friendly” perennial flowers planted around the trees to encourage pollination of the fruit blossom.

Over a weekend in March 2013 Belper Town Council cleared The Triangle site and a group of 12 volunteers (not just the Blooming Milford group) spent the rest of the day setting up the orchard, as can be seen from the pictures. A tonne of organic compost was dug into the site and then it was planted up with apple, plum and pear trees, rhubarb, bay, sage, and the bee friendly perennial flowers, and the chipped bark spread round the trees.



Local volunteers hard at work planting fruit trees and perennials and applying compost & chipped bark March 2013

Three months later and the “official opening” took place and it can be seen from the pictures that the place had been transformed. The apple tree behind the group is already laden with fruit – in just the first year. The group includes members of Blooming Milford, Belper Town Council and the Lubrizol Charities and Communities Committee.



Official opening of Triangle Community Orchard June 2013

Since then the partnership between Belper Town Council and Blooming Milford has continued and the area has matured nicely but remains very well kept. At least 4 times a year Blooming Milford thoroughly weeds the area, and Belper Town Council (BTC) removes the resulting 6-8 black bin liners of weeds. BTC also continues to plant the bedding along the front, prunes the bushes, waters the herb planters and deals with occasional sprouts of Japanese knotweed.



Weeding party, autumn 2015

Willow sculptures provided for Triangle as part of Milford's Silver Gilt award winning entry for East Midlands Best Kept Village in July 2013

Blooming Milford planted extensive clumps of bulbs round the fruit trees in 2014, and continues to feed them annually. In 2015 Blooming Milford replaced the plum tree which had died with a pear tree, which now thrives. They also annually supply organic codling moth traps and grease bands for the apple trees, to stop the apples having maggots, feed the fruit trees and replenish the herb planters. Recipes have been placed on the Milford & Makeney website for apples, pears and rhubarb, and locals make wine from the rhubarb.



The Triangle in full bloom June 2017

Written by Blooming Milford 17th June 2017