

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

National Wildflower Festival

A PROJECT BY MOLLY'S WORLD AND TAUNTON BREWHOUSE



KEY

Molly column: focus of the Festival site and, at 1:4 scale, for schools.



Coaches to take children to see meadows.



Urban areas.



Wildflower drawings sent from children to the Festival site using the MollyApp.

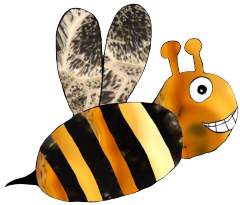


Panels from meadow image in schools, health buildings and care homes.



Anamorphic image planted as meadow in a field viewed digitally from Molly atop her column: see page six.





Introduction

Designed to educate children about the role of wildflowers and bees in supporting our natural environment, the National Wildflower Festival will engage children throughout the UK in planting and celebrating meadows.

The project enjoys the support of Her Majesty the Queen, and will be launched with the presentation to Her Majesty of a meadow scarf, designed using drawings made by children at Highrove. Throughout the 2024-25 school year, diverse nationwide initiatives will take place in schools and families, culminating in an inspirational, media-friendly Festival in Somerset in June 2025. The Festival's conclusion will be symbolically marked by the presentation of a meadow brooch to Her Majesty. Designed by a talented young Scottish Jeweller, Katie Watson, it will be made of silver recycled from NHS X-ray plates, complemented by some gold flowers.

The Festival will also mark the official launch of the child-centred Molly's World website and apps, described by Richard Hickman, Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University, as 'showing the way forward, not only for visual education, but for all learning'.

This consultative document invites support, ideas, proposals and contributions from all potential stakeholders.

A joint venture between Molly's World, a non-profit Community Interest Company and Taunton Brewhouse theatre and arts centre, a registered charity, the UK-wide Festival will involve:

- planting of new wildflower meadows;
- teaching packs about the ecological importance and cultural history of wildflowers, made available via the MollysWorld website;
- visits to see wildflower meadows, particularly for children from deprived inner city areas;
- art, craft, poetry, stories and musical works inspired by wildflowers.

The culminating celebration in Somerset will be an innovative, networked event over the course of a weekend in June. Working live on iPads in schools across the UK, children will use the MollyApp to create images of wildflowers. These will be instantly available via the app's server on the Somerset site, where they will be composed into a vast meadow image, printed and displayed on plywood panels to form a temporary enclosure for performances to celebrate the delights of Spring. Individual panels will be permanently housed in locations where they can bring joy to often visually joyless locations such as health and care facilities.

Owned by its members – subscribing schools and parents – the Molly's World CIC will show how communities, both actual and digital, can work together to offer better ways to improve the well-being of children and the broader social fabric.

Working with children

Working with children, individually and through schools, is our first priority. The focus during the Festival will be on inner city schools in deprived areas, of which Albany Primary – where the Molly, Patch and Bouncer characters were drawn – is fairly typical. It serves some 430 children who speak over forty different languages. One of the first decisions of the recently appointed Head Teacher, Wil Howlett, was to buy a minibus to take children out into the countryside, to tour the centre of Cardiff and to see the Bristol Channel, which many of them had never experienced. Taking some of his children to Highgrove is symbolic of our wider ambition to introduce many children from our inner cities to the delights of wildflowers.

The current generation of children face far wider problems. Not only will theirs be the first generation to confront the full impact of the Climate Emergency, their lives have been blighted by Covid. Anecdotal evidence, supported by government research, suggests that this has made many nervous about engaging in traditional patterns of play and with the wider world – something compounded by continual bombardment from so-called social media.

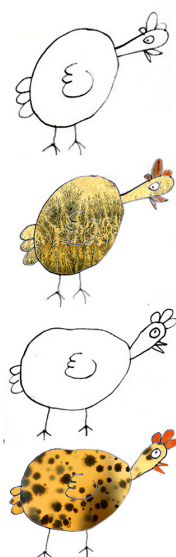
Molly's World aims to contribute to addressing these problems by:

- creating a safe, richly educational online space to introduce them to the richness and diversity of nature and human cultures;
- giving access to an app with which they can enjoy their natural creativity and, for the first time in history, create a wide range of digitally manufactured everyday goods such as mugs and tee-shirts, fabrics and wallpapers, ceramic tiles and greeting cards; and by
- enabling them to work collaboratively on pictures, designs, patterns and animated stories with other family members, or with children in the same classroom or in one on the other side of the world.

The Wildflower Festival will show the potential of this vision in action.

Right: wildflower mug and drawing of a sheep by a seven-year-old girl.

Below: from chicken drawings to dress, and detail of millefleur, fleece-backed velour blanket, made with the work of six- and seven-year olds.



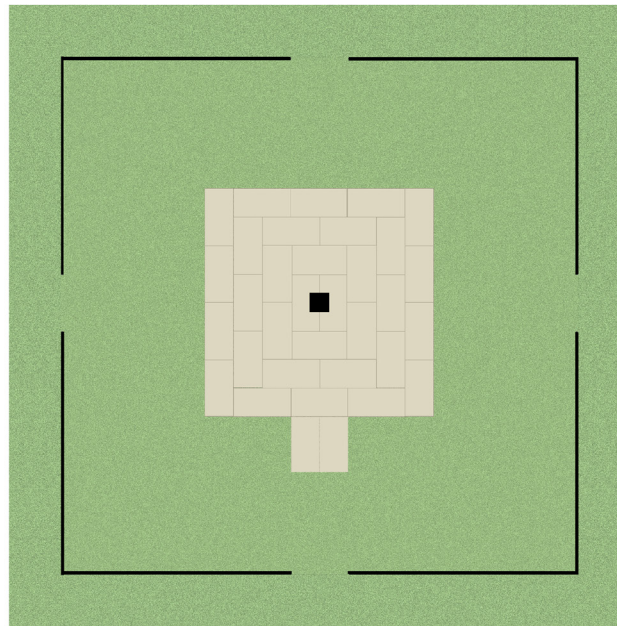
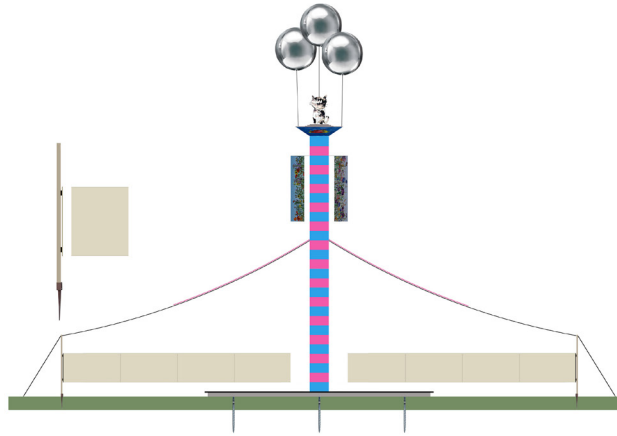
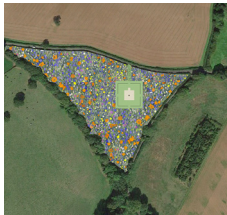
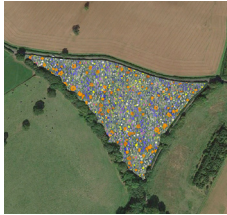
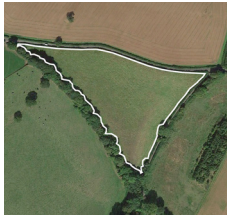


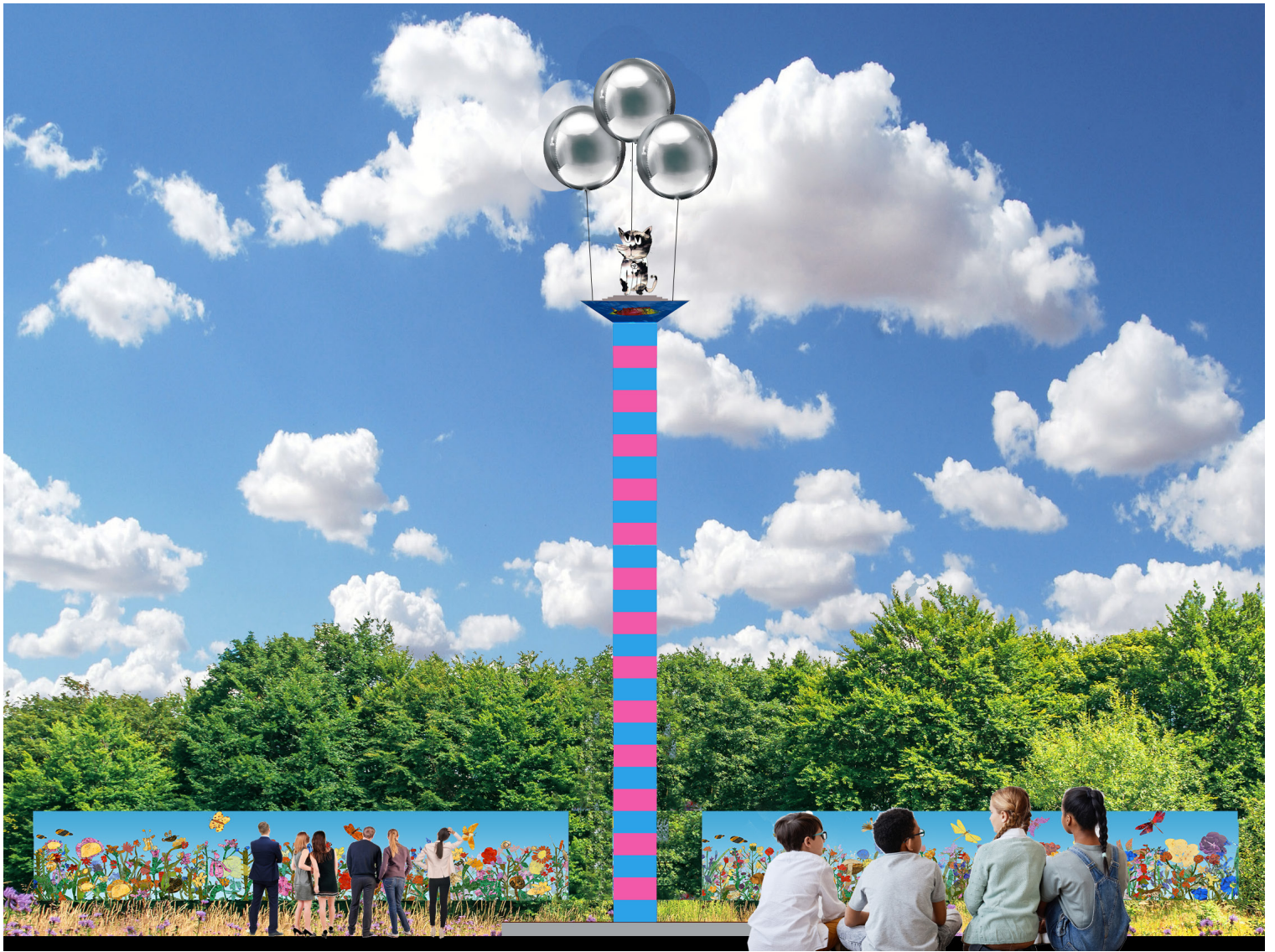
National Festival site

The Festival site will be a newly planted wildflower meadow in Somerset, with a square grassed area and, at its centre, a symbolic MollyColumn (described in detail below). The column is framed by a square stage and sits within a temporary enclosure of plywood panels on which the vast meadow frieze will be displayed.

The stage will be the setting for digital printers; screen-based displays of work made over the course of the year; presentations of prizes to schools and to individual children; 'in the round' performances to close the weekend; and a final flourish of fireworks from around Molly atop her column!

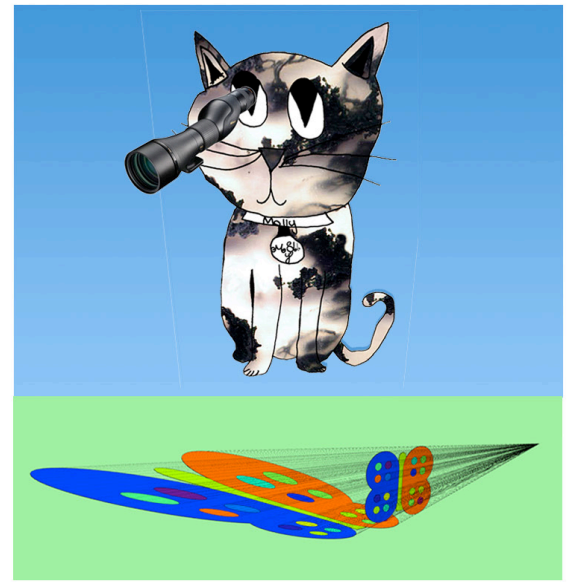
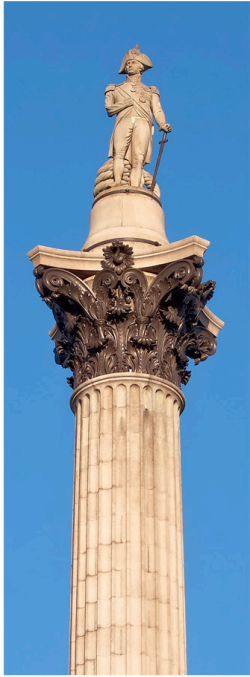
After the Festival, the grass area will be planted with poppies, which will gradually blend with the surrounding meadow flowers.





Molly Column

The MollyColumn will provide an emblem for the Festival, repeated in miniature meadows in planters in school playgrounds. It melds cultural associations, from monuments to maypoles, and – more obscurely – to the early Christian tradition of column-dwelling stylites. But whereas they had food sent up to them in baskets via a rope and pulley, Molly will send down the prizes for our competitions. In schools, activated by a motion sensor, Molly will talk to children (the ‘tech’ costs c. £30!).



Anamorphic butterfly

This image shows the principle of anamorphic projection: from ground level the shape of the meadow is meaningless, but seen through Molly’s fieldscope it clicks into an image of a butterfly – much like adverts on sports pitches. We hope to plant at least one such image, to be seen through Molly’s fieldscope.



Legacy

Like Common Ground's hugely successful Apple Day, begun in October 1990 and still being celebrated, we hope that the first Wildflower Festival will find a place alongside Plantlife's National Meadows Days (perhaps in collaboration with them), and have a long-term future with schools and families. Its immediate legacy of enriching healthcare and other buildings will be built on locally by helping schools make things for themselves and facilities in their catchment areas and beyond.

For Molly's World, successful completion of the project will help with plans to develop large-scale projects around other precious, and increasingly threatened, ecosystems such as Antarctica (for which we have a grant from the US National Science Foundation).



As an organisation we are dedicated to innovation through exploring cross-overs between the visual arts and technology. For example, the solar-powered, GPS-guided Farmdroid robot planting and weeding machine, which we plan to use to plant one or more anamorphic meadows, offers many other opportunities to explore innovative fusions of agriculture and land management with large-scale land art installations.



Organisers

Richard Weston is an architect, landscape architect and author. After graduating with First Class Honours from Manchester University in 1977 he won a Thouron Award to study at the University of Pennsylvania under Ian McHarg, the leading pioneer of ecological landscape design and planning.

Following a thirty year career in university education, he took early retirement as Professor of Architecture at Cardiff University in 2013 to focus on developing personal projects such as Molly's World. His seventeen books include a Sir Banister Fletcher Prize-winning study of Alvar Aalto; *Modernism*, which won the 1996 International Book Award of the American Institute of Architects; and *Utzon*, the only authorised account of the work of the architect of Sydney Opera House, described by one reviewer as 'possibly the finest architectural monograph ever produced'. He is now a Visiting Professor at Cardiff School of Art and Design.

His work has been exhibited in the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition and published in magazines in the UK, USA, France, The Netherlands and Ukraine, and at book length by ListLab in Italy. He is passionate about cats, and shares his home with two.

Vickie Robbins has worked within the charity sector for many years, and most recently paired this with her love of theatre to lead the Taunton Brewhouse team through a rocky post-pandemic world into becoming a beacon of hope for creative communities.

With a strong background in finance, and qualifications in accountancy and business management, her steer empowers the creative team towards audience development whilst keeping a close view on business sustainability for the future.

Vickie has a keen eye on collaborative culture and aims to continue the mission of making theatre and the arts more accessible to all. Working with national organisations, she has become a champion for Dementia Awareness and Hearing Loss, as well as being an advocate for Audio Described, BSL Interpreted and Relaxed performances within the theatre space.

Vickie is currently studying for her Master's Degree in Arts & Culture Business Management. Outside of work, Vickie is passionate about rescuing and rehoming dogs: she currently has four!

Consultants

John Parker is a director of Molly's World and a literary consultant. His clients have included the leading physicist, Sir Roger Penrose; the great plantsman Roy Lancaster; and the acclaimed psychogeographer Iain Sinclair. He will be developing digital and print opportunities arising from the Festival.

Joe Offside is the founder of iApp Manager and is responsible for the coding of all the apps and websites of the Digital Arts and Crafts.

Bob Barton is the principal of Barton Engineers whose work includes cutting-edge structural design for leading British architects and the conservation of historic buildings, including the National Gallery in London. He is advising, *pro bono*, on the design of the MollyColumn.

Wassim Jabi is Professor of Computational Methods in Architecture at Cardiff University and has written a script to generate anamorphic images on complex landforms.

Martin Price is a sponsorship marketing consultant with extensive experience of raising corporate sponsorship for charitable, sporting and other events.

Contact

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Lines Written in Early Spring

William Wordsworth

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played:
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

