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Environment and Biodiversity Committee meeting 17th September 2025

Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan –

Item 9e – To receive and update on the application to BMSDC’s Pride in your Place fund for bird, bat and swift boxes and to consider how to incorporate community involvement in the project.

Background – Following the many recommendations in the Biodiversity Audit carried out by Wilder Ecology it was resolved at your last meeting to consider an application to the MSDC Pride in Your Place grant to fund the purchase of up to 200 bird, bee, bat and swift boxes, up to the maximum grant available of £5000.

Current position - The response to my initial enquiry to the grants team at the District Council is below;

“Thank you for your Pride in Your Place Grant Enquiry on behalf of Thurston Parish Council. The proposed project of installing bee, bird and bat boxes has the potential to be eligible for Pride in Your Place Grants, under the theme of enhancing local areas and environments.

What we’d definitely be keen to see as part of the application is the community involvement mentioned in your email, be that volunteers involved in installation, school children helping to decorate the boxes etc.. While environmental projects are eligible for the fund the aim is to see projects which give communities the opportunity to develop projects that make them feel proud of where they live, and successful applications are those which provide detailed descriptions of what benefits the project will deliver to their community.”

With this in mind I have attended a recent Scouts meeting to give them details of your aims for the project and they are very keen to join in. They would however like to make their own bird boxes and they would like to schedule this into their programme for the end of May – June next year.

With this in mind we should perhaps be looking to arrange an open event for personalising and decorating the boxes for a Saturday in July 2026 before the schools break up. This would then give us the autumn months to arrange installation events to complete the project.

Thoughts should be given to seeking funding for the raw materials for the Scouts making sessions and providing a template for them to work from to ensure some continuity for the bird boxes.

Cllr Hamel-Cooke has arranged to meet with the Primary School and SENDAT to have similar discussions with them around joining in with this project. I have also emailed the Brownies and await a reply.

Hopefully with a plan for a community open day in July together with support from the Scouts and the schools we should have enough evidence for a successful grant bid. It should be noted

that the timeline for this grant is on a first come, first served basis. The grants aim is to give communities the opportunity to develop projects that make them feel proud of where they live. Details of the criteria and scoring matrix can be found on the funding pages of the district councils website.

[Mid Suffolk District Council Funding - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk)

Recommendations –

- Members consider a timeline for this project.
- Members consider the format for an open day to decorate and personalise the boxes and the associated costs involved.
- To consider a recommendation to full council to make an application to the Pride in Your Place Grant, to arrange a community engagement open day and to support the project to install bird, bee, swift, owl and bat boxes at various locations within the village.