



RED RIVER LNR

Quarter 3 SLA Report for October - December 2019

General background, aims and objectives

The aim is to work in partnership with the Friends of Red River community group 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 biodiversity of species. The Local Nature Reserve is home to a variety of both local and visiting wildlife. Regular wildlife recording visits are made to record the changing wildlife throughout the seasons.

I will continue to seek additional funding to deliver a variety of environmental events, activities and guided walks to ensure ongoing public interest and involvement.

Volunteer Practical Activities

During this quarter, there have been four Groundwork conservation volunteer days and three Friends of Group Saturday morning action days completed. The attendance of friends of group members on the practical days this quarter has been excellent.

Over the three months, we have had a total of 23.3 practical volunteer days completed by adults on the reserve and 22 different adults have been involved in volunteering on the reserve during this quarter.

I have also visited with volunteers on three half days, one each month, to record the wildlife on the reserve.

View of impressive oak tree from the bench on new meadow.



Summary of practical tasks in Quarter 3

- Regular litter picks on site to remove rubbish and recycle cans, bottles and plastic
- Cutting back of low and overhanging branches along the main paths and removing fallen trees
- Trimming of the hedgerows at and alongside the Reserve entrances.
- Clearance work on bank between reserve and St Luke's Church
- Constructed temporary steps on the bank
- Cutting back re-generating willow
- Hazel coppicing and constructing dead hedges
- Cutting back vegetation alongside the stream in the Jubilee Glade
- Collecting moss, willow, ivy and holly for the Christmas event



Friends of Group (FOG) Task Days

The first action day this quarter was held on Saturday 12th **October**. It was a decent day, dry and mild and eleven volunteers attended. The task was the annual action day with St Luke's Church and four of their congregation came along to help. We concentrated our work on the bank between the church and the reserve, cutting back the vegetation, removing some damaged trees and cutting temporary steps into the bank to ease access. Two smaller teams trimmed the hedges and shrubs in the church grounds and removed the brash onto the dead hedges in the reserve. Two people carried out a thorough litter pick around the church, the reserve and all access routes.

The second action day of the quarter was held on **November** 9th. It was a dry and mild day but cloudy. Parts of the site were still flooded from the recent heavy rain, so we were limited on where we were able to work. The twelve volunteers were split into smaller groups to tackle the following tasks: -

- Litter pick
- Remove damaged tree on bank next to car park
- Entrance area clearance and moss collection for Christmas event
- Hazel coppicing and constructing dead hedge

The **December** action day was on Saturday 7th and we were again lucky with the weather, which was fortunate as the Christmas event was planned to start in the afternoon at 1pm. The fourteen volunteers and I spent the morning in preparation for the event. We litter picked the site, put up the gazebos and the bunting, and collected additional ivy and holly for decorating the wreaths. We sorted out the brazier, collected the fuel for burning and filled the water containers needed to put out the fire after the event. We then set up the tables with boxes full of the art and craft materials such as ribbon and lace. The natural materials were displayed on tarpaulins and in trugs close to the gazebos. We were ready in time to allow everyone to get a quick lunch break before the public arrived.

Conservation Volunteer Tasks

During **October** our first visit to the reserve was on Monday 14th. It was reasonable weather, overcast with only light rain. The three regular volunteers and I were joined by Emma from Derbyshire County Council and her client Wayne, who was joining us to see if he would like to become a regular volunteer. We trimmed back the low overhanging Ash and Elm branches above the wildflower meadow as our first task. We then moved to the Jubilee Glade to cut back the re-generating willow over the stream. Our final task was to fell and clear a dead willow tree close to the path in the nature area. This proved to be a very demanding and tiring task and Wayne decided that this type of volunteering was not for him; this work does not always suit everyone.

We visited the reserve twice during **November**. On an overcast day on Friday 15th, Ben, Claire and I continued trimming back the willow, bramble and blackthorn along the stream in the Jubilee Glade. We moved the brash to a habitat pile nearby in the nature area. Our second visit was in the afternoon of Monday 25th November and we were collecting willow, moss and ivy for the fast approaching Christmas event. The moss needs time to dry out and the willow requires weaving into the rings for decoration during the event, so the collection of natural materials needed to start early to allow time for the preparation.

Our **December** visit was on Wednesday 4th and was again linked to preparation for the Christmas event. We spent the morning collecting further natural materials, this time mainly Holly, Ivy, Dogwood and assorted varieties of cones. During the afternoon we created 66 willow rings for use during the fast approaching Christmas event. We also found the time to do a full site litter pick.

Events

The very popular, annual Christmas event was held at the reserve on Saturday 7th December, between 1 and 3 pm. The event, now in its eighth year is eagerly anticipated by the local community and for many people it is an important part of their Christmas social calendar. A local visitor said, "this is the start of Christmas for our family".

The event gives members of the public the opportunity to work with skilled, volunteer, environmental artists to produce attractive Christmas wreaths using natural materials. The wreaths are constructed using a woven willow circlet adorned with holly, ivy and other festive flora. The finished product is attractive, traditional, environmentally friendly and entirely biodegradable. Many of our visitors are now experienced wreath makers and newcomers to the event have many people willing to help them or offer advice.



This year, we were lucky with the weather. The morning was fine and dry for setting up and the afternoon stayed dry and mild. We arranged a brazier (burning locally sourced wood) which added to the atmosphere and was appreciated by the many visitors. Refreshments are provided by the Friends of Group members and included mulled wine, warm mulled soft drinks, mince pies, shortbread biscuits and Jaffa cakes.

Despite many other local attractions including the ice rink on Heanor Market place, this year's event attracted our best attendance; a total of 53 adults and 24 children and many excellent wreaths and decorations were made and taken away. Many people were visiting us for the first time this year, as they had seen our additional local publicity and our publicity on Facebook. Fourteen volunteers from the Friends of Group helped to ensure that the event ran smoothly.

This year, once again it was a very enjoyable event with a wonderful Christmas atmosphere. Many favourable comments were received from both regular visitors and the many newcomers, who all agreed that they had a very enjoyable time, which could only have been improved by a few flurries of snow. Many local houses will be decorated with a handsome Red River Wreath this Christmas and the date for next year's event has already been set as Saturday 5th December.



Meetings

The Friends of Group meeting this quarter, was held on Wednesday 6th November. It was attended by five group members, with apologies received from four others, including myself, as I was late home from an hospital appointment.

Items discussed included the installation of a plaque received from Tesco to be placed on the pond dipping platform and the success of the joint activity in October with St Luke's Church. The main topic of discussion was planning for the Christmas Wreath making event and allocating preparatory tasks to individuals as well as sorting out their duties for the day itself.

Publicity

Publicity Officer

Alan is continuing to promote the group, and the volunteering opportunities within the local area. The publicity poster is displayed in a variety of local stores as well as gymnasiums, doctors' surgeries, Heanor Library and Shipley Country Park Visitor Centre. It is also in Town Council notice boards and in the Red River reserve notice board. I am continuing to be contacted by potential volunteers and I arrange for them to attend the next available task day.

Get Active! Help Nature Leaflet

The Get Active! Help Nature volunteer leaflet, which includes details about the Red River reserve is still being distributed within the Amber Valley. It features the Red River Nature Reserve on the front.

Practical Task Programme

All tasks and events at Red River LNR are promoted on my general task programme. The task programme is produced quarterly and distributed around all the Groundwork Conservation Volunteers working with me. It is also distributed to all members of the numerous Friends of Group who help on the other reserves, in Amber Valley and the Derbyshire Dales.

Specific tasks (and events) are promoted by posters distributed locally, including the reserve notice board, the Tesco community board and the visitor centre at Shipley Country Park.

Funding

The group and I continue to seek out funding opportunities to support our work on the reserve.

I am currently researching a potential funding source from Severn Trent Water.



Statistics

Summary Statistics - Quarter 3	
No. of individual volunteers on practical tasks	22
No. of individual volunteers on events	14
No. of individual volunteers on wildlife recording	2
No. of Friends of Group meetings/tasks/events attended	4
No. of Practical volunteer days contributed by adult volunteers (140 hours divide by 6 hours) =	23.3
No. of volunteer days contributed by volunteers on wildlife recording (12.5 hours divide by 6 hours) =	2
No of days on events contributed by volunteers (71 hours divide by 6 hours) =	11.8
No. of adults attending events	53
No. of children attending events	24
No of activities/events/practical days delivered by GGN	7
No of wildlife recording visits delivered by GGN	3
No of additional days spent on site by additional GGN Staff	1

Wildlife Recording

I look and listen out for wildlife on most of my visits to the reserve, but often I am too involved with the practical tasks and supervising the volunteers to, systematically, record everything seen or heard. I am continuing the half-day wildlife recording visits to the reserve each month, to check and record our wildlife visitors.

I have spent three hours recording wildlife on the reserve each month this quarter; Wednesday 9th October, Wednesday 13th November and Friday 13th December. I have been helped on these recording sessions by two of my regular volunteers.

These monthly recording visits help to build up a picture of what is likely to be seen during the year giving a good indication of the wildlife to be found on the reserve in the different seasons. These types of records become more valuable over time and help to influence the habitat management on the reserve.

Birds

We have spotted, or heard 28 different species of bird, this quarter; last year in the same quarter we saw or heard 24.

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|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| • Bullfinch | • Great Tit | • Crow | • Wood Pigeon |
| • Chaffinch | • Blue Tit | • Magpie | • Feral Pigeon |
| • Goldfinch | • Coal Tit | • Jackdaw | • Mistle Thrush |
| • Sparrow Hawk | • Long Tailed Tit | • Jay | • Fieldfare |
| • Dunnock | • Mallard | • Starling | • Redwing |
| • Robin | • Moorhen | • Nuthatch | • Blackbird |
| • Wren | • B. H. Gull | • Goldcrest | • Tree Creeper |

Butterflies

Butterfly sightings between October and December included Speckled Wood, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell. The wet weather during the quarter has not been beneficial for our butterflies.

Monthly Records

The month by month summary is shown below:

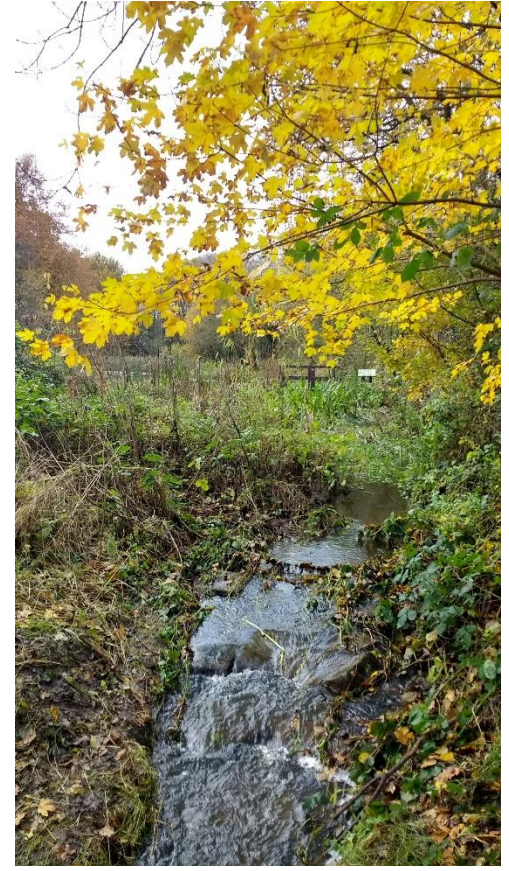
October

On the 9th October, we saw 14 species of bird, including Bullfinch, Long Tailed Tit, Jay and Goldfinch. An unidentified Dragonfly was seen flying over the pond. We also saw Speckled Wood and Comma butterflies. Flowering plants included White Deadnettle, Red Campion and Honeysuckle. There are numerous berries this year, particularly on the Hawthorns and Hollies. The displays of fungi were impressive again this year with a variety of species seen during October.



November

The most notable bird sightings, amongst the 15 birds seen this month were Bullfinch, Chaffinch and the seven Mistle Thrushes flying back and forth from the trees onto the Charles Hill grassland. A Small Tortoiseshell butterfly was seen on one of our task days on Ivy flowers; Red Campion was also still in flower. There was still a spectacular display of autumnal colours well into November.



December

The wildlife recording visit on the 13th December in the afternoon was very good. We saw Nuthatch and Tree Creeper among the 21 species seen. A Sparrow Hawk flew through disturbing the winter visiting Redwings and Fieldfares feeding on the Rowan berries. Also, worth a mention are the tiny Goldcrests and Coal Tits spotted. Grey Squirrel activity is also more obvious now that the trees have lost their leaves. A very late Dragonfly was again seen over the pond, but again unidentified, they move too fast!

Future Tasks

During Quarter 4 (January - March 2020) the following meetings/practical days/events/activities are planned. Please check with me before attending, as these dates may change. Other dates may also be added, if required.

Wednesday 8 th January (pm)	Wildlife Recording
Wednesday 8 th January	FOG Meeting
Saturday 11 th January	FOG Action Day
Monday 13 th January	Conservation Volunteers Task Day
Wednesday 29 th January	Conservation Volunteers Task Day
Saturday 8 th February	FOG Action Day
Wednesday 12 th February (am)	Wildlife Recording Visit
Friday 14 th February	Conservation Volunteers Task Day
Wednesday 11 th March	FOG Meeting
Saturday 21 st March	FOG Action Day
Monday 23 rd March (am)	Wildlife Recording Visit
Wednesday 25 th March	Conservation Volunteers Task Day