



PORTFOLIO 2022

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1. Curry Rivel

Curry Rivel is a village in South Somerset in the Somerton and Frome parliamentary constituency. It has a population of approximately 2,500 (electoral role 1,500) and is set on a ridge high above the Somerset Levels.

It is a long village which straddles the main A378 trunk road, and offers wonderful views of the levels from the north and the south.

There is a bus link to Taunton and Yeovil, and the village has a 15th century church, a convenience shop, a filling station with a shop and post office, the Firehouse restaurant, and Sandpits Heating Centre.



2. Curry Rivel in Bloom: Our story so far

Curry Rivel in Bloom was started in 2016 as the result of the parish plan published in 2015. A small group of volunteers began clearing the very overgrown war memorial.

July 2017 was our first-year entry to South West in Bloom; we won a silver medal and The City of Bath Trophy for the landscaping of the War Memorial. The planting was annual to last for one season.

In 2018 we replanted and redesigned the War Memorial with a permanent red, white and blue theme to signify the three-Armed forces.

Granny's Garden and the sensory planting was developed. We took on an allotment, involving the Brownies and Rainbows, and installed the railing planters. We found other areas in the village to install pots and planters such as the three village ends.

Our entry into South West in Bloom brought great success; winning a gold medal, The Cox Cup for best large village. The Michael McGahey Trophy for Exceptional Community Effort and the Sargeant Trophy for Outstanding Effort and Dedication.

In 2019 we were entered into the Britain in Bloom finals where we won a silver gilt medal. We won gold in the South West in Bloom awards.

2020 /21: Covid

During the pandemic we continued to maintain planting around the village, but worked alone or in a bubble of two. We arranged things by email and phone calls. One of our achievements during lock down was to arrange the building of the retaining wall at Granny's Garden to replace a difficult to maintain grassy bank. Villagers commented that they really appreciated us keeping the planting going to cheer up the village.

Laraine and Peter Hayes had been given several wooden planters by a neighbour. Peter restored and treated them and Laraine organised with the residents of Parsonage Place a sheltered housing area to grow flowers or vegetables of their choice. CRiB provided all of the soil and plants. This helped the residents to be mobile and get some fresh air during lockdown. This enabled us to apply for a grant from our local Nisa shop and we were awarded £1000 to help our project. This year the residents are still looking after their troughs and most have chosen mainly flowers to plant.

2022: We slowly came out of lockdown and have resumed meetings and work parties. We recently organised the village Open Gardens which, despite the rain was a successful event and many people enjoyed getting out and about for the first time.

We have a band of volunteers and helpers; we now have people to water and weed each area of planting. We have set up rotas for the War Memorial and Granny's Garden as they are the largest area to cover.

There are monthly CRiB and recycling articles in the Curry Rivel News.

We have obtained sponsorships and grants from Nisa & The Parish Council.

We have raised £300 from plant sales in the village.

We have continued to develop the allotment with the Brownies & Rainbows. We have held weeding sessions around the village and mulched the war memorial and added bark chippings. We have continued to develop our community involvement. especially with the planters at Parsonage Place which have encouraged older people to garden and get outside during lockdown.



Sandra planting up her trough



Lesley looking after her flowers



The donated planters



Peter preparing the planters



Bob at Parsonage Place with his beans.

3. The War Memorial

The war memorial was built in 1920 and from sometime in the 60s hadn't really been cared for apart from trimming back the shrubs. From our initial efforts in 2016 through to the WW1 commemoration planting, with the installation of extra posts and the willow Dove of Peace in 2018, we have continued to develop and improve the garden. The regeneration of the War Memorial has allowed this area to become a new focal point for the village.



Planting at the war memorial consists of shrubs and perennials in the colours red, white and blue representing the Army, Navy and the RAF.

There are plants with meaning, such as Rosemary for remembrance and Forget Me Nots. A dianthus called Fusilier in the Army Garden and roses planted in memory of loved ones. The planting, especially the scabious in the blue garden, attracts wild life and we have put down a saucer of water with pebbles to allow birds, bees and butterflies attracted by our planting to have a drink. Local residents have donated plants. We fill in areas with annuals where necessary.

The Dove of Peace



4. Granny's Garden: A Garden to Stimulate the Senses

In 2018 this area was developed into a sensory garden. This was done in 2018. The Langport and Somerton Rotary Club donated to sponsor it.

This piece of land was ceded to the Parish Council by the Mounter family, who still live in the village. Before the petrol station was built, this piece of land was the garden of Granny Mounter. It was originally called the 'Twinning Area' as the oak tree growing here was donated to the village by our partner town in France; Cheveilly. The current family were delighted that the land was renamed in 2018 by the Parish Council and CRiB as "Granny's Garden".

The garden is designed to be an easy maintenance garden for people of all ages to touch, taste, smell, see the vibrant colours, and hear the grasses rustle and the wind chime in the tree! The height of the wall makes it accessible to those in a wheel chair.

South Somerset District Council gave 3,000 spring bulbs for planting in the area next to the petrol station. These are now well established and in spring we leave the grass long as a Blue Heart area along with the dandelions and buttercups as first food in the spring for bumble bees and other insects.

The rose garden and rose arch with the 'Madeleine' rose were planted in 2019 as a memorial to Madelaine King-Oakley who was instrumental in renaming Granny's Garden and who did so much for CRiB and the village. While digging for the rose garden we actually unearthed Granny Mounter's doorstep!



The newly planted wall at Granny's Garden Oct 2021

During lockdown we were able to find a local builder to build a retaining wall at the south end of the garden to replace a very difficult to maintain grassy bank. This was done with the cooperation of Terry Mounter and CRiB who shared the cost. It is being planted with low growing sensory plants to allow the residents in the lane visibility when leaving the driveway.

5.The Allotment

In 2018 CRiB took over part of an allotment at the Heale Lane site. This has been well developed and in 2022 we were able to take over the other half. The Brownies and Rainbows visit and use the site. This is expertly run by Nicky Barker.

A green house was found on Freecycle and put up with the help of other allotment owners and volunteers. The raised beds were made by Peter Hayes and Ted King-Oakley using recycled wood, and the benches, another Freecycle find, were refurbished by Peter Hayes,

The bug house continues to attract wild life, along with the water feature and plants to attract pollinators for the numerous vegetables and fruit being grown here. The small pond attracts frogs and is well used by the resident sparrows.

The Brownies hold summer meetings here and have turned what was once a bare patch of land into a vibrant well used allotment. They have already been able to harvest lettuce, radishes, beans and peas with more produce to come. Much of the produce is donated to the local foodbank.

There are several compost bays which provide good compost and this year the no dig method was used when taking over the new part of the allotment. Another greenhouse from Freecycle and a polytunnel, which is used as a classroom were added. Water is harvested from the greenhouse and shed rooves.

Brownies planting tomatoes in the rain!



6. Planting around the village.

As well as the War Memorial and Granny's Garden, we now have planting in several areas of the village. The three village ends, the railings in the High Street, two bus stops; Parsonage Place and Townsend, Chatham Place, Barton Close, Coopers Cross, Wiltown Garage and the BP garage. We are always looking out for more areas to develop. All these areas are watered and deadheaded by local residents.

Local villagers appreciate the efforts made and when out working and watering they often stop and compliment CRiB on keeping the village beautiful.



The Langport end



Summer planting on the railings

7. Eastfield & Batty Piece

Eastfield is an unimproved, natural grassland field belonging to our community, which together with the adjoining privately owned Batty Piece, support a number of wildflower species which indicate that they have not undergone agricultural improvement, such as the application of artificial fertilisers or herbicides, for decades, if not centuries. This is an unusual habitat, belonging to the 5% of species-rich grassland that has not had its native flora destroyed since the Second World War.

A survey was carried out in 2016 that lists 39 plant species of which 15 are classified as rare. A nightingale has held a territory next to the field for the past two years; its conservation status in the UK is red listed as it has suffered very steep decline over the past thirty years. It has eggs of the brown hairstreak butterfly, a nationally scarce species. The site is home to the Great Green Bush Cricket and numerous Pyramidal Orchids.

An educational display board was erected in 2018 and a side gate for pedestrian access installed. A balance of community use (walking and one side as a car park for events) and maintaining its environmental specialty is being achieved.

The Curry Rivel Wildlife Survey Group organise talks, visits and walks, while encouraging wildlife friendly gardening, and a survey of moth activity has recently taken place.



8. Community Involvement

In 2018 we won the South West in Bloom cup for The Best Community Involvement. Since then, we have been working to maintain and develop that involvement. We have obvious links to The British Legion and to the Parish Council who are both very supportive of our work. We have links to The Rotary Club of Langport & Somerton who have sponsored Granny's Garden two years. They support clubs locally for patients with dementia and the Sensory Garden was designed with them in mind. We have obtained sponsorship from The Parish Council, our local Nisa shop in the BP garage, from the recent Open Gardens event which was organised by CRiB, and from many individuals.

We hold an annual Front Garden competition to encourage village participation, this year the theme was the Jubilee and the 100th anniversary of the village WI.

We have also introduced an award for a Young Gardener of the Year in memory of Madelaine King-Oakley. This is sponsored by Ted, her husband. This year it was won by Zac Powell who was a previous winner in 2020.

Pre Covid, we held several fund-raising events, the first being a Pumpkin Party for the children which was well attended and a very enjoyable afternoon for young and old. Hopefully we can repeat this event this year. We also

previously held quiz nights which were well attended and another is planned for the autumn.



We have held plant sales at the War Memorial which are very popular. They are run on a “bring and buy or come and buy” theme and people from all over the village come and admire the memorial garden, do some weeding, have cup of coffee and a chat, and of course buy plants. We have given gardening advice and gained a few more volunteers at each sale.

Most of our members are WI members and we have their support especially on judging day when they prepare a lunch in the village hall. We have helped residents at Parsonage Place sheltered housing with planting during lockdown.

We are currently working with the Parish Council to develop Westfield recreation area with landscaping and planting ideas.

In June this year CRiB organised the village Open Gardens which had not taken place for three years. Twelve gardens opened, together with the wild life meadows, allotments, school the War Memorial and Granny's Garden and Curry Woods. It was a rainy day but many families turned out to enjoy the gardens and cream teas in the village hall.

Gina writes a Curry Rivel in Bloom article each month in the Curry Rivel News magazine and this is distributed to each household in the village. The website is now directly linked to the Curry Rivel Village website and details of all our events and contact details are there.

We have established links with the village school. The new head has been here since 2021 and is a keen gardener, Gina has been liaising with the head. During lockdown we gave advice and helped design a butterfly & bee friendly garden. Gina helps at the school Garden club Mondays, with help from Rob the caretaker, we have planted seeds and helped to plant hanging baskets with the children. A new bug house has been created using pallets Two raised beds have been built to grow vegetables, and CRiB have donated plants for the school garden which the children have planted. The school has an active forest school and has a wild area and recently planted several trees.



A Mediterranean garden in the village open gardens



The school Bee friendly Garden

9. Environmental Responsibility

Around the village, with the exception of the railing troughs, all our planters have been donated, reused and recycled. Soil has been reused and donated along with compost received from villagers. The raised beds at the allotments have been made using recycled wood and pallets and the soil donated, the 'No Dig' method has been tried out there too. Four compost bins at the allotment provide a lot of soil which is reused. The bug house at the allotment has had a refurbishment.

Since CRiB was formed, we have always had a 'no chemical use' policy and although it involves more hard work, all our weeding is done by hand. The grass at Granny's Garden is left long in the spring for bees and other insects. We leave the red poppies at the war memorial to grow.

We are establishing awareness of the Blue Heart campaign and many gardens in the village have areas of grass left for the wildlife to enjoy. This was evident at the recent Open Gardens event where many gardens had swathes of long grass. We have encouraged the church to leave sections in the churchyard to rewild.

The wild life meadow at Eastfield has an informative sign and this year has been good for orchids, we have pyramidal white, yellow and red orchids, bee orchids as well as Lady's Bedstraw and many other plants which encourage other wild life, especially bees and butterflies. There have been visits and walks arranged to the field which is open to all villagers and of course they can walk there at any time.

We encourage recycling wherever possible; we ask villagers to bring flower pots to our plant sales to be rehomed. Our local nursery where we obtain our summer planting will now take back pots and trays to reuse.



A Scarlet Tiger Moth on Knapweed at the War memorial

At Parsonage Place we have recently installed guttering and a water butt, to assist the villagers who water our displays here so that they don't have to carry water to the site and to avoid the use of tap water. Places in the village that have no water supply are watered where possible, with rain water collected in water butts and then transported in four pint milk bottles!

A new initiative in the village was established during lockdown; The Curry Woods Conservation Trust which is a registered charity set up in 2020 bought a piece of mature woodland overlooking the Somerset levels. The aim is to protect and enhance the woodland and 1000 new trees have already been planted on what was once previously poor agricultural land. The woodland forms part of an important natural network that allows wildlife to safely move through it and along the ridge and the trees capture carbon and absorb rainwater, thus slowing the passage of water to both the village and the levels in times of flooding. It is planned to develop a wild life meadow on the site and in future there will be information boards and a glade with seating. The land is open to the public at all times. The schoolchildren and the WI have visited and have planted trees.



New guttering and water butt at Parsonage place

10. Historical Highlights in the Village

The Village Hall

Curry Rivel Village Hall was built in 1907 using a legacy left by Robert Sewers to the village.

School dinners were served in the hall until 2004 when the new school hall was built. The Chatham Room was added to the rear of the building in 1994. In 2013 a new



porch and kitchen were added making the hall available to a far wider range of events. There are numerous clubs and societies in the village that use the hall today on a regular basis.

The War Memorial

Local builder James Dyer & Sons were commissioned to build the memorial which was dedicated on Sunday 7 November 1920. The memorial was repaired and cleaned in 2014 in preparation for the ceremonies commemorating the start of the First World War in 1914. It was fitting that in 2018 Curry Rivel in Bloom commemorated the ending of the First World War and the coming of peace in November 1918 with a new permanent planting scheme. We also created a poppy trail from the church to the War Memorial.

One hundred and fifty-seven men and one woman from the village and surrounding area served in World War 1, twenty-one of whom were killed in action or died of their wounds or disease and two died from accidents. Twenty names are currently listed on the memorial and a booklet produced by Rita and Dave Garnett describes in more detail the stories of those soldiers and this can be found by the memorial in St Andrews Church.

The majority of those who went to war returned, but the village they returned to has changed significantly during the last hundred years.

The Old School Room

The church donated land on the north side of the churchyard and in 1828 the Old School Room was built, £127 being raised by public subscription. Most of the children of the village and surrounding area were educated here until the present village school opened in 1876.



During its lifetime a boiler house and kitchen were added and about 15 years ago the community came together again to raise funds for a major restoration to extend its life. The room is used for numerous social functions and provides a place for after-school activities.

The Village School

The current primary school opened in 1876 for 112 children aged from 3-14. Since then, the school has grown from its three, poorly heated classrooms with toilets in the yard.



In contrast the extended school buildings today provide accommodation for children aged 2-11, in warm comfortable and educationally stimulating surroundings.

The school has a forest garden where nature activities and learning take place. Historically children had gardening lessons at the allotments which were on the school site.

The Forge/The Olde Forge Inn/The Firehouse

The Blacksmith in his forge opposite the school would no doubt have fascinated the schoolchildren, as they arrived and left the school.

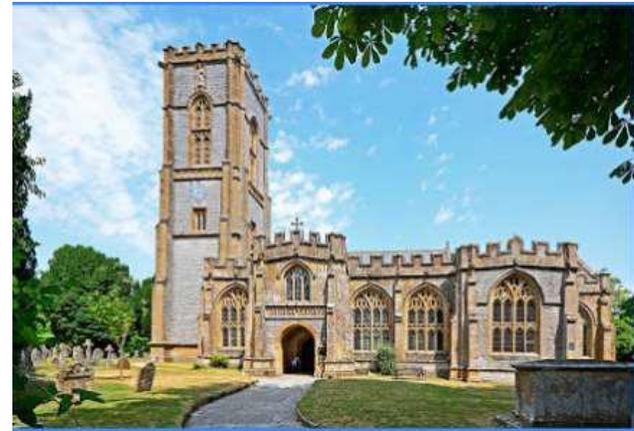


Walter Scriven was the last village blacksmith who continued to mend agricultural machinery and make ornamental gates until the early 1970s, with his wares being sold at the ironmongers opposite, which is now the site of Sandpits Heating Centre.

The Old Forge was redeveloped and reopened as the Firehouse restaurant in 2017.

St Andrew's Church

Built in the 15th century on the site of a Saxon church it is the oldest building in Curry Rivel. It is built of locally quarried Blue Lias and Ham Hill stone.



The tower was rebuilt in 1860 and sadly one Langport mason, Henry Bevan, died after falling from the tower. The cost of the rebuild included over £2 spent on 96 pints of cider.

In 1875 a "great gale" blew one of the pinnacles from the tower crashing through the roof into the nave causing significant damage. The other five pinnacles were hastily removed to prevent further calamity.

11. Plans for the Future....

Next Year 2022/23 we plan to...

- Continue to raise sponsorship and apply for grants.
- Continue to hold our fund-raising events
- Find more areas to install water butts to save use of tap water.
- Continue to expand our band of helpers to include younger families.
- Continue to raise environmental awareness through recycling and caring for the environment.
- Grow more sustainable planting; perennials, even vegetables as an attractive alternative to flowers in planters.
- Work with the Parish Council on the redevelopment of Westfield as a community space. Gina & Laraine are helping with plans for a landscaped area and a sensory area.

12. Our partners and supporters in 2022

Curry Rivel Parish Council

John Casebourne Litter and strimming

Nisa Shop & BP Garage Wiltown Garage

Sandpits Heating Centre

Curry Rivel WI

Curry Rivel Flower Show

Greenshutters Garden Centre

Brimsmore Garden Centre

Kelways Garden Centre

South Somerset District Council

Northwing Nurseries Curry Rivel

13. A Special Thanks to our helpers

Thank you to over 50 people in the village who help in many ways, watering, deadheading, weeding, cutting grass, digging, moving heavy objects and much more.

Thank you to our committee who work hard organizing and coordinating CRiB.



Thank you to all our volunteers and villagers who make Curry Rivel look so beautiful.



Mulching the War memorial in March 2022



Working at Granny's Garden June 2022

14.Spring Planting around the village



The new wall at Granny's Garden
with the grass left long to let
the spring bulbs die down and feed the bees



Wall at Parsonage Place with naturalised bulbs in the background



Spring Flowers at the allotment



The white Navy Garden at the War memorial with white daffodils



The Blue RAF Garden at the War memorial in spring with Forget Me Nots and Knapweed



The red Army Garden with tulips in spring