

# **RED RIVER**

## **Quarter 1 SLA Report for April – June 2014**

### **General background, aims and objectives**

The aim is to work in partnership with the Friends of Red River to deliver an annual work programme, agreed with Heanor and Loscoe Town Council representatives, on the Red River Local Nature Reserve at Loscoe.

The intention is to improve the site for the benefit of the local community by ensuring public access, and to manage, maintain and develop the site to improve habitats and encourage bio-diversity of species.

The Local Nature Reserve is home to a variety of both local and visiting wildlife.

Additional funding will be sought to deliver a selection of environmental events, activities and guided walks to ensure ongoing public interest and involvement.

### **Volunteer Practical Activities**

During this quarter there have been 3.5 Groundwork Conservation Volunteer days and 3 Friends of Group action days on a Saturday morning.

Over these three months we have had 15.8 practical volunteer days completed by adults and 4.3 by young people. An additional 1.3 volunteer days were completed helping to organise and run events.

Twelve (12) different adults and twelve (12) children have been involved in volunteering on the reserve in this period. A further Groundwork staff member has been involved to provide specialist skills for the environmental education activities.

Jenny and the Futures Homescape Voices of Youth team visited the reserve on Wednesday evening, the 18<sup>th</sup> of June. Eleven young people and four adult volunteers spent two hours collecting the litter from all around the reserve.

The Voices of Youth team pictured just before starting their evening litter pick in June. They also helped with planting the wildflower plug plants on their visit in May.



## Practical tasks in Quarter 1

- Clearance of weeds and encroaching vegetation on two flights of steps.
- Cleared encroaching vegetation and overhanging branches alongside all main access paths.
- Litter picks on site to remove rubbish and recycle cans, bottles and plastic.
- Regular strimming of a strip of land alongside all the nature reserve paths to control encroaching vegetation.
- Worked on clearing and hand weeding the new Glade at the far end of the reserve.
- Cleared the vegetation around the two areas of recently planted Hazel coppice.
- Trimmed the hedgerows at main entrance and alongside the new Glade.
- Cleared small fallen tree from steps leading to Glade.
- Planted 40 wildflower plug plants around the site.
- Sowed mixed wildflower and grass seed in the new glade.
- Cleaned the two interpretation panels.



Claire is shown cutting back the vegetation on the steps from the reserve to the playing field and cleaning the entrance interpretation panel.



The main task this quarter has been working on the new “Jubilee Glade” area. We have cut and removed the vegetation and spent many hours hand weeding to remove nettle, bramble and dock roots. We prepared the soil for seeding and carried out the sowing of a wildflower and grass mixture on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June. Prior to this on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May we worked with the Futures Homescape Voices of Youth group to plant the wildflower plugs and other donated plants around the site, concentrating the planting in the “Jubilee Glade”

Other activities completed this Quarter included controlling the vegetation growth in the two areas of Hazel coppice, around the new Glade hedgerow and around the Women’s Institute “Jubilee” Oak. We have cleared bramble, nettles and other invasive “fast growing” weeds.

We have trimmed overhanging vegetation from paths and steps and controlled the growth of vegetation alongside paths by regular strimming.



## Events

There has been one event held during this quarter.

It involved a day of environmental activities in partnership with Futures Homescape. The young people were taking part in Dreamscheme 2014, designed to help them gain the John Muir Explorer Award. (Some of them gained the Discovery Award last year, when they also visited Red River). Marion, a Groundwork colleague, and I assisted them in identifying the many creatures which use the reserve as a home. They went on a nature walk and took part in pond dipping and a mini beast hunt. The event was attended by 11 young people and four volunteers helped us to supervise the activities.



Shown above is a selection of photographs of the volunteers working on the preparation of the “Jubilee Glade”. The digging and the clearing of roots was a tough task. More enjoyable, was sowing the wildflower and grass seed, completed by Chris and Claire on a sunny morning in early June. The fourth photo shows the new growth of flowers on the bank above the stream.



## Meetings

During this quarter there has been one Friends Of Group meeting attended by five members of the group. Items discussed included the forthcoming action days for the Summer, the latest news from the Charles Hill development and the funding bid recently turned down by the Lodge House Community Fund. We agreed to rewrite the bid and submit it to the Derbyshire Community Foundation. It was also agreed for me to work on a Lottery Awards for All funding bid to acquire funding for training and equipment.

Before the meeting the Friends of Group AGM was held. All existing officers were re-elected to their positions. They are David Burrows – Chairman, Sharon Brown - Secretary and John Hague – Treasurer.



The Voices of Youth Team are shown enjoying mini beast hunting in the meadow above and pictured opposite at the reserve entrance waiting to go on the Nature walk and scavenger hunt.

## Funding

The Lodge House Surface Mine Community Fund bid for £900 has been unsuccessful. Feedback told us that the remaining funds were insufficient to cover the many funding bids received. The funding committee also informed us that we had made a good bid, but the competition for funds was strong.

I have re-written the bid in draft form to send to the Derbyshire Community Foundation. It now concentrates on acquiring funding to pay for a chainsaw operative to fell some of the larger Willows in the Autumn. It is currently with the committee members for their comments and will be sent electronically to DCF in the next few weeks.

Futures Homescape have again funded, for the second year, the environmental educational activities day which took place on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May.

## Wildlife

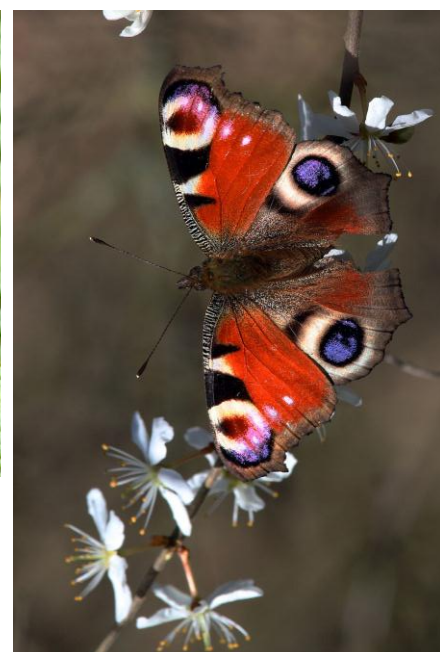
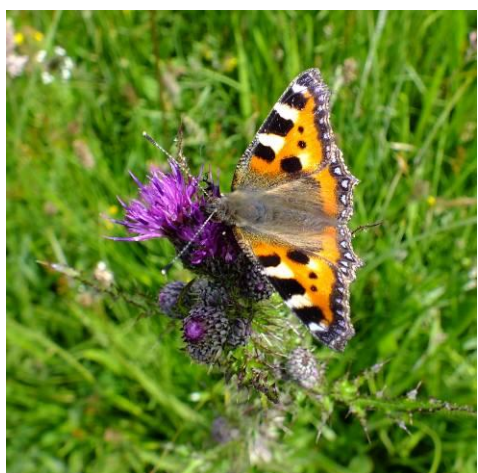
The summer visiting birds started to arrive on the reserve from early April. The first heard was the Chiff Chaff, followed soon after by the lovely song of the Blackcap. Swallow and House Martin were seen over the reserve during May and Swifts turned up in early June. There have been wonderfully close sightings of Green Woodpecker and Buzzard and a Curlew has been heard in the fields at the bottom of the reserve.

The full list of birds seen, or heard, on workdays this quarter include:

- Wood Pigeon
- Swallow
- Swift
- Blackbird
- Song Thrush
- Wren
- Mallard
- Chaffinch
- Moorhen
- Goldfinch
- Blackcap
- House Martin
- Jay
- Curlew
- Dunnock
- Robin
- Crow
- Magpie
- Black-headed Gull
- Great Spotted Woodpecker
- Mistle Thrush
- Chiff Chaff
- Starling
- Greenfinch
- Great Tit
- Buzzard
- Green Woodpecker (pictured)



The pleasantly warm and settled weather for most of the quarter (with the odd exception) has been great for butterflies. Sightings have included Speckled Wood, Orange Tip, Comma, Green Veined White, Brimstone, Small White, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral.



The photographs above, taken on the reserve by one of the volunteers, show from left to right a Small Tortoiseshell, Comma and Peacock. It has been a great quarter for butterfly sightings with Comma and Brimstone being particularly good sightings.



## Statistics – Quarter1

Summary Statistics - Quarter 1	
No. of individual volunteers on practical tasks	24*
No. of individual volunteers on events	4**
No. of Friends of group meetings/action days	4
No. of Practical volunteer days contributed by adult volunteers (95 hours divide by 6 hours) =	15.8***
No. of practical volunteer days contributed by young people (26 hours divide by 6 hours) =	4.3***
No of days on events contributed by volunteers (8 hours divided by 6 hours) =	1.3
No of activities/events/practical days delivered by GCAM	8
No of additional days spent on site by extra Groundwork Staff	1

\* This figure includes the eleven young people and four Futures Homescape adult volunteers who spent 4 hours carrying out practical tasks on the reserve.

\*\* This figures include the four volunteers from Futures Homescape who attended to help supervise the young people who took part in the environmental education activities and litter pick.

\*\*\* Litter pick hours not included.

## Publicity

The Nature Reserve continues to be publicised in the general leaflet promoting the health benefits of volunteering in the local environment.

The practical activities on the reserve are promoted to all members of the Friends of Group and also to all the conservation volunteers who are registered with me and who help on the other reserves which I manage in Amber Valley and the Derbyshire Dales.

Specific tasks and events are promoted by posters distributed locally, including the reserve notice board.



The photo opposite was taken at the end of June showing the good growth and grass and wildflowers in the “Jubilee Glade”

<b>Volunteer Information – Quarter 1</b> <i>(when information available)</i>	
Male volunteers	10
Female Volunteers	14
Unemployed	2
Employed	7
Retired	3
Students	12
Registered Disabled / Health problem	N/A
Under 18	12
Aged 18-25	0
Aged 26-40	2
Aged 41-65	9
Over 65	1

## **Future Tasks**

In quarter 2 the following meetings/practical days/events/activities are planned:-

Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup> July (am)	Con Vol Task Day - Litter Pick to clear camping site
Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> July	FOG Meeting
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> July	FOG Action Day
Fri 25 <sup>th</sup> July	Con Vol Task Day
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Aug	FOG Action Day
Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Con Vol Task Day - Grass Mowing
Wed 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	FOG Meeting
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Sept	FOG Action Day - Grass Removal
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Con Vol Task Day