



Portfolio 2026

GROWING FOR GOLD!



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“It has been a great pleasure to see so many individuals and groups come together and their enthusiasm to contribute meaningfully for the community.”

Neil Pullen, Conservation Lead for Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

**CHECK OUT
OUR BLOOM
WEBSITE!**



www.southswindoninbloom.co.uk

Who We Are

South Swindon in Bloom exists to inspire individuals and groups in South Swindon to make positive changes to our local environment and neighbourhoods through horticulture, environment and community action.

South Swindon is a mainly urban area south of the Bristol to London railway line, with a population of about 65,000. It has a highly diverse community, including 10 neighbourhoods among the 20% most deprived in the country.

[South Swindon Parish Council](#) maintains public spaces, roadsides, and pavements, as well as 22 play areas and 14 allotment sites (576 plots). The area's history is highlighted by the [South Swindon Green Trail](#), an 8-mile circular route connecting its three main green corridors. South Swindon's parks and open spaces host a wide range of [year-round cultural events](#), including exhibitions, public art, sculptures, and memorials.



Volunteers, stakeholders and partners celebrating their successes at a South Swindon in Bloom presentation event in November 2026

The **South Swindon in Bloom Steering Group**, established in January 2025, brings together representatives from community partners to coordinate activities and increase participation. Its key objectives are to:

- Increase volunteering, particularly among ethnic minority groups and young people across all Bloom sites
- Improve communication and awareness through social media, a dedicated webpage, and promotional materials
- Support fundraising efforts
- Organise events and promotional activities
- Provide training, including workshops



Background

South Swindon first entered South-West in Bloom in 2019, winning Silver and the City of Bath Trophy for Best Victorian Park. Following no competition in 2020, we earned Silver again in 2021, Silver Gilt in 2022, and Gold in 2023, along with the Tesco Cup. In 2024, we achieved Gold in the Champion of Champions category.

In 2025 South Swindon won Gold, entering a record 24 sites in It's Your Neighbourhood, with 4 rated 'Outstanding' and 13 as 'Thriving'. 2 primary schools also took part, and 1 joined the Children's Painting Competition.



2019

Silver

2021

Silver

2022

Silver Gilt

2023

Gold

2024

Gold

2025

Gold

2026



Review of our year

Impact in numbers

34

It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) groups

3

It's Your School (IYS) groups

3

Afterschool gardening clubs

17

Growing workshops delivered

3

Parks entered Pride in Parks

260+

Community volunteers engaged

£4k

Raised from plant sales & events

7

Horticultural community outreach
events



Review of our year

Impact in words

**“This is Bloom
powered by
people**

**“Gardening
is
our shared
language”**

**“We may not have the
biggest budgets, but we
have the strongest
community”**

**“My mum and I
made a compost
heap like this in
our own garden”**

**“Every age, every
background, every
contribution matters”**

**“This garden
is my safe
space.”**

**“We grow more
than plants, we
grow people”**



Review of our year

Year in pictures



Review of the year

Financials

Bloom Group	Amount	Received from
South Swindon in Bloom	£4,000	South Swindon Parish Council (*)
Blossom Festival	£5,000	National Trust
Blossom Festival GWR Park	£500	Sovereign Network Group
Blossom Festival Badbury Spring Festival	£135	Badbury Park Pharmacy
Blossom Festival Town Gardens Art Workshop	£1,500	Swindon Culture Collective
Town Gardens Christmas Art Installation	£4,000	Swindon Culture Collective
Manor Road Community Garden	£5,500	Stonewater Housing Association
Twigs Community Gardens	£5000	Great British Gardens
Twigs Community Gardens	£1000	The Wiltshire Gardens Trust
Swindon Schools Grow Together	£464	SALGA
Swindon Schools Grow Together	£936	Town Gardens Cafe
Cupcake Planters	£1,500	Swindon Borough Council

(*) South Swindon Parish Council also provide a significant amount of support from their Councillors, the Office team as well as the Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning teams, for which we are extremely grateful.

Review of the year

Fundraising



Achievements

Horticultural

South Swindon Parish Council are responsible for the management and maintenance of 3 formal parks, each one with different characteristics and seasonal interests. Town Gardens and Queens Park are included in the “Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England”.

In 2025, South Swindon Parish Council entered **Town Gardens, GWR Park** and **Queens Park** into the **Pride in Parks competition** for the first time with Town Gardens and Queens Park achieving scores of 5 stars, and GWR Park being awarded 4 stars. In 2025, Town Gardens achieved a **Green Flag Award**. GWR Park was submitted for a Green Flag in 2026 with plans to include Queens Park in 2027.



Town Gardens bandstand, Spring



GWR Park formal gardens, Summer



Queen's Park lake, Autumn

Achievements

Horticultural

Town Gardens is a traditional Victorian style park that remains at the very heart of the local Old Town community and has a rich combination of historical and cultural heritage along with traditional landscape features.

The front lawn, with its scattered mature trees, cherry-tree lined path and colourful seasonal bedding, is the first feature that you see. The Sunken Garden has been replanted with textured ferns and strong scented lavender and herbs to create a new Sensory Garden.

The Rose Garden was laid out in the late 1920s/early 1930s and was built on the site of a former maze whose design, it is said, was based on a similar design at Hampton Court Palace. The rose plants are regularly replaced as part of an on-going programme using both traditional and modern rose varieties.

Highlights include spectacular spring blossom displays from magnolias and cherries as well as formal spring and summer bedding, the rose garden, a spring meadow, public art, an independent café, an aviary, and well-used bandstand and concert bowl for various vibrant cultural activities.

In 2024, the gardens celebrated its 130th anniversary.



Spring blossom on the front lawn



New Sensory Garden



The newly designed Bandstand Rockery

Achievements

Horticultural

GWR Park was established in the 1840's initially as a cricket pitch for GWR employees and then as a formal park in the 1870's when formal beds and glasshouses were laid out. In June 2024, the park celebrated its 180th anniversary.

In 2021, a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was produced in a partnership between the Parish Council, Swindon Borough Council and Historic England. In 2023, GWR Park Blossom Circle was officially opened with the National Trust along with the planting of a new formal rose garden and herbaceous borders.

Notable features of the park include the Blossom Circle, the WW1 Memorial, the Mother-Language Monument, the carving of GWR pioneer Sir Daniel Gooch, and the railway themed children's play area

The blossom circle is made up of 11 Malus Rudolph blossom trees, laid out on the footprint of the old bandstand that used to be on the eastern side of the park. There are an additional 6 new blossom trees lining the Church Place entrance to the park.

A dedicated gardening team have recreated the historical formal gardens.



Herbaceous borders



Rose garden



Sir Daniel Gooch carving

Achievements

Horticultural

Queens Park was created during the 1950's and now provides a green oasis of tranquillity amongst the hustle and bustle of the town centre. The design and features of the park reflect the informality of that period.

Today, Queen's Park is a place where cultivated plants and trees are grown in natural surroundings with an atmosphere of freedom and space characterised by glades and vistas created by the non-symmetrical planting of trees and shrubs.

Highlights include a comprehensive collection of trees and shrubs, mixed borders, a paeony bed, a community garden, lakes, a rose garden, formal bedding as well as a performance space.

In addition, there is a remembrance garden which was refurbished in 2024 in dedication to the many victims of Mesothelioma.

In 2025, work began to remove the old hot house, to be replaced by a café and information area about the history of the park.



Mesothelioma garden



Entrance to the park



Top lake

Achievements

Horticultural

The new **Fleming Way Linear Park** and Travel Interchange in the Town Centre was completed by Swindon Borough Council and opened in 2025 after undergoing a £33m transformation. More than 173 semi-mature trees along with 23,000 bee friendly shrubs and perennial plants have been planted along with a sustainable drainage scheme, solar powered bus shelters and new toilet facilities.

The **Great Western Wellbeing Memorial Garden** in partnership with the Brighter Futures Charity was created in memory of the 300+ lives lost at the Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust due to COVID. The garden which has 8 different zones is located adjacent to a pond at the entrance of the hospital and is planted with modern perennial planting, colourful borders, trees and seating.



Fleming Way Linear Park



Fleming Way Linear Park



Great Western Wellbeing Memorial Garden



Great Western Wellbeing Memorial Garden

Achievements



Environmental

Rewilding

The Parish Council has worked with residents to identify several roadside verges and other areas to develop into wildflower areas. These areas have been taken out of routine maintenance and managed for biodiversity with an annual grass cut and removal regime carried out in late summer.

In addition, there are many roadside verges across South Swindon that have been planted up with naturalised crocus, daffodils as well as wooded areas with snowdrops and bluebells.



Wildflowers at Pipers Way

These areas provide a splash of early spring colour, popular with residents and beneficial for pollinating insects. After the naturalised bulbs have finished flowering, many of these areas are followed by cow parsley, buttercups, dandelions and other wildflowers.

Rewilding sites are identified by a timber post along with a Bee logo to acknowledge that the area is being pro-actively managed and maintained for biodiversity.



Proactive management bee marker post

Some of the re-wilding areas have already shown good natural re-generation of wildflower species with several species of orchids found, including Bee, Pyramidal and Common Spotted Orchids.

Other rewilding work takes place as required including clearance of water courses and pond margins, coppicing, and the provision of deadwood habitat stacks.



Thriving meadow at Croft Woods

Achievements

Environmental

South Swindon is rich in biodiversity and contains several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (including geological SSSI's dating back to the Jurassic period); Local Nature Reserves (LNR's); Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM's); and County Wildlife Sites.

The most notable designations include Coate Water Country Park (SSSI & LNR), The Quarries LNR, Old Town Cycle Path & Green Trail, Radnor Street Cemetery & LNR, and Great Copse. We work closely with Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and other organisations who provide specialist advice and support to ensure biodiversity is encouraged.

Knowledgeable and qualified volunteer Ecologists Ian Johnson and Helen Senior are helping us to survey and monitor some of the rewilding areas to record the number of flowering orchids as well as a general ecological survey annually to determine how these areas are developing over time.

A local Entomologist, Marc Taylor MSc has recorded the beneficial impact planting has had on biodiversity. Marc says "As my recording efforts have demonstrated, the corridor from the Town Centre through Theatre Square and on up to Mr Cod Community Garden all have bee species living, feeding and breeding in them."



Wild orchids



Guided bat walk in the Town Gardens



Volunteer Ecologist Ian Johnson



Volunteer Ecologist Helen Senior

Achievements

Environmental

Radnor Street Cemetery was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 2003, and the site was managed to encourage biodiversity as well as recognising its importance for local heritage.

The Friends of Radnor Street Cemetery Heritage Group were formed to tell the important story of the cemetery through the people who are buried there. People buried here include civic dignitaries, members of the Great Western Railway hierarchy, boilermakers and plate layers, the philanthropic benefactors, the teachers and tradespeople of the town and the 104 servicemen who lost their lives in military service in two world wars.

The small team of dedicated volunteers research and write about those buried in the cemetery, conduct guided cemetery walks, help maintain the Commonwealth War Graves, help visitors locate family graves, hold exhibitions in the Chapel and have an annual Remembrance Day Service.



Spring flowers at Radnor Street Cemetery

Christ Church in Old Town has been the final resting place for many of the residents of Swindon. Although now closed to new interments, it remains a place for remembrance.

Most of the church grounds are now managed for wildflowers and biodiversity.



Wildflowers at Christ Church



Achievements

Environmental

Bird and Bug Boxes

Our dedicated volunteers construct and maintain numerous bird nesting boxes as well as several bug / bee boxes including a giant bug hotel in the Town Gardens that was constructed by children as part of the Blossom Festival.



Giant bug hotel at The Town Gardens

Use of Peat

All the bedding plants bought by the Parish Council are grown using peat free compost. When we buy plants from local garden centres or nurseries, we try to source plants grown in peat free compost and from peat free suppliers.



Bioblitz at East Wichel Tiny Forest

Composting

We have leaf mould and composting areas at the Town Gardens and Queens Park as well as at many of the community Bloom sites. Local groups are encouraged to use composting whenever practical.

Water Harvesting

Water storage containers have been installed to collect rainwater from the roof of buildings in Town Gardens, Queens Park and one is also planned for GWR Park. Several of our community gardens also have water butts.



Water harvesting at The Gap IYN

Use of Glyphosate

The use of glyphosate has been prohibited by the Parish Council for several years now and therefore strimming is used as appropriate to control grass growth around obstructions and margins of roadside verges and open spaces. Swindon Borough Council continue to use a specialist contractor to spray out weeds growing on the public highway.

Achievements

Community

Volunteers and local community groups meet regularly to work on various sites and projects across South Swindon. As awareness of South Swindon in Bloom spreads across the area, more individuals, groups and communities are wanting to get involved. This has resulted in many additional It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) groups being submitted for assessment in 2026.

The following pages highlight some of the community projects and IYN's.

Pride in Place

The Government's Pride in Place programme invests in neighbourhoods to help communities shape and improve where they live. It supports projects that build stronger communities, create thriving places and empower local people.

In March 2026, Walcot East and Penhill were awarded £20m over 10 years for regeneration projects. Funding has already supported Community Caretakers tackling graffiti, fly-tipping and street cleaning, alongside Community Action Days for residents.

A resident-led Neighbourhood Board will also help guide future investment, including improvements to parks, streets and public spaces.

Old Town Open Gardens

This annual event will see 15 gardens across South Swindon open to the public in early July 2026 to raise money for charity and provide gardening inspiration to the Swindon gardening community.



Old Town Open Gardens



Achievements

Community

Twigs Community Gardens

Opened over 25 years ago, TWIGS offers support to people experiencing mental health difficulties. Through a range of horticultural, craft and art activities, TWIGS enables people to develop and learn new skills, grow in confidence and make connections with others.

The gardens have evolved over many years and provide an oasis of calm and beauty in the middle of the town.

Throughout the year, the gardens transform, offering a changing canvas of colours and textures and regular open days.



Twigs Community Gardens

Prospect Hospice

This site was opened in 1995 and is supported by 12 regular volunteers led by Lead Volunteer, Yvonne, who tend to the gardens every week come rain or shine. The Remembrance Garden is open every day for families and friends, providing a peaceful area to create a lasting memory of loved ones whilst strolling around the bluebell path or to take a moment at the memory tree.



Prospect Hospice Garden



Richard Jefferies

The museum and gardens honours Richard Jefferies, a well-known Victorian writer, and a pioneer on environmental issues and one of the first people to use the term “wildlife”.

The museum includes gardens, a small copse, and an orchard. The Museum puts on a programme of arts, music and nature activities for young people and has a small café. A new, larger greenhouse and refurbishment of the veg garden are new for 2026.



Richard Jefferies Museum and Gardens

Westcott Community Tree Nursery and Forest Garden

This project with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust aims to collect and grow locally sourced seed, nuts, berries and cuttings from tree and shrub species, that can be used to supplement tree planting schemes in and around Swindon.

Alongside the production of local trees, the area also provides opportunities for the community to learn about other tree-based habitats such as living hedges, hazel coppicing for bean poles and the growing of seasonal berries and perennial food.



Westcott Forest Garden

Achievements

Community

Manor Road/Westcott Community Garden

The site has continued to develop and attract new groups to work alongside residents from the nearby flats. New raised beds, a living fence and a shelter for volunteers were all added in 2026. A group of young people have established a herb patch and a charitable cut flower project has set up in the new raised beds. An apple tree pruning workshop was delivered in the winter months and the site hosted South Swindon's first 'public living room' in Spring.



Manor Road new raised beds

Central Community Centre and Westcott Allotments

A project managed by the Swindon Heritage Preservation Trust and supported by the LiveWell Team at Swindon Borough Council. The Project aims to provide inclusive gardening activities that bring people together and promote sustainability and horticulture. Two volunteer-led groups regularly participate in the gardening activities, including Global Gardeners, a weekly gardening session for refugees & asylum seekers.



Central Community Centre front garden

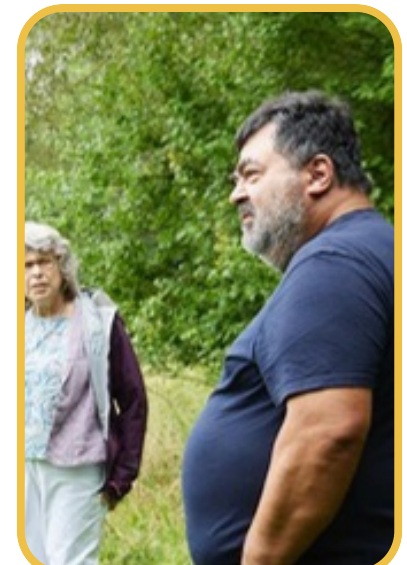
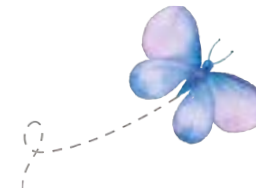
Theatre Square Community Garden

Work to refresh this site has taken place in 2026 including adding a new layer of shade loving plants to a large shaded bed plus a wonderful new sign.

Drought tolerant plants have been added to the bed outside the Wyvern Theatre. This is part of an ongoing project to make the raised bed look cared for while supporting many unusual invertebrates on the rotten sleeper as identified by local Entomologist Marc Taylor.



New shaded bed at Theatre Square



Marc Taylor, local Entomologist

Achievements

Community

Prospect Place Conservation Area

For the second year in a row, residents took part in a successful and enjoyable Container Planting Workshop with support from South Swindon in Bloom.



Container workshop at Prospect Place

Old Town Community Gardeners

Old Town Community Gardeners were formed just over 10 years ago to help improve the local environment through litter picking and gardening. Since then, the group, which meet every Monday afternoon, has become a familiar sight around the Old Town area working on various sites and advising new groups. The group look after 8 IYN's around Old Town and The Hop Pub as well as running a very popular Open Gardens event and Plant Sales.



Marriot bed created and maintained by the Old Town Gardeners

Angel Ridge Community Garden

Started in 2024 to transform an overgrown public space surrounded by blocks of apartments into a community garden. The raised beds and growing area have been refreshed by community grown plants.

The site has a committed group of volunteers who continue to develop the site by creating new growing areas, log piles and bug hotels and a new vegetable patch. Bloom volunteers ran a plant propagation workshop in early Spring 2026 which was well attended by volunteers.



Plant propagation workshop at Angel Ridge Garden



Achievements

Community

The GAP and new Youth Project

Started in 2022 in Park South, the GAP got its name from its location between two blocks of houses in this residential area. The garden was set up to encourage community involvement and help provide free food to a disadvantaged area of South Swindon.

In 2026 a local youth group took over an area of the site with the objective of 'creating community through gardening'. The young people have started building the space together by planting flowers in raised beds and painting the seating area.



Vegetable bed and South Swindon Youth Group at the GAP



Badbury Park Bloomers

Badbury Bloomers gardening group, who meet regularly and carry out community litter picking and gardening sessions. The raised beds were planted by local volunteers in 2025, with a planting scheme focused on sustainable low maintenance designed by the South Swindon Community Gardener. The raised beds are also home to a small herb garden and sensory bed, for everyone to enjoy.



A new bed at Badbury Park planted by young volunteers

Friends of Shaftesbury Lake

An established group of local residents in Park South have worked with the Parish Council to care for this green space and host Wildlife Discovery Days as part of the annual Blossom Festival. Activities have included pond dipping, a discovery trail, face painting, build a bug hotel and learning about wild flora and fauna with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.



Pond dipping and craft activities at Shaftesbury Lake Wildlife Discovery Day

Achievements

Community

Swindon Growers

“Connecting Swindon’s deep rooted mycelia network of growers, farmers, market gardeners, nature enthusiasts and everyone in between”, Swindon Growers is a movement joining up and connecting Swindon’s lively growing community.

Swindon Growers promotes local gardening events, groups, training and social opportunities across the town and is the driving force behind the **Growers Summit**.

Swindon Growers is for anyone with an interest in growing and hosts bi-monthly ‘**Growers Drinks**’, where people come together to share ideas, tips, seeds and plants.



Growers Drinks



2026 Growers Drinks



March 2026 activities publicised by Swindon Growers

Achievements

Community

Litter & Fly Tipping

South Swindon Parish Council provides nearly 400 waste bins on the streets, parks and open spaces, the majority of which are emptied 2-3 times a week by the Parish Council. The Parish Council facilitates and supports community litter-picks for individuals and local groups of residents as well as corporate volunteering activities and Action Days.

Keep Swindon Tidy group also organise regular community litter picks and clean up events across Swindon on their web page and have supported groups of local residents to start their own neighbourhood clean-up groups.

One of these projects is **The Alleyway Garden**. In an effort to clear a fly-tipping hotspot, a group of residents have worked with Keep Swindon Tidy and local activists to clear an alleyway of over 40 tonnes of waste and are transforming the space into Swindon's first alleyway garden.



Transformation of Radnor Street Alleyway Garden



Swindon Paintfest murals



The ever-popular **PaintFest (Street Art) Festival** which takes place every September has seen many of the sites prone to tagging / graffiti transformed into brilliant and colourful works of public art.

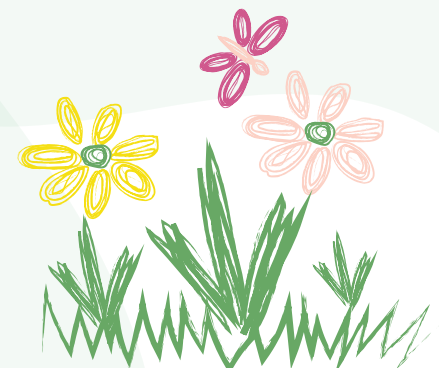
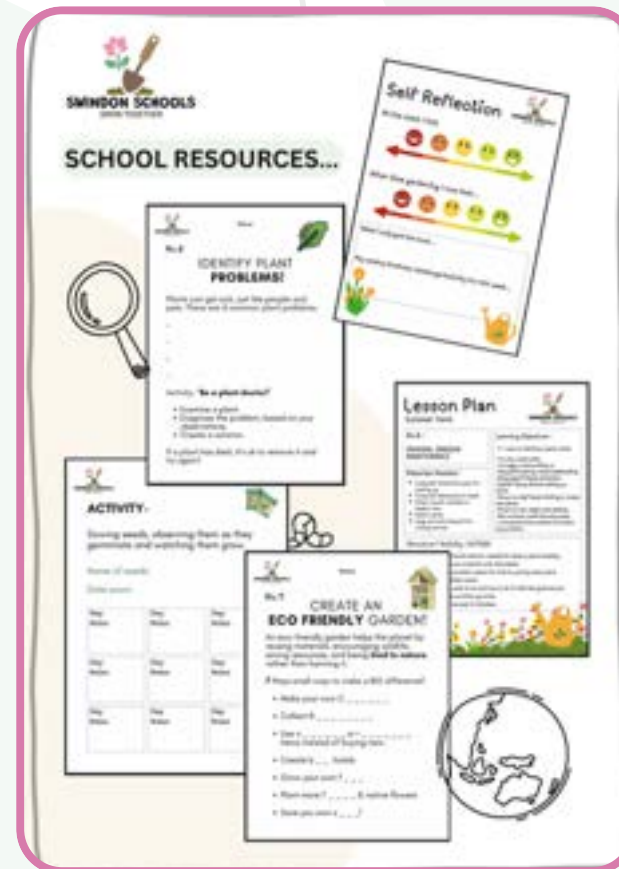
A Mural Trail has been produced by Artsite to showcase these amazing works of art – [Swindon Paint Fest Mural Trail](#)

Achievements

Schools

Through 'Swindon Schools Grow Together', schools in South Swindon are being supported with advice, resources and plants, practical hands on help, accessing funding and motivation to turn their environments into thriving green spaces. The work has grown from activity at Swindon Allotment & Leisure Gardens Association (**SALGA**) – a brilliant network of experienced growers across Swindon. This partnership with SALGA connects young people with passionate local gardeners who share skills, stories and a love of growing.

Three schools across South Swindon have entered the **It's Your School** competition this year and all three have been working on growing projects and delivering school gardening clubs. Resources such as lesson plans, plants guidance and activity sheets have been developed for teachers and children to encourage their growing activities.



Achievements

Schools

King William Street Primary School

King William Street CE Primary School has transformed a predominantly concrete urban site through its Key Stage 1 Reflection Garden, enhancing biodiversity and creating a peaceful outdoor learning environment. Its Bloom-supported gardening club inspires environmental stewardship, while pupils are designing and growing plants for a new Key Stage 2 Reflection Garden, funded through successful Bloom-supported grant applications.



King William Street School plant sale

Badbury Park Primary School

Badbury Park Primary School has created a wildlife-rich woodland garden from an unused area using recycled materials and Bloom community-grown plants. Pupil-led gardening projects, a reclaimed giant pumpkin patch and a pre-loved polytunnel support year-round growing, biodiversity, sustainability and wellbeing.



Young hands planting up their own veg bed

Robert Le Kyng Primary School and Pre-School

New for 2026, the primary school and pre-school have refreshed their existing raised beds and pots with new plants, including a 'smelly herb bed' in the pre-school, planted by the early years children. The primary school have started a gardening club with years 3 and 4, where they have established a vegetable patch and have plans to build a new raised bed with flowers.



School plant sale poster



Collaborations

Partners & Supporters

- Arkell's Brewery
- Artsite & Post Modern
- Brighter Futures Charity
- Christ Church
- Every Cloud
- Friends of Radnor St Cemetery
- Great Western Community Forest
- Growing South Swindon Community
- Harbour Project
- Keep Swindon Tidy
- National Trust
- Nationwide Building Society
- Old Town Arts Centre & Library

- Old Town Business Association
- Plastic Free Swindon
- Prospect Hospice
- Richard Jefferies Museum
- South Swindon Parish Council
- Stonewater Housing Association
- Swindon Allotments Association (SALGA)
- Swindon Borough Council
- Swindon Growers
- Swindon Robins FC
- Wiltshire Police
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Collaborations

Media

Videos

The Parish Council has produced a few information videos which can be found on their website:

[South Swindon Parish videos](#)

Notice Boards

Information about activities taking place across the Parish including regular gardening sessions are regularly posted in community information boards located in the formal parks and other community focused locations.

Social Media

Links to South Swindon in Bloom associated Social Media sites:

[South Swindon in Bloom website](#)

[South Swindon in Bloom Facebook](#)

[South Swindon in Bloom Instagram](#)

[Old Town Open Gardens Facebook](#)

[South Swindon Parish Council Facebook](#)

[Old Town Community Gardens Facebook](#)

[Swindon Schools Grow Together Instagram](#)

[Swindon Growers Instagram](#)





GROWING FOR GOLD!

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