



## Royal Wootton Bassett

### **Royal town plans poppy tribute to WW1 fallen**

A colourful project which will see 28,000 poppy seeds planted has launched in Royal Wootton Bassett to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

The seeds are being planted around the town's trees and flowerbeds with hopes that they will flower in September in time for Royal Wootton Bassett's remembrance events later this year.

The scheme is being led by the town's business association with £200 funding from Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council.

Hazel Newson, the business association's chairman and owner of gift shop Dandelion, based in the High Street, said: "The group decided it would be nice to plant the poppies in and around the High Street to make the town stand out as part of the commemorations. "I think given our status as a Royal town it is important that we did something like this." Over the last two weeks, around 20,000 seeds have been planted with shoots already starting to come through.

Hazel said: "The support we have had for the project has been really positive, we've had the town council, businesses and residents all behind us. It feels great to see some of the poppies starting to come through. "I think it will look absolutely stunning when they come through properly although we are in the lap of gods to see just how quickly they'll flower."

John Macindoe, Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council's groundsman, has been going out with staff and planting the seeds.

He said: "I think this will be a very fitting tribute and a wonderful way to commemorate the First World War centenary. "So many people gave their lives so we could live ours, so the effort that we are going to with this project is nothing compared to what they did.

"We hope that the poppies will flower and we put on a great display. We just hope that mother nature will be kind to us and that they successfully flower."

Once the poppies begin to flower, the team behind the project will plant more seeds, if necessary, where there are gaps.

The town council and business association hope to continue the scheme each year.

Royal Wootton Bassett has played a significant role in Britain's recent military history with bodies of servicemen killed in Iraq and Afghanistan passing through the town as part of their repatriation to RAF Lyneham.

The town carried out the tribute between 2007 and 2011, becoming the first town since 1909 to receive Royal status because of the efforts it went to honouring those who died.

**Source:** Wiltshire Times 2 June 2014