
Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report - 2022



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Opening Remarks

The Second year of our Charity has consolidated our progress, and raised our profile. The Highfield Management Plan (written by Lancashire Wildlife Trust) is now published and acknowledges the Bee Sanctuary as a significant community endeavour rich in wildflowers, and an educational and research centre for developing Biodiversity. We were also recognised for our work by the Royal Horticultural Society, winning 'Outstanding' in our category.

We are seeing an increase in the involvement of volunteers, not only involved in practical work but also prepared to work with Manchester Ecology Unit and ourselves to record wildlife. We have specialist recorders in Birds, Bugs, Bees, and other pollinators, Amphibians, and Fungi. The Volunteer Centre is now a reality being delivered on 23rd March 2022. The Volunteer Centre will enable many more volunteers to become involved, not only volunteering as "Wildlife Gardeners" on the Bee Sanctuary, but across the Highfield Nature Reserve and local area. Indeed fresh groups are springing into life independently in our local area, and the existing sister projects, Bluebell Green on Chapel St Park and Bluebell Pond are going from strength to strength, so we feel that we are part of a community head of steam, leading the way to a greater Movement to restore Nature in our area. Robin has contributed massively to this outreach, and we have an excellent working relationship with MCC officers, and work closely with them, supporting local projects and initiatives.

Again COVID has determined that we have not been able to organise many community events, but we did manage one for families with younger children('Trick or Treat'). There is active interest to become involved from local Scouts groups, forest schools and schools, and working with young people is an area where we want to expand.

We have continued to invest in the Bee Sanctuary, with a fund dedicated to buying wildflower seed for 2021, and we have obtained funding for 2022 from the NIF Fund, for more wildflower seed. The ponds are being renovated with better liner material and more defence against vandalism. Our main task moving forward is to manage the wildflower areas so that they will continue to thrive.

Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report
Chair Report
Nicole Henry - Trustee

My Year as Chair

The last year has been a busy one for the group. We began with a rocky start coming out of lockdown and having to stop our progressions for numerous months. Starting to get the ball rolling again with activities and volunteering sessions took a little while, but once the general public got back to the 'new normal' after the covid19 pandemic, we slowly headed back in the right direction. There were a couple of rushes to get back on top of things so we didn't fall too far behind, but as a group I have to say, everyone has done extremely well to keep the momentum going and keep the positivity flowing. We gained a new Trustee and Vice Chair, Helen Troupe, who has been an amazing addition to the group. Prior to this she was already an excellent volunteer, and has worked hard to support the group's progressions.

This year as chair, I have been much more in the background since last year, Sheila and Robin have managed to continue leading volunteer sessions twice weekly and outreaching to groups and like minded others in the area. I have been keeping on top of all important documents ensuring the correct documents, policies and infrastructure is in place so as a group we can achieve all that we strive for throughout the year.

Meetings Minutes and Agendas

From a couple on months into this year, Brian offered to take over being the person to complete agendas and minutes of meetings as I was worried I would not be able to keep up to date with these since having to take so much time off work due to the pandemic, I had a lot to catch up and my outside work was extremely busy, so I was concerned it may affect the amount of spare time I could spend on the Bee |Sanctuary for a while. Copies of minutes and agendas are kept in both mine and Brian Shared Bee Sanctuary Folders.

Policies and important documents

This year Helen, our new Trustee and Vice Chair offered to take on the role of checking and updating our policies. I have updated the monthly general risk assessment, and this is done at the beginning of each month. Alongside others that may be needed e.g. Container Risk Assessment. Sheila created a Childrens and Young Families risk assessment with which I also made edits too.

Insurance documents have been renewed with all details and price being the same as last year which includes our Sheds and Tools style insurance.

DBS Checks have been completed by myself, everyone is up to date apart from Robin, who I think has some computer issues. Brian has a standard DBS check, whilst both me, Helen and Sheila all have enhanced versions, this is so we are able to hold sessions with young people.

I keep folders of all important documents for all Trustees, all folders are up to date with copies of relevant documents, such as copies of passports and proof of addresses, signed Trustee documents etc. Brian the treasurer keeps copies of my documents instead of me keeping a copy of my own.

Funding and Finances

The accounts are still managed by our Treasurer Brian, since the beginning he has continued with good management of our accounts. He is currently in the process of switching our bank account over.

I set up the Paypal account, which now both Brian and Sheila both have access to. This is mainly for the website and to enable us to receive digital donations.

Much of our funding this year had been sourced via Sheila, she had taken much time to research and apply to different funding pots that are available to support our goals.

I have been researching ways to get more funding more consistently using online platforms and working out which may be suitable for a group like ours.

Activities and Volunteering on The Bee Sanctuary

Near the beginning of this year, we decided it would be nice to create a railing exhibition. This would consist of images on progress so far, history, and educational info on species. Sheila did the hard work of putting it together and creating all of the slides. I got the slides printed, and cut out the images and foam board and mounted these ready for Sheila and Brian to finish and fix to the railings for the grand reveal!

A while back, as trustees we decided it would be a fab idea to have a day where we can all work on the park together as well as invite other volunteers to join the sessions. We decided that a great day for all of us would be a Sunday session. We all try to attend each Sunday, weather dependent, I have had to miss a couple of sessions due to other work commitments. Sheila, Robin and Brian have also been there for most Sunday sessions and Helen has attended where possible too.

During some of these Sunday volunteer sessions, I have cleaned up the woodside side back entrance of the Bee Sanctuary, cleared a large area of bramble patch and created a dedge hedge and edged the existing muddy pathway. I also tidied up the fallen tree and used some of it to create a barrier deterrent next to one of the ponds.

I also started to create a new path just off the back path, I cleared the bramble and topped up the existing dead hedge nearby. I have started to shift logs for pathway edging and Maeve helped with woodchip. In this area I also cut back new bramble shoots in existing pathways and areas that will or have been planted.

During the first few sessions of 2022 coming into the new year, we tidied up the main and mainly solid path, cutting back the bramble and overgrowth, and created a dead hedge corridor.

This year the container has finally arrived! With help from the successful bids from ARIS and PIP, we managed to get a great container/storage and base. Sheila took over my research for a suitable supplier and came up with a great plan. This will be a huge support to the group and hopefully take the pressure off Sheila who has stored equipment and tools at her house since the beginning of the project. It also could mean that we could support larger scale sessions and 'or appeal to a broader variety of groups or volunteers as we would have a toilet and hand washing facilities.

RHS - Coming towards the end of 2021, we were entered into North West In Bloom, 'It's Your Neighbourhood' and not long after found out that we were awarded with 'Outstanding'. This was great news and it's great for us to be recognised with such an award.

I love being involved in various jobs and tasks on the ground at the Bee Sanctuary. The efforts and success on the ground is mainly due to Sheila, Robin and our incredible volunteers that attend the twice weekly sessions. We now have around 60 people in our WhatsApp group of volunteers.

Bluebell Green/Chapel Street Park

After last year's successful funding bid via ILoveMCR, the Shed arrived! They also now have a HUGE polytunnel and have started constructing the raised beds. The Friends of Chapel street that run Bluebell Green are now a fully independent group that we have a good relationship with.

The Friends of Highfield

After last year's pleasant invitation to be a committee member. Since then, unfortunately, progression of a positive and progressive relationship with the group did not go to plan. Communication is only now to do with gaining the management plan and plans related to the successful funding bid. E.g. Eco walks, New steering group etc.

Events

For the most part of the year, events were restricted which prevented us from planning anything on a large scale. When it was next possible, we decided it would be nice to hold an Appreciation event for our volunteers as our next event, this will happen on August 20th 2022.

Security & Safety

Both Sheila and I completed First Aid for Appointed Persons courses back in March 2021 via the Red Cross, going forwards it may be wise to suggest a few others attended a similar course.

We are continuing to find ways to make our work onsite strong and vandal proof wherever possible. We also continue to follow our data protection and confidential information policies. We also have Public Liability and Sheds & Equipment Insurance with the RHS, which renewed in February 2022 for 12 months.

Future Plans

1. Continue raising the profile of the Bee Sanctuary, making both residents and visitors aware of our fantastic wildlife resource in the centre of Levenshulme and ways that they can help.
 2. Exploring the ways of reaching out and educating other bodies in the local area
 3. Continue to enhance our research, our educational session's outputs and inspirations.
 4. Encouraging Donations from people or businesses locally, who are maybe not able to be active but do wish to support our aims.
 5. Ensuring the long term effects of what we do on our Bee Sanctuary, in regards to sustainability, maintaining spaces and safety of volunteers and park users.
 6. Enhance and encourage more recordings of wildlife and findings so we are able to accurately analyse our findings as more time goes by, we can record our progress year on year.
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Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report
Vice Chair Report
Helen Troup - Trustee

Introduction

I live about 5 minutes' walk to the Bee Sanctuary. For several years I have walked onto Highfield to walk my dog and always thought of it as a great open outdoor space but due to working full time I never had the time to do any volunteering, the COVID struck and I was furloughed so I started to volunteer at the Bee Sanctuary. I have always been drawn to nature and being outside. Volunteering on Highfield was a natural thing for me to do, and a great opportunity to get involved with the local community in a way that was enhancing nature and the local community.

It turned out that the other volunteers are a great bunch of people, their enthusiasm is infectious and before long I was fully immersed in chopping back huge spikey bramble bushes to reveal trees that had been hidden and smothered by them. It was a great feeling to know that you had uncovered an oak tree, silver birch, cleared a pathway and made a pond. The difference that working together has created is magnificent. There are more and more people discovering the Bee Sanctuary and the park beyond. New life and light has been breathed into the area, I am proud to be able to say that I have helped to develop the site.

I have found that getting involved and volunteering with a great bunch of people has really helped me over the last couple of years. I have gone through some personal changes and being part of a community group has given me a purpose.

I was asked by one of the trustees to get more involved in the Sanctuary by becoming the Vice Chair. I accepted this role happily and have been able to help and support others if and when needed.

I am looking forward to seeing the Sanctuary develop and evolve. I personally am looking forward to learning more about nature, sustainability and wildlife, and hope to encourage others to be part of the local community by contributing and helping on the Bee Sanctuary.

Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report

Treasurer's Report

Brian McGill - Trustee

It's nearly Christmas, and I've found a quiet moment, so I thought I would use it to dip my quill in ink, and write out the first instalment of my report for the financial year running to 5th April 2022.

Just recently I am pleased to say we received a generous donation of £2000 from Fitch Ratings. This has allowed us to pay a 50% deposit for the converted container we will be using as a base at the vehicle entrance to Highfield Park.

We are currently a bit low on funds, due to the £3 930 deposit we put on the container. Hopefully, this will be sorted out mid January, when we receive the Parks in Partnership grant we applied for.

Also worth a mention is the help we receive from the Charity Aid Foundation, who after having been supplied our bank details, have regularly made donations of ten to twenty pounds each month.

This year I have instructed my fellow trustees to write their reports using google docs, and paste them into an outline of the combined reports I have created in my shared google directory. Hopefully this will result in a more uniform combined report than we created last year.

I have been continuing to learn Wordpress over the last year, and I have successfully transferred the Park Fence Exhibition created by Sheila onto the website. Hopefully we can get a few more people to visit and link to the website, so that it appears at the top of the results when people search for 'Bee Sanctuary Movement' with Google.

I have also maintained regular back-ups of the website database, and kept plug-ins and the website theme current with the latest software updates.

Pam Wright: Our web developer has continued to help me with the website, and I thank her warmly for her contributions.

I was very pleasantly surprised when Nicole came to my house yesterday bearing gifts, and a charming letter thanking me for my contribution to the project. She had put a lot of thought into the presentation of the letter, and I was moved by her generosity. I have to admit though, that it is Sheila who has put in the most hours at the Sanctuary, and is the most responsible for its success.

I successfully handed over control of the Chapel Street Park accounts to the Friends group that Sheila helped to create. I continued to provide help and advice in the role of Assistant Treasurer to Lizzie Meade, who

took over as Treasurer. I ended my role towards the end of the year after providing advice on how to produce final accounts.

I have taken on the role of banker to a group of Cringle Road residents, who wish to improve their alleyway with lots of greenery. Sheila introduced me to Emma, who will be doing the buying and organising of volunteers.

Sheila has also made plans to create a new group called Highfield Local Nature Reserve Conservation Volunteers. This new group will oversee all volunteering in the Park. I will be acting as Treasurer and Webmaster for this new organisation

The 106 money from the developers will be spent by a steering group with representatives from all of the stakeholder groups working in the park. Sheila has been busy seeing that things will be done according to plan.

I have continued my volunteering at the hospital, playing chess online, and listening to Radio 3. I am currently reading the complete works of Robert E. Howard, and trying to use my spare time effectively.

Brian McGill

Treasurer

22nd December 2021

Okay, a quick update on what has been happening over the last couple of months

I have been acting as banker for Cringle Road Residents, who hope to transform their alleyway with greenery. Unfortunately the grant that was earmarked for this project was transferred to Acorn Allotments rather than the Bee Sanctuary. Acorn was originally acting as banker for the Bee Sanctuary before we had our own bank account, and it seems that the accounts department at the council had not removed their bank details from our records.

This unfortunate circumstance was compounded by the fact that the treasurer at Acorn died on New Year's Day, leaving her accounting records in paper format. I rose to the occasion and proposed myself as acting treasurer, until they could find a permanent replacement. Acorn still has not decided whether they would take up this offer.

As I am writing we still have not received the parks in partnership funding, we were promised. We have decided to pay for the deposit for the container anyway, and hope this will be sorted out soon.

We are also still waiting for the Aviva funding, which will also be spent on refurbishing the container.

I personally decided that after gaining the experience I have at the Bee Sanctuary, it was time I started actively searching for employment. My job search started out by handing out CVs to businesses up and down the

high street in Levenshulme. I gained an interview with an estate agent as a result, but unfortunately was not successful.

More recently I updated my CV on the Indeed Job Website, and started applying for clerical assistant roles. This also resulted in an interview with a security company based in Manchester Science Park. I have yet to hear from them, as of the time of writing.

I have also applied for some new voluntary roles. I will now soon be serving food at the Inspire project in Levenshulme, every Monday. I have also expressed an interest in acting as assistant bookkeeper at the Unitarian Chapel in Manchester. This will be very useful, as I will be learning to use Quickbooks to add to my Sage and GnuCash experience.

Brian McGill
Treasurer
11th February 2022

Okay, the financial year is over, and it is time to add the final closing words to my report. We have eventually received the £7000 parks in partnership money for the container. We also received the £1454 Cringle Road money from the acorn allotments. They declined my offer to act as interim treasurer.

We also received a £500 NIF grant from the council which was mostly spent on wildflower seed.

After the Cringle Road Residents' money was deducted, we ended the year with £3,151 left in monetary assets.

As you can see on the Receipts and Payments Account, the majority of our expenses were for the container, composting toilet, and steel shed. Most of our income came from £7,500 in council grants, and the £2000 donation from Fitch Ratings.

We decided to account for the toilet and fittings for the container, in a separate restricted account, which we hope to raise funds for in the future.

We are still waiting for the funds from Aviva.

Brian McGill
Treasurer
8th April 2022

Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report

Coordinators Report

Sheila Standard - Trustee

Coordinator

This year has seen the consolidation of our wildlife gardening on the Bee Sanctuary, producing a diversity and abundance of wild flowers and associated pollinators. Our work was endorsed by a leading ecologist; Mark Champion of Lancashire Wildlife Trust, and also RHS North West in Bloom. We have reached out, thanks in large part to Robin, and our success in growing wildflowers, and creating diverse habitats has brought wildlife and enhanced biodiversity to our wider local area. We have also consolidated our organising, and now have a physical Volunteer Base (converted 20' steel container,) thanks to our partnership with MCC. We remain 100 percent volunteer powered organisation, and we now have volunteer specialist observers for different wildlife as well as bees, so watch this space for the bioblitz of 2022.

Social Media and Non virtual Communication

- Facebook following (310) Great for blogging. A source of volunteers through messenger.
- Articles for Heaton's Post, also links from Website
- The website updated regularly, but still could do more. Brian is the web master, but we are all able to update.
- Park Fence Exhibition. Excellent for engaging local residents and visitors to the park. Could be better positioned. Other information signs on the Bee Sanctuary have been created by Robin.

Volunteers

- WhatsApp *Bee Sanctuary Volunteers*, a large group of people (61) but a smaller proportion end up coming out to volunteer 48, not all on the Whatsapp group. Also used for nature observations which is becoming increasingly important. We are well placed for the Bioblitz needed to raise the profile of Highfield.
- Need to formalise the recording of volunteer hours in the future. Volunteer hours summary (upto April 2021), shows that we completed 892 volunteer hours which is an understatement of actual hours as many went unrecorded.

- Reorganised in the New Year into two sessions, Sundays and Tuesdays. Working well. Encouraged other Trustees to come out on Sundays so we can work with each other outside of meetings.

Land Owners(MCC) and other network connections

- Good coordination with MCC Parks Team Leader, Catherine Hall(now left), new Park Ranger Monika Sayed, and involved with “Parks In Partnership” with the project to develop a Volunteer Centre (Ed Flaherty, and Robert Gorvette). Robin has a good working link with Jo Fraser(River Valley Lead), and we will be working with Dave Barlow (Biodiversity Officer) on wild flower meadows.
- We are now part of a forming ‘Steering Group’ (led by Monika) to role out the Highfields LNR Management Plan. We are setting up a new Charity to role out the plan.... ‘Highfield LNR Conservation Volunteers’.
- Have formed a close working partnership with the new MCC Local Neighbourhoods officer Mark O’Pray, working on new initiatives to form *Bee Sanctuaries* elsewhere in Levenshulme(eg Secret Garden, Cringle Rd residents, A6) Robin is working further afield with additional networking and coordination. (see his report for details.)
- In Our Nature,(Lisa Linguard). Decided to collaborate rather than sign onto their course. Watch this space.
- Have communicated with Stockport MBC re Cycleway on Nelstrop Rd North, and worked closely with Friends of Fallowfield Loop. Succeeded in persuading Stockport MBC to do a Bat Survey, and get the best lighting for the cycleway (we were opposed initially to lighting at all).
- Friends of Chapel Street Park is thriving, and the *We Love Mcr Grant* enabled us to buy compost, timber, and a high security steel shed for their project. We work with them sharing tools, and mowing.
- Milford Drive Residents. Coordinated the Trick or Treat event together, which was very successful.
- Litter Pickers/ Groups. Robin has a strong lead with this, but we have both supported and linked with individuals and initiatives through Facebook. (see Robins Report)
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust. They were commissioned to create the Management Plan (Hilary Wood, and Mark Champion). Work closely with them to research and study the site. Also provide materials for their social media (Ellen Sherlock)
- Community Police - Janet and Gary. We communicate well about issues including motor bikes and drug dealing.

- Success in objecting to the entire consumption of the green space at the bottom of Cringle Rd, and felling of mature trees. Coordinating with Cringle Rd Residents.
- RHS Mel Kirby entered us for the North West In Bloom, 'It's Your Neighbourhood'

We gained *Outstanding!*

Organiser

Volunteering in the Bee Sanctuary.

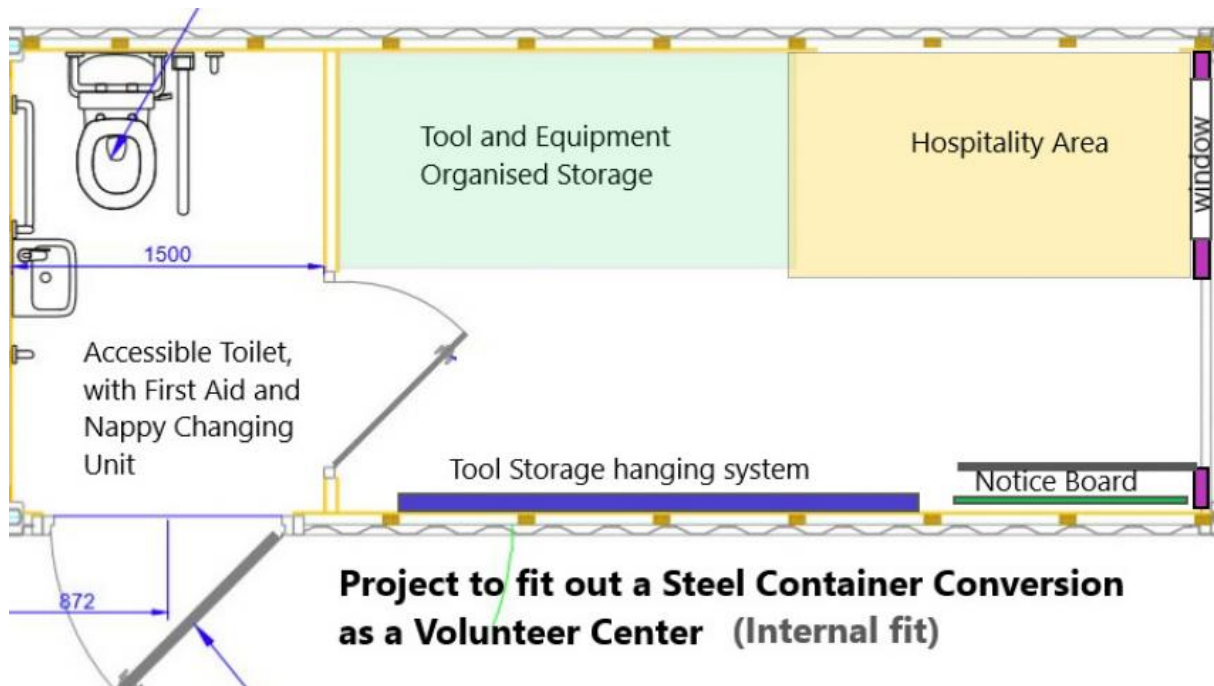
Volunteering was prohibited from Jan 15th 2021 and could not be organised in a larger team until the end of March. During this period we created the *Park Fence exhibition*, to raise the profile and education about the Bee Sanctuary. The ban on volunteering did damage our team of active volunteers, and it has been further affected by the end of lock down, and people's lives getting back to the new 'normal'. However there is a steady trickle of new volunteers, and several steadfast volunteers who joined after the lockdown. The *Bee Sanctuary* itself attracts the interest of people to volunteer, as well as our signs, blogs, and social media presence. I do the majority of the organising to develop and maintain the Bee Sanctuary itself, naming myself as *Chief Gardener*. We are limited by the reality that there is no toilet, toolstore, or welfare facility for volunteers, and we are in the process of remedying this. Through the funding raised from ARIS in 2020 plus funding from the Parks in Partnership fund, we have prepared a foundation and purchased a customised 20' steel unit, which we need to fit out as our new Volunteer Centre. Watch this space for the coming year. Despite the lack of facilities we do have a group of committed volunteers, and we have managed to attract our first team of Workplace volunteers from 'Fitch' in November 2021.

From the end of November I paused the regular sessions to re-evaluate, and plan for Year 3..... End of January, we are up and running with two regular volunteer sessions a week, which is working well, especially at getting the Trustees on board.

Volunteer Centre

This project is a partnership between MCC Parks in Partnership, and ourselves. It will be open to other user groups, and will expand the facilities for volunteers, and make it possible for more groups to get involved. Groups using the Centre will not be restricted to BSM volunteers but will be a general facility for the whole park. We have yet to raise the funds for the internal fit out, although we have bought the toilet already. We would like to have a mural on the front, a green roof and water collection for supplying washing water. In

the front we would like to install a bike park, accessible picnic bench, as well as recycling bins, and an accessible entrance to the park. Our aspirations need funding.



Project work

The Bee Sanctuary Highfield -

2021 Spring -preparing the new Sumner meadows, and the woodland edge for sowing a wildflower:low maintenance grass seed mix 1:5. First meadow was sown in March by Helen and me, Second meadow was sown in May, with more volunteers taking part. Different meadow mixes for the two meadows, and woodland mix for the woodland edge. Mending and tidying up the paths. Mending the liner of Robin pond. Doesn't work! Regular maintenance to keep the bramble, dock, cleaver, mustard, garlic and other dominant species in check. The bulbs and spring flowers like Lesser celandine make a splendid show.

Summer- great team development. Weeding of rapidly growing weeds a priority, heroic efforts made. Sumner Meadows and the rest come into flower. Quite glorious! Ponds to be renovated with a more expensive liner. Mike digs out Robin pond to make it longer and slightly deeper. Helen and I plus others fill one end with river gravel and sand which will make a reed bed eventually. This goes on top of many layers; smoothed bottom surface, blanket, rubber liner, blanket, old liner). On the rest we add a layer of clay, and treat it with Alum to remove the cloudiness. Robin Marcus and Autumn make a splendid Bee Hotel, and work on the raised beds. Robin renews the educational signage across the Bee Sanctuary.

Mark and Hilary LWT visit at the beginning of July, and give good advice. (see report of their walks from Liz Standard Appendix 1). July 22nd we have the Assessors visit from RHS, and show them all of the Bee Sanctuary.

We encourage other groups and individuals to harvest the Yellow rattle seed. In August we start to mow and rake the areas for sowing Yellow Rattle which we buy in.

Autumn - Robin Pond is filling with water, and we start the renovation of Swallow pond which has also been vandalised. Robin organises re chipping of the paths, and begins to dig Swallow Pond deeper on the advice of the ecologist

Mowing and scything continues to remove organic material so that the soil does not become too rich. Fitch Team remove the White Poplar suckers and bramble from the side of the gravel path. Clearing/mowing raking. This will continue until December.

Winter- Cutting back the brush back where it is growing over where the gravel path. Renewing the wood chippings. Clearing continues. Break taken in December. Restart on Jan 11th.

March update:- have successfully applied for £500 to buy wildflower seed to sow on the areas we have cleared, which include the wide corridor along the gravel path and a new area in the brambles where they collapsed last year. Mid March we stopped clearing bramble patch, (bird nesting season), but are weeding out bramble from the wooded bank and other areas we cleared in previous years. Robin has sourced local wild flower seed, and is organising the sowing regime.

Spring- mowing clearing raking and sowing in March.

Recording Wildlife

Other Projects

- **Bluebell Pond and Bluebell Green** - These projects are now operating independently. Bluebell Green(Chapel St. Park) is looking spectacular, with successful vegetable and flower growing in raised beds, wild flowers, an orchard and edible hedge planted, and many community activities for all ages. Bluebell pond was looked at by the ecologist who suggested that some of the draining issues be looked at, but it has been massively improved and is very popular as a go to place.
- **Cringle Residents** Again, an independent project led by Emma which we are supporting with the bank account
- **Pink Bank Wood** - An initiative of Robins (see his report).
- **Secret Garden** - an initiative of Mark O'Pray(MCC neighbourhood officer), which allows us to share tools, labour and experience to assist other projects off the ground.
- **Highfields Management Plan** - Although the partnership with *Friends of Highfield Country Park* was strained, we have managed to bring about a Management Plan that seeks to maximise the biodiversity of the Nature Reserve. Robin worked very hard with LWT, both in leading the field work, and further research. I contributed research as well.
- **Volunteer Centre** - we optimistically made the base in May 2021, from compacted gravel on top of an old roadway. We applied for additional funding to add onto the ARIS fund from MCC Parks in Partnership in May 2021. However, we did not hear from them until November, and received

the money in January 2022. Because of rising costs it will require additional fundraising to fit it out.
Funding of £? From Aviva Community Fund will be applied for

Website

Keeping it up to date is helped by the brilliant notes on how to edit left by Pam, who is still there to assist from afar. Brian is the web master and is skilled at editing. He has linked our Facebook blog.

Funding

- Parks in Partnership (£7000) to buy and renovate a container for the Volunteer Centre
- Aviva Community Fund?
- Donation from Fitch £2000
- Individual donations
- NIF grant £500 for wild flower seed

Events

- Trick or Treat. October 30th

Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report

Outreach Report

Robin Wright - Trustee

Outreach

My role as the Outreach person for the BSM has rapidly expanded this year, and it is raising our profile with other local stakeholders in restoring Nature and improving the environment, as well as gaining new friends and colleagues. I continue to work alongside Sheila and the other Trustees on the Bee Sanctuary, but I also provide practical support, eg. litter picking, building Bee and Bug hotels, assisting new projects to get going, covering for illness 'Volunteer leading' for other groups, and practical support to our Bee Observer for Manchester, and now our new Park Ranger Monika Sayed. I have been very active on Facebook which I use as my main communication tool posting on our BSM facebook page and also litter picking sites, Debdale Nature Centre, Highfield and a group I initiated for Pink Bank Woods.

I have built good relations with MCC officers, and they invite me to support them and take part in events. I have led strategic walks round Highfield, two days last summer with Mark Champion from Lancashire Wildlife Trust, preparing the Management Plan for Highfield, one this March with council officers and a local councillor to inform the Steering Group for Highfield, and another with Stuart Fraser from the Great Manchester Ecology Unit. We aim to bring the importance of the ecology of Highfield to regional and national attention by organising our wildlife observation data, to be added to the database for Greater Manchester. In 5 years time I hope that our Local Nature Reserve will be recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Not bad for old pig farms and toxic landfill!

In addition I was able to share my research on local waterways, and history of Highfield contributing to the long term development of this area for Nature. This has proved useful in drawing up new plans and strategies both for Highfield, and for flood mitigation. I am stepping into a new role of Chair for the new charity we are forming called "Highfield Local Nature Reserve Conservation Volunteers". This new organisation will provide insurance, training, and resources to support Conservation Volunteers on Highfield, guided by the new Highfield Park Plan (written by Lancashire Wildlife Trust, and being further developed by the new Steering Group). I will retain my position as Trustee for the Bee Sanctuary Movement. We draw a distinction between the volunteer work on the Bee Sanctuary, which is intensive and experimental

(Wildlife Gardening), and the volunteer conservation work on the Highfield LNR, which is guided by the Park Plan.

Social Media and Non virtual Communication

- Facebook contribute to BSM Group, Debdale Nature Centre, Litter picker Groups, also set up facebook group for Pink Bank Woods
- Signage Redesigned educational signs and Volunteer Sign
- Networking and attendance of meetings including ‘Friends of Debdale, and ‘Friends of Knutsford Vale’, Friends of Highfield. Steering Group. Attendance at events building Bee hotels and representing the BSM.

Volunteering and Leading initiatives in our local area

- Summer. Led the Walk round by LWT and interested parties in July, liaised with FOH re Highfield Biodiversity Management Plan. Made links with Debdale Nature Centre, took our travelling show of building Bee hotels to their event plus other outreach.
- Autumn. Kept Debdale Nature Centre going whilst Chis and Vicki Kennedy were dealing with Covid, ensuring that 1000s of bulbs were planted and 140 trees heeled in in the Autumn and Winter. Have now taken a regular Volunteer leader spot. Regular workshops building Bee and Bug hotels, becoming a go to person for this.
- Spring covered Sheila with the volunteer sessions on Bee Sanctuary when she was off with Covid. Located a local Wild flower Grower, and organising the buying and sowing of seed.
- Other

Leading on litter picking in local environments, including Secret Lake, and Pink Bank woods, and acting as Admin for Longsight & Levenshulme. Litter Pickers facebook group.

Leading a brand new project Pink Bank Woods, clearing the litter by organising regular litter picks, also planting bulbs, and working with the Friends of Nutsford Vale, and Longsight Neighbourhood officer and councillors, to generate interest in a long-neglected green oasis between Longsight and Gorton.

Working with the Neighbourhood Officer Mark O’Pray and Sheila on a new project “The Secret Garden”, to encourage local residents to bring back a wonderful lost garden to life again in a

deprived area on the Levenshulme/Longsight border. Supporting the initiatives of local volunteers e.g. Pigeon Park.

With Sheila setting up a new organisation to lead volunteers on Highfield. "Highfield Local Nature Reserve Conservation Volunteers.

Continue to support Karen with the Research Garden, which has yielded some significant observations. (See Karen's Report)

Land Owners(MCC) and other network connections

- Good coordination with MCC Parks Team, particularly, Monika Sayed, our new Park Ranger.
- Building good links with local Councillors through outreach and litter-picking activity.
- Good Links with Jo Fraser (River Valley Lead), particularly because of my independent research on Brooks flowing through this area.
- Links with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, organising a training course on recording wildlife for addition to their records, planning a BioBlitz for this Summer, and also gaining more interest in Highfield.
- Have formed a close working partnership with the new MCC Local Neighbourhoods officer for Levenshulme Mark O'Pray, and also....working on new initiatives to form Bee Sanctuaries elsewhere in Levenshulme
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Provided the guided walks and also research
- Work with Sheila to develop volunteering on the Bee Sanctuary
- Working with other community groups to provide support, leadership, and education representing the Bee Sanctuary Movement (see details below)

Practical work on various projects

1. Bee Sanctuary

- Raised beds, growing and planting. Added one new one this year.
- Bee Hotel with accommodation for larger and smaller bees and bugs - planning more
- Leading volunteers, particularly the Fitch Group, path laying.

- Working with Sheila and other Trustees and volunteers on development of the Bee Sanctuary.
- Working with Kelly and Mike to develop the funghi “farm” making use of spore filled waste from an actual farm to seed woodchip and logs. This technology (using Native Funghi) can clean up the woodland floor and make it possible to develop the understory of our woodland area far more quickly>

2. Debdale Nature Centre

- Leading the volunteering on alternate Saturdays
- Building Bee Hotel
- Covered for illness of the main volunteers, organised the planting of 3000 bulbs and 140 trees whips
- Developing their herb gardens etc.

3. Research Garden - continued maintenance, and working with Karen McCartney to look at new areas.

4. Pink Bank Woods - gathered a good team of litter pickers, and developing the biodiversity working with Jo Fraser and other stakeholders.



Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report
Bird Species Report 2022
Jackie Vigilanti - Volunteer

Briefing report on bird species present at Highfield Country Park

Report data was taken from [eBird - Discover a new world of birding...](#) Records for Highfield only began in 2018.

Total number of bird species reported

55 species have been recorded at Highfield (two of which are single, unconfirmed sightings).

List of birds recorded

Canada goose (flyover)*

Mallard

Rock Pigeon/Feral pigeon

Common Wood-Pigeon

Eurasian Collard-Dove

Common Swift

Eurasian Moorhen

Eurasian Coot

Black-Headed Gull

Common Gull

Herring Gull

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Great Black-backed Gull

Great Cormorant (flyover)

Grey Heron
Eurasian Sparrowhawk
Common Buzzard
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Rose-ringed Parakeet
Eurasian Jay
Eurasian Magpie
Eurasian Jackdaw
Carrion Crow
Coal Tit
Eurasian Blue Tit
Great Tit
Barn Swallow
Common House-Martin
Willow Warbler
Common Chiffchaff
Long-tailed Tit
Eurasian Blackcap
Garden Warbler (unconfirmed)
Greater Whitethroat
Goldcrest
Common Firecrest (unconfirmed)
Eurasian Nuthatch
Eurasian Treecreeper
Eurasian Wren
European Starling

Mistle Thrush

Song Thrush

Redwing

Eurasian Blackbird

European Robin

Dunnock

House Sparrow

Grey Wagtail

Pied Wagtail

Common Chaffinch

Eurasian Bullfinch

European Greenfinch

Lesser Redpoll

European Goldfinch

Eurasian Siskin

*Some species are reported under a breeding code of 'Flyover' which means they were observed but the bird(s) did not interact with the habitat and most likely does not breed in it. Additionally, not all the birds reported necessarily breed in the park due to preferred habitat for nesting sites e.g. swifts, swallows, and martins. In these cases, the birds may be using the habitat in other ways e.g. feeding.

Observations and frequency

Data is from January 2018 – December 2021. Full data can be found here: [Bar Charts - eBird](#)

Birds of Conservation Concern – The Red List

The latest update on the BTO's Birds of Conservation Concern was published in December 2021. The report can be read here: [Birds of Conservation Concern | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

Of the 70 birds on the red list, 8 have been recorded in Highfield:

Species	High count*
Common Swift	7
Herring Gull	4
Common House-Martin	4
European Starling	16
Mistle Thrush	2
House Sparrow	45
Eurasian Greenfinch	17
Lesser Redpoll	6

*High count is the total number of individuals seen at a single time.

Of the 103 birds on the amber list, 13 have been recorded in Highfield:

Species	High count
Mallard	4
Common Wood pigeon	59
Eurasian Moorhen	5
Black-headed Gull	36
Common Gull	2
Sparrowhawk	2
Willow Warbler	8
Common Whitethroat	1
Eurasian Wren	19
Song Thrush	10

Redwing	22
Dunnock	7
Grey Wagtail	2
Eurasian Bullfinch	17

Habitat

Highfield is comprised of mainly scrub (including hawthorn and bramble) and young woodland with areas of wet woodland and grassland. These are very important habitats to a number of bird species and is evidenced in those species that nest in the park

Scrub and bramble:

This is by far the most abundant habitat in the park. Those birds that nest in scrub such as hawthorn, and particularly bramble include pigeons, tits, warblers, long-tailed tits, wrens, thrushes, robins, and finches. It is important to be aware of how much bramble and scrub is removed as part of management since this will affect the numbers of birds able to nest. These birds begin establishing territories from March, and robins earlier.

Woodland:

Those birds that nest in woodland (conifer or broadleaf) include raptors, woodpeckers, corvids, and goldcrests. It is worth noting that there are a pair of Great Spotted Woodpeckers in the park. They nest in rotting, soft wood such as alder, willow, white poplar, and birch. Standing dead wood should be left in place.

Willow Tit and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (not yet recorded in Highfield and on the red list) also prefer wet broadleaf habitat and nest in rotting alder, willow, poplar, and birch. Highfield could therefore be a potential site for both these species and should be managed to ensure that this habitat is retained.

Grassland:

Birds that nest on or near the ground include Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Common Whitethroat (also nests in brambles and nettles), of which the latter two are on the amber list. Issues that affect these birds is the presence of dogs off lead and mowing. Mowing should be done after the breeding season has finished (mid-August) and before territories are established (March).

Highlight species

Sparrowhawk

A pair of sparrowhawks has been observed in Highfield, and there is evidence that they nest in the park. This is an indication that there is plenty of prey. Sparrowhawks exhibit niche separation with the females being larger and able to prey on pigeons and thrushes, while males prey on tits, sparrows, and finches. As apex predators, they maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Willow Tit

Willow Tit numbers have fallen over the last three decades making it the second fastest declining breeding bird in the UK. In Greater Manchester, Willow Tit populations have declined from 300 pairs in 1984 to 120 pairs in 2016 with the population now confined to west in areas around Wigan, and sightings in Sale and Blackleach Country Park.

Willow Tits nest in wet woodlands and prefer young, soft wood such as willow, birch, elder, hawthorn, and white poplar. They excavate cavities in small, dead trees about 10-20 cm in diameter. Highfield contains wet woodland and is dominated by these tree species, so there is a chance the habitat is suitable for Willow Tit.

Study of Willow Tits by the Greater Manchester Records Centre suggests that they do not move far, but that they need corridors to travel. [SP12-Willow-Tit-Final-Report-BftB-Website.pdf \(naturebftb.co.uk\)](#)

Highfield is connected to other sites by the Fallowfield loop.

A report of a Willow Tit in Highfield was made on 6 Feb 2021 through the Manchester Birding Forum: [Fallowfield Loop - Manchester Birding Forum \(activeboard.com\)](#)

A Willow Tit survey will be performed between March and April of 2022 as part of the Greater Manchester Wetlands NIA Survey. Data will be sent to the Greater Manchester Records Centre.

Recommendations and future steps

Considered management of bramble

Many of the bird species observed in Highfield nest in scrub and bramble. It is recommended that only the minimum bramble is removed and done so in the winter before territories are established in March and the breeding season begins.

Swift boxes

With the approval to build houses along the south-east side of Highfield, one potential consideration would be to canvas for those houses to have swift bricks or boxes included. Swifts nest in holes and under eaves of buildings, but populations have declined by 53% between 1995 and 2016. One way to help is by providing nesting sites. This might be a positive way to address the undesired housing estate being built.

The Bee Sanctuary Movement reg. charity 1187263 Receipts and Payments Account 06-04-2021 to 05-04-2022					
	General Fund (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total (£)	Total from Last Year (£)	
Receipts					
Gifts	2,215	0	2,215	6,111	
Other Grants	0	0	0	3,494	
Council Grants	0	7,500	7,500	500	
Other	266	0	266	104	
Sales	0	0	0	50	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	2,481	7,500	9,981	10,258	
Payments					
Materials and Fixings	488	1,048	1,536	1,662	
Tools	81	31	112	1,097	
Seed	119	427	547	929	
Internet Services	0	0	0	250	
Insurance	190	0	190	190	
Plant Hire	0	169	169	170	
Bank Charges	22	0	22	0	
Container	0	7,860	7,860	0	
Composting Toilet	0	985	985	0	
Steel Shed	0	1,019	1,019	0	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	900	11,540	12,439	4,649	
NET RECEIPTS LESS PAYMENTS	1,582	-4,040	-2,458	5,609	
Cash Funds from Last Year End	2,217	3,392	5,609		
CASH FUNDS THIS YEAR END	3,798	-647	3,151		

Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report
Statement of Assets and Liabilities

The Bee Sanctuary Movement reg.					
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charity 1187263				
Statement of				
Assets and				
Liabilities at				
05-04-202				
				5/4/2021
				(£)
	Monetary Assets			
	Current Asset Investments			0
	Cash at Bank and in Hand			
		Current Account - HSBC		3,132
		Cash		19
	Total Cash at Bank and in Hand			3,151
	TOTAL MONETARY ASSETS			3,151
	Represented by Funds			
	Unrestricted Funds			
		General Fund		3,798
	Restricted Funds			
		ARIS Project X0016		248
		Toilet and Fittings		-985
		VCSE NIF 4640600		89
	TOTAL FUNDS			3,151
	Non-Monetary Assets and Liabilities			
	Tools			
		Large Ego Mower		499
		Chromebook		275
		Small Flymo Mower		175
		Multi-cutter Tool		75
		3 Mattocks		75
		Loppers		23
	Purchases			
		Good Bee Book		6
	Seed and Bulbs			

		Seed		120	
		Bulbs		0	
	TOTAL NON-MONETARY ASSETS			1,248	
	Debtors			0	
	Creditors			0	
	TOTAL NON-MONETARY ASSETS			1,248	

**Bee Sanctuary Movement Second Year Report
Statement of Thanks**

We would like to thank everyone who has volunteered so far, and the list is longer this year. In 2021-2022 the following people contributed volunteer hours to the Bee Sanctuary, Brian, Cheryl, Heather, Helen T, Helen

S, Jean, Karen, Laura, Edwina, Maeve, Nicole, Steph, Tim, Jass, Sheila, Robin, Jac, Anita, Leo, Tony, Rachel, Lizzie M, Lizzy, Monica, Tom, Prince, Vicky, Ruth, Ida, Ricky, Hannah Jacqui, Marcu, Autumn, Kath, Kelly.

We would like to thank the Trustees for their unique input. Karen McCartney for providing specialist knowledge and education about Wild Bees. Pam Wright who volunteered her professional skills to create our wonderful website, and continues to support Brian as webmaster. Leo Woodfelder (Tree Surgeon) for the logs and chippings that made our paths possible. MCC officers Mel Kirby (RHS Link), Catherine Hall, the Parks in Partnership team Ed Flaherty, and Rob and now our new Neighbourhood Officer Mark O'Pray, and new Park Ranger Monika Sayed. Councillors including Dzidra Noor for their support with NIF funding, and Parks in Partnership. We would also like to thank everyone who has donated money, special thanks to the friends and relatives of Bee for 'Bee's Wild Flower Fund', and to the Charity 'Gables End', for a major donation that enabled spending through our general fund. There were individual donations large and small, and this has been brilliant, because we have not been held back from projects such as pond building.

Finally thank you to our Funders MCC Neighbourhood Investment Fund, Parks in Partnership, and individual donations including £2000 from Fitch, who also came and volunteered.

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