



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2024 – PARKS AND GARDENS COMMITTEE**

The Parks and Gardens Committee looks after the main green spaces in the village, namely the Strand Gardens, the Memorial Garden, The Millenium Garden and Bonhay Road Park. The Committee is responsible for the safety and general management with routine maintenance carried out by our contractors, Plant Tech and Tom and Trish Greenslade who, we feel do a great job in keeping these areas looking so attractive.

In the past year, the Parish Council has funded the purchase of new shrubs and spring bulbs which were planted into the shrubbery on the Strand to provide more year-round colour in an areas which is well-used and appreciated by walkers and cyclists alike. Starcross in Bloom kindly takes care of the planters along here and elsewhere along the Strand and we hope to see their usual colourful displays when summer arrives.

There has been considerable activity in the Park over the past 12 months with a focus on enhancing imaginative play, improving safety and protecting/ developing the ecological environment. We organised a wildlife-focused event for all ages at the Pavilion last May, led by our local Wildlife Officer, and from this a small group "Starcross Goes Wild" was set up to support the main committee in this work. With the support of Starcross Action for Trees (SAFT) a hedgerow was planted to protect the ecological corridor that runs across the back of the park, at the boundary with Bakers Boatyard and a small orchard and a willow grove have been created in an area where the grass will be allowed to grow long. Native wildflowers are being introduced and we are looking at adding some muddy puddle/ wet areas and possibly some Swift boxes to see if we can attract different birds and insects. We are sure everyone was saddened to see that one of the old oak had to be felled for safety reasons - it had areas of rot and hadn't grown back after an earlier pruning for the same reason. Thanks to the imagination and skills of Steve Swift and his team however, the felled oak will remain in the park and appears to be providing great fun as a boat/ monster/ rocket (just a few of the descriptions we have heard) or just a different place to sit!

The other major addition to the park has been the fencing which runs along the footpath which was recently installed by Mamhead Sawmills and separates the play area from the general thoroughfare. We have been made aware that older residents find it difficult to access the benches without walking over grass and we are actively looking at a solution which we hope will resolve this within the next month or so.

The Parks and Gardens Committee welcomes comments as to ways in which we could further enhance our green spaces such as through "litter picks" and, in particular, "Starcross Goes Wild" is always keen for input from any member of the community interested in preserving wildlife and our environment.

**Councillors Chase, Allen, Lovell, Williamson and McNally**