

> Dear Environmental Services Committee,

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> I am a Trustee of the Aylesford Village Community Centre (AVCC) and I am submitting a request to add a range of plants outside of the AVCC main hall and patio area. I am making this request on behalf of the AVCC to the Aylesford Parish Council via your committee as advised by the clerk.

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> Background

> You may be aware that a hedge was previously located on the perimeter edge of the Aylesford playing fields and the AVCC large hall. Agreement was reached in 2019 that the AVCC would meet the costs of removing the hedge and replacing it with a more secure fence line. This work was carried out satisfactorily. This email is to request agreement that the AVCC may add a considered planted border to the area of bare ground that remains.

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> Planting mix

> Planting would consist of low maintenance perennial planting and annuals to maintain year round interest and encourage pollinating insects ( a key aim of Kent's Plan Bee). The planting includes a number of red stemmed Cornus (dogwoods) to provide winter structure, dahlias and Japanese anemones for late summer colour and roses - 25 roses have been donated for community gardens from the 'Harkness Community Gardening Scheme'. Pride of place is a new rose, the first to be named after an ethnic minority Briton - John Ystumllyn - to symbolise friendship, love and community. A mixture of annuals, including sunflowers as the symbol for Ukraine, and bulbs will be added over time and to increase the duration of colour and interest for wildlife and the public. We are also seeking donations of rhubarb crowns to provide an edible crop for local residents and hope to tie-in to an annual 'Community Crumble' event to bring the community together in something positive.

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> Maintenance and watering

> I hold a Level 2 Horticulture Diploma awarded from the Royal Horticultural Society. I will oversee the planting design and manage the ongoing pruning and weeding of the planted areas. It may also be possible to create a community gardening volunteer team to share learning with but this is for future consideration.

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> This submission also requests agreement for the AVCC to install three to four slimline water butts along the side of the low rise building. These will be out of sight (front on) as covered by the remaining hedge line. See photo of area to locate the waterbutts. AVCC will fund the purchase of waterbutts and carry out the connection work however it would be necessary to cut into the down pipe to allow connection to the guttering water flow. This installation is intended to reduce reliance on water supplies from the AVCC although there is an external water tap if the Committee feels unable to agree to this part of the request.

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> Area in question

> I attach photos of the two areas that this request relates to: a smaller triangular area by the AVCC gated access to the patio area, opposite the children's play area and a long thin border area running in parallel to the AVCC fence line where the hedge was previously planted. I have also attached a map of the locations - please note this is not to scale.

> It should be noted that if the Committee is agreeable to this request a thin strip of bare earth will remain between the flower border and edge of the turf. This is because the strip measures up to 150cm at the widest point closest to the existing hedge line and narrows to 100cm at the end closest to the play area. This AVCC border design proposes maintaining the same depth of border at 120cm along the complete fence line to look the most attractive to park users.

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> Costs

> There are no costs to the Aylesford Parish Council. I understand that maintenance of the grass

already falls to the APC and this will not be affected. As above, ongoing plant pruning will be managed by the AVCC. The plants are being donated by community garden awards and local residents. Other costs for the waterbutts will be met by the AVCC.

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> I would be grateful if you would consider this request and the associated benefits such planting provides to the park users, local community and wildlife.

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> I look forward to your response following your committee meeting on 26 April.

> Alex Birtwistle

Cc: AVCC Chair Bettina Barber  
AVCC Secretary Lin





