

RED RIVER LNR

Quarter 2 SLA Report for July - September 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 bio-diversity 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.

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 three 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 continues to be good with attendance regularly in double figures. Over the three months, we have had a total of 19.3 practical volunteer days completed by adults on the reserve and 20 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.

Summary of practical tasks in Quarter 2

- 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
- Clearance work (strimming/mowing) the encroaching vegetation along all the paths.
- Trimming of the hedgerows at and alongside the Reserve entrances.
- Meadow mowing and grass removal
- Removing damaged fence
- Wildflower plug planting
- Installed the repaired Interpretation Panel



Friends of Group (FOG) Task Days

The first action day this quarter was held on Saturday 13th **July**. It was a very hot and sunny day and we had a great turn out of thirteen volunteers. We spent the morning getting ready for the inaugural Charles Hill Playing Fields Community Day organised by a partnership of local groups and co-ordinated by Amber Valley CVS. We cut back vegetation on the main footpaths, cleared up the litter and tidied around the benches and wildflower meadow. We also set up the gazeboes, tables and an informative display about the Red River reserve on the Charles Hill playing fields. I was in place on the meadow by 12 noon ready for the rush of visitors wanting to take part in the mini-beast hunt.

Preparing for the community event on Charles Hill Playing Fields



The second action day of the quarter was held on **August 24th**. The original date of Saturday 10th was cancelled due to heavy rain and strong winds, a severe weather warning had been issued. Eight volunteers attended on another hot and sunny day. It turned out to be very useful that the day had been deferred as it meant we had eight eager volunteers to help to move the grass (shown below), as the meadows had been mowed earlier in the week. We also had time to carry out a litter pick.



The **September** action day was on Saturday 14th and we were again lucky with the weather. It was a fine, dry and clear day and we had 13 volunteers which included three new volunteers, who had seen our recruitment publicity at the community event in July. We managed to get a wide variety of tasks completed during the morning. These included the following

- Litter pick
- Hedgrow trimming
- Strimming grass alongside paths
- Removing the vandalised fence
- Bramble clearance
- Clearing vegetation and fallen branches in the entrance glade, near the info panel
- Wildflower plug planting

Conservation Volunteer Tasks

Our **July** visit to the reserve was on Monday 15th. It was another hot and sunny day; we are being very lucky with the weather. Four volunteers attended to help replace the site information panel next to the pond dipping platform. We also went down to the Jubilee Glade to trim the hedgerow. The final tasks were cutting back vegetation along the main path and litter picking.



We visited the reserve twice during **August**. On the warm and sunny morning of Wednesday 7th, the four volunteers and I cut the grass in the Jubilee meadow using a scythe and sickles. It's easier with the mower but we are unable to get it over the bridge. We also strimmed the grass each side of the main path.



The second visit, on Monday 19th August was another nice sunny day. Marion, my colleague from Groundwork came along to help me, as we had the mower and a strimmer to ensure we got both the old and new wildflower meadows mowed. Ben, a regular volunteer was also assisting, and we shared the mowing and strimming.

Events

On Saturday 13th July, Groundwork and the Red River Friends of Group were involved in the inaugural Charles Hill Playing Fields Community Day. It was organised and delivered by several local groups co-ordinated by Amber Valley CVS. It ran from 11am until 3pm and had lots of visitors, many of them visiting Red River for the first time. It helped that they passed through the reserve to get to the toilets and the refreshments at St Lukes Church. Our role in the event included the following activities.

- set up an information desk giving info about the site, the wildlife and volunteering opportunities
- organised and led a reserve guided walk
- organised a mini-beast hunt in the old meadow, on a drop-in basis throughout the event
- had a display of wildlife themed willow sculptures to attract people to our display
- self-guided trail around the reserve using the new leaflet

Our information point and display had many visitors and we gathered the contact details of seven potential volunteers, three of whom have been out helping us since the community day. We had 28 adults and 16 children taking part in the mini beast hunt and three people went on the reserve guided tour. Overall it was worth being involved in the event and the thirteen volunteers helping were encouraged by the positive response of the public.

Meetings

There has been one Friends Of Group meeting this quarter, held on Wednesday 11th September and attended by six group members.

We discussed the success of the pond dipping platform launch, for which (I have been told) we got coverage in a local newspaper. The final instalment of the grant has been received from Tesco.

The new reserve leaflet has now been distributed and appears to have been well received. We got a lot of positive feedback at the July event.

We received and noted the reports from Heanor and Loscoe Town Council representative and from the FOG publicity officer.

We had a lengthy discussion about the Charles Hill fun day and the general impression was that it was worthwhile and if asked we would like to be involved again in 2020. We selected a representative from the Red River FOG to join the partnership co-ordinating next year's event.

We had initial discussions about this years Christmas wreath event and selected the date of Saturday 7th December for this to take place between 1pm and 3pm. Lots of volunteers are needed. Further detailed planning at the November committee meeting.

We then discussed the forthcoming tasks for the rest of this calendar year.

Publicity

Publicity Officer

Alan is continuing to promote the group, and the volunteering opportunities, in the local area. He has recently produced a new recruitment poster which has now been distributed to many local outlets including Heanor Library, the local Tesco Store, Shipley Country Park Visitor Centre and other local shops within Loscoe and Heanor. The publicity at the recent Charles Hill community day attracted a lot of potential volunteers some of whom have already attended the groups task days.

Get Active! Help Nature Leaflet

The Get Active! Help Nature volunteer leaflet was recently revamped with a picture from the Red River Nature Reserve on the front. Several Local Nature Reserves continue to be promoted in the Groundwork leaflet promoting the health benefits of volunteering in the local environment.

The leaflet is regularly distributed to a variety of local outlets including Amber Valley CVS, Heanor Library and the visitor centre at Shipley Country Park.

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. The October to December task programme has recently been produced and distributed.

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.

The group have recently sent off the final project report to Tesco for the Pond Dipping Platform and the final payment has just been received.



Statistics

Summary Statistics - Quarter 2	
No. of individual volunteers on practical tasks	20
No. of individual volunteers on events	13
No. of individual volunteers on wildlife recording	4
No. of Friends of Group meetings/action days attended	4
No. of Practical volunteer days contributed by adult volunteers (116 hours divide by 6 hours) =	19.3
No. of volunteer days contributed by volunteers on wildlife recording (24 hours divide by 6 hours) =	4
No. of practical volunteer days contributed by young people	0
No of days on events contributed by volunteers (52 hours divide by 6 hours) =	8.7
No. of adults attending events	28
No. of children attending events	16
No of activities/events/practical days delivered by GCAM	7
No of wildlife recording visits delivered by GCAM	3
No of additional days spent on site by extra Groundwork 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 to organise the half-day wildlife recording visit to the reserve every month, to check and record our wildlife visitors.

I have spent three hours recording wildlife on the reserve each month this quarter; Wednesday 10th July, Wednesday 7th August and Wednesday 25th September. I have been helped on these recording sessions by four 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 33 different species of bird, this quarter. This quarter last year we managed to see or hear 30. Nothing can be guaranteed where wildlife is concerned.

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|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| • Bullfinch | • Great Tit | • Crow | • Wood Pigeon |
| • Chaffinch | • Blue Tit | • Magpie | • G. S. Woodpecker |
| • Goldfinch | • Long Tailed Tit | • Jackdaw | • Green Woodpecker |
| • Buzzard | • Mallard | • Jay | • Mistle Thrush |
| • Sparrow Hawk | • Moorhen | • Starling | • Song Thrush |
| • Dunnock | • Robin | • Coal Tit | • Blackbird |
| • B. H. Gull | • Wren | • Nuthatch | • Swallow |
| • Blackcap | • Chiff Chaff | • Goldcrest | • Lesser Black Backed Gull |
| | | • Pheasant | |

Butterflies

Butterfly sightings between July and September have included Peacock, Comma, Brimstone, Gatekeeper, Small White, Speckled Wood, Green Veined White, Painted Lady, Meadow Brown, Red Admiral, Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Large White, Small Tortoiseshell and Ringlet. 15 species is very impressive especially with the many spells of very wet weather in this quarter.



Monthly Records

The month by month summary is shown below:

July

Highlights for July included large numbers of Meadow Brown and Ringlet butterflies in both wildflower meadows. We also recorded both Small and Large Skippers. Three beautiful species of Dragonflies were seen over the pond early in the month. Notable birds included a Green Woodpecker, Goldcrest, Blackcap and a large flock of Long Tailed Tits. During the Mini Beast hunt we found lots of grasshoppers, capsid beetles, soldier beetles and frog hoppers.

August

The Jubilee Glade is still very attractive for butterflies. We saw Gatekeeper, Comma, Brimstone and Painted Lady during the month. Bird sightings of note were Swallow, Nuthatch, Coal Tit, Lesser Black Backed Gull and Buzzard. Flowering plants included Meadow Cranesbill (shown below), Red Campion, Honeysuckle and Birds Foot Trefoil.



September

The wildflower meadows on the reserve during September have been very attractive with surprisingly many late flowering plants including Willow Herb, Selfheal, and Yarrow. The variety and number of wildflowers seems to improve each year, which is very encouraging for our management of the reserve. Butterflies seen during September included Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Small White, Comma and Peacock.

Bird sightings included Jay, Sparrow Hawk, Coal Tit and Nuthatch, which we watched for ages going up and down and round the tree. A late singing Chiff Chaff was heard on the 25th September.

Future Tasks

During Quarter 3 (October - December 2019) 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.

Wednesday 9 th October(am)	Wildlife Recording
Saturday 12 th October	FOG Action Day jointly with St Lukes Church
Monday 14 th October	Conservation Volunteers Task Day
Wednesday 6 th November	FOG Meeting
Saturday 9 th November	FOG Action Day
Wednesday 13 th November(am)	Wildlife Recording Visit
Friday 15 th November	Conservation Volunteers Task Day
Saturday 7 th December(am)	FOG Action Day
Saturday 7 th December(pm)	Christmas Event
Monday 9 th December	Conservation Volunteers Task Day
Wednesday 11 th December(am)	Wildlife Recording Visit