

Environmental Volunteer Network Newsletter

Spring 2019

The Volunteer Network

South Lanarkshire Council's Countryside and Greenspace Service work with environmental volunteers across the county in a number of ways. We continue to work closely with a number of groups to help improve sites and engage with local communities.

We are able to facilitate training for our volunteers and we are always interested in suggestions for potential courses that would help fulfil your objectives and build capacity within your group!

In this newsletter we have updates from Fernbrae Meadows, K- Woodlands and an update from Cambuslang Beekeepers.

We also have some amazing photographs from Holmhill Wood Community Park to inspire you to pick up that camera when you are out and about...

We aim to organise another networking day to follow on from the great event we hosted last year. We aim to get something organised for this Summer so get in touch with us if you are interested.

Passing on wisdom



Volunteering day

Fernbrae Meadows

Friends of Fernbrae Meadows

Our friends group was established in 2018 with the help of Community Links. We were very fortunate that Scottish National Heritage and South Lanarkshire Council decided to turn the disused "golfy" (Blairbeth Golf course) into a greenspace for the community.

Within the 18.6 hectares of Fernbrae Meadows we have:

- woodlands
- wetland areas
- 2 ponds
- an outdoor classroom area
- a pond dipping platform
- a community orchard and planning permission for a community garden
- a network of paths linked to Cathkin Braes and the Magnificent 11
- wildflower areas and much more...

Fernbrae Meadows has a long history. It lies on the site of what used to be Mill Farm, which became Blairbeth Golf Course, which opened at this site in 1956.



Amazing artwork



Our friends group holds regular events every year, from fairy trails to litter picks.

In May we are planting a wildflower meadow in partnership with the South Lanarkshire countryside rangers as well as having a litter pick.

We are also in the middle of planning a big summer event for the end of June.

Our aims range from the development and sustainability of the greenspace for the benefit of people and wildlife to biodiversity, health and wellbeing, history, community growing and outdoor learning.

We have a weekly health walk every Tuesday morning from 9.30 – 10.30, leaving from Fernhill and Cathkin Church and walking along the newly created paths through Fernbrae Meadows.

The friends group meets once a month at Fernhill Community Centre and we are very pleased that we have had great support and attendance of local people, who all share a keen interest in the future of the park.

Fernbrae Meadows also contains a newly created council allotment site. The plots are being handed over to the new tenants and we are looking forwards to seeing the site come to life.

For more information and updates of events, please follow us on Facebook



www.facebook.com/FernbraeMeadows



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K-Woodlands – *Bringing the community closer to nature*



Come and meet us!

K-Woodlands is owned and maintained by the local charity East Kilbride Community Trust who also own K-Park Training academy. The Woodlands is a short walk from Hairmyres train station making it is easily accessible to all. Being the only social urban woodland in the whole of the West of Scotland which belongs to a charity, it has quickly become a welcoming community woodland, with paths being installed in 2017 and soon after it won the Scottish Finest Woods Awards in 2018. It is a fantastic greenspace in an urban setting which easily links the community to nature. We are always developing and improving K-Woodlands and in the near future will be expanding our pathways as well as installing eco-friendly artwork, created by our Artist in Residence, Robert Mulholland.

K-Woodlands aim to encourage the local community to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and the outdoors by coming along to our free events or going for a walk by themselves through the woodlands. We have had a fantastic year in 2018 running lots of events including our movie nights in the woods, pumpkin carving events and our Halloween spooky walk, which involved many of our volunteers dressed as ghouls throughout the woods. We also ran fun rustic Christmas craft events to get everyone into the festive spirit!

We have had a very busy start to 2019, with lots of fun events including "Food in the Woods" and "Nest Box building day". We have also built a new pond area with a board walk, which will not only be great for biodiversity but also allows us to run pond dipping events, teaching families about what can be found in the pond. As well as building a pond, we have also constructed a polytunnel! With this new addition to the woodlands, we are planning lots of great event and food growing programmes with the local community. We are looking forward to lots of fabulous events throughout the year in the woodlands. So keep an eye on our Facebook, Twitter and website as we will be posting more fun activities to get involved with at K-Woodlands.

Walking amongst nature can greatly improve our physical and mental wellbeing. There is growing amounts of research to support that greenspace helps to reduce stress, depression, and anxiety.

Our Wednesday morning Health Walk encourages people to take a break from their busy life's to join us on a nice walk through K-Woodlands, we even stop for a cup of tea and a biscuit during the walk. It's great for your physical and mental health and is also a great way to meet new people. So if you fancy a stress free walk through K-Woodlands why not join us every Wednesday at 10.30am.

If you can't make our Health Walks, not to worry, we are always encouraging people to use K-Woodlands. Whether it's for a short walk during your lunch break at work or taking part in one of our regular events, K-Woodlands is open to everyone. It can be your own little zen space in the middle of East Kilbride.



K-Woodlands Health Walk

Get in touch: k-woodlands@ekct.co.uk

Address: 1 Burley Place, G74 5LZ

Phone: 01355 235986 / 07590633376

Community Action Lanarkshire



Free support for rural communities in Lanarkshire

Community Action Lanarkshire (CAL) is a project supported by the Rural Development Trust and funded by Lanarkshire LEADER until June 2020. From community-led action planning to support for project development and help with funding applications and delivery, the team have the time and experience to give you **free** hands on support to help you improve your community. We can work in the following communities in South Lanarkshire: Leadhills, Crawford, Abington, Glespin, Douglas, Rigside, Crawfordjohn, Forth, Lesmahagow, Kirkfieldbank, Blackwood, Kirkmuirhill, Stonehouse, Sandford, Carstairs Junction, Tarbrax and Woolfords.

Unleashing people power with community led action planning:

Community-led action planning is where decisions are made for each place, in that place, by the people who live there. Communities work together towards a common purpose, where the focus is on local people-led action. The communities of Plains, Upperton, Harthill, Greengairs, Caldercruix, Sandford and Lesmahagow have kick-started the community plan process. Each are expected to take around six months to complete, providing an opportunity for people to say what's important to them and what feasible projects need to happen to make their communities better places to live for now and for generations to come.



Learning new skills



Get in touch with Ruth at ruth.mcelhinney@ruraldevtrust.co.uk to find out more.

Support to take forward projects:

CAL is also here to help you take forward projects already identified by local people. Over the last 6 months through the Make Your Way project, CAL has been working with nine rural villages to explore ways to tackle the transport issues frequently highlighted by local communities. We have also supported Crawford to investigate the need for a community hub to provide more services and activities locally. And over 100 pupils from 6 rural primary schools, some of whom had never ridden a bike before, took part in sessions with cycling social enterprise Socialtrack, who delivered bike maintenance classes, lessons and challenges/activities. Check out www.communityactionlan.org for the project reports along with the next steps.

Help to improve your local environment:

Has your community identified improvements needed to the local environment? Team up with CAL and Clydesdale Community Initiatives to help rally your troops, organise volunteer days and work with you to give your local environment a facelift for 2019!

Make Your Way in rural South

Lanarkshire: Building on the sustainable transport work with nine villages in 2018/19, CAL is awaiting news on funding from Paths for All to provide walking and cycling activities, including maps, signage and community events, encouraging people to use local routes for everyday journeys.

Contact ewan.bachell@ruraldevtrust.co.uk for more information.

The Friends of Calder Community Orchard



Thanks to Babcock International and their supply chain partners, Story, Speedy and Jewson, for creating a Community Orchard at Milheugh Park, in High Blantyre.

In just three days they supplied and installed the structure for the orchard including a pathway, six large planters, fencing and a gate. The FOC community group were blown away with their generosity, with special thanks to Alicejan Sweeney for arranging the project and to the Babcock team and Story, who carried out the work.

Following this the SL Countryside Rangers organised a volunteer day with the FOC and the dream team from TACT Healthy Park. The volunteers planted ten fruit trees, many fruit bushes and improved the hedge with trees from The Woodland Trust and Octopus Energy. The FOC hope continue to improve the entrance to the park further in the year with the creation of a wildflower meadow.

For more information on the Friends of the Calder and their events, please follow their Facebook page.



Our new garden



Babcock at work

Cambuslang Apiary Project (CAP) – A community beekeeping group

CAP is a support group helping aspiring beekeepers gain practical experience by working on our community hives. Our aim is for individuals to acquire the skills and confidence to manage their own honeybee colonies. Our hives are kept at a couple of apiaries in the Cambuslang area, but we welcome new or established beekeepers from any location.



Honey barrel

At present we are preparing our apiaries for the coming beekeeping season, clearing undergrowth away from the hives and repairing or building equipment needed in the weeks ahead. Our weekly hive inspections start when the temperature reaches 14°C, otherwise when we open the hive, we risk chilling the brood which is fatal to developing young bees. We check the hives weekly to prevent swarming, a natural urge of the honeybee colonies which results in half your bees absconding if not carefully managed.

The appeal of beekeeping is numerous, with the promise of your own supply of honey, beeswax and propolis in ample time to prepare Christmas gifts. However, these are not the honeybees greatest of gifts to us humans, that would be pollination services without which we would struggle to fill our grocery shelves. Where beekeeping was once all about the hive produce, we now find members keeping bees for environmental reasons and because learning about this species is a fascinating journey. They are far more than their sum of parts; one sting, two stomachs, three hearts, four wings five eyes and six legs.

We can all help our bees and other pollinators by planting pollinator friendly plants which flower throughout the seasons. Be aware of the "Asian hornet" which is a notifiable alien species that has devastated European honeybees. Urban beekeepers can struggle to find space for a hive, so if you have a large garden consider offering space for a colony or perhaps learn to keep bees yourself.

There is great pleasure to be found sitting next to a busy hive on a warm day, observing their comings and goings and hearing their contented hum.





Hive inspection



Cambuslang Apiary Project Facebook:

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/CambuslangApiaryProject1/>

Scottish Beekeeping Association:

<https://scottishbeekeepers.org.uk/>

Sightings of Asian hornet e-mail:

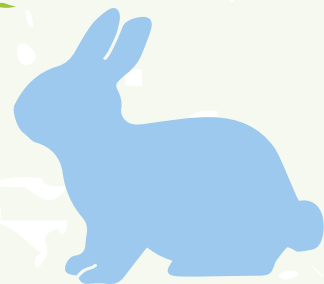
alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk



www.apiaryproject.btck.co.uk

**A COMMUNITY
BEE KEEPING GROUP**

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Bat Conservation Trust – Sunset/Sunrise Survey

Keen to get involved in bat monitoring?

This survey is ideal for you if you don't have previous bat surveying experience. It is also a perfect opportunity to get together with family/friends and discover bats and other wildlife in your local area. Simply head out at dusk or before dawn, or both! Spend an hour in your garden or walking around your local area and look out for bats.

- You can carry out your survey anytime from April to September.
- You will need: survey form, pencil/pen, torch, watch.
- If you are doing your survey in the evening start at sunset. If you are doing your survey at dawn start one hour before sunrise.
- Spend an hour looking for bats and any other nocturnal animals you can see or hear.

Sunset/Sunrise Survey Big Weekend

- This year the Sunset/Sunrise Survey Big Weekend will take place on 13 and 14 July.
- On these dates we would like to encourage as many people as possible to take part in the survey and share your discoveries with us via email, social media (follow us on Facebook and Twitter) and by submitting your results online.

Mammal Mapper!

Most wild mammals, including rabbits and iconic species like hedgehogs and mountain hares, are very poorly monitored. This makes it difficult to know which regions or habitats are most important, or to detect changes in their population sizes. The Mammal Mapper is designed to record information on the location and number of animals spotted on walks or bicycle rides.

Users of the Mammal Mapper can record sightings of any mammal, including field signs such as burrows and mole-hills as well as live animals. The app includes detailed guides to help identify animals by their appearance and is very easy to use. Mammal Mapper is free to download and available on android and iOS in app stores now.

British Dragonfly Society

The British Dragonfly Society aims to produce a State of Dragonflies report 2020... and we need your help!

We are currently undergoing one of the greatest periods of change in dragonfly distribution, with a number of species newly colonising the UK and spreading at an unprecedented rate. At the same time, climate change is raising interesting questions on an uncertain future for some of our species. In response to this, the BDS plans to release a State of Dragonflies report 2020, with trend analysis revealing how our breeding species have fared since the Atlas' release.

The Atlas pulled together the thousands of hours work given by volunteer dragonfly recorders, producing an astonishingly thorough account of the current distribution of British dragonfly and damselfly populations. Not only does this let us know how dragonflies were faring up to 2014, but it also gives a fantastic reference point for future comparisons. We hope that volunteer effort can once again provide us with the vital data needed to create population trend analyses, by taking part in Complete Lists and Adopt a Site.



You can adopt a chosen wetland site on which to carry out complete lists two or three times between May and September over successive years. This will increase the value of the records for trend analysis. Get in touch with your BDS County Dragonfly Recorder to inform them of your adopted site or for help choosing a site.

Choosing a site

The aim is that those sites adopted should together provide records of all the species that breed in each (Vice) county. The species which are hardest to produce trends for are the scarce ones so including sites which support such species will be important. The BDS County Dragonfly Recorder should be able to help you choose a site which will both provide the best information for analysis and be convenient to you. If you do wish to Adopt a Site, please let him or her know. If your county does not have a County Dragonfly Recorder, contact the BDS Records Officer about your chosen site. This will help us avoid double adoption of sites and make us aware of sites which need adopting.

- **iRecord Butterflies** is a free app that will guide you through the identification of any butterfly that you see in the UK and allow you to add your sighting to millions of other valuable records that inform the work of Butterfly Conservation.
- **BeeWalk** – This is the national recording scheme to monitor the abundance of bumblebees across the UK. The survey would be impossible without volunteers like you, who identify and count the bumblebees they see on an hour's walk each month from March to October.

Anyone with basic bumblebee identification knowledge can become a BeeWalker – all you need is a spare hour or so every month to walk a fixed route of about a mile (you choose where it goes), and send us your sightings.



4Spot chaser – A Park

The information collected by BeeWalk volunteers is integral to monitoring how bumblebee populations change through time, and will allow us to detect early warning signs of population declines. All data collected contributes to important long-term monitoring of bumblebee population changes in response to changes in land-use and climate change and, ultimately, to informing how we manage the countryside.

Visit our BeeWalk project page to find out how the project has progressed so far. Recording apps are available for your smartphone for casual records.

Helpful websites:

iSpot: for identifying various species
www.ispot.org.uk

Arkive: photographs and information on species around the world www.arkive.org/

iRecord: add any of your wildlife sightings]

Hamilton Natural History Society



HNHS has our summer programme coming up – details (including booking info, costs, meeting points etc) will be posted on our website from mid-April.

At the moment we have planned:

- **All day (bus) outings –**
11 May Sanquhar, 8 June Aberlady/
Gullane, 13 July Greenock,
10 August Thirlestane
- **Half day (car) outings –**
25 May Kerse Farm Woods,
27 July Riccard Johnson
- **Super-spot sessions (1 hour local) –**
28 April Morgan Glen (spring flowers
survey), 3 August Calder Walkway
Blantyre (Big Butterfly Count),
5 October Neilsland Woods
(Fungal Foray)

Anyone welcome to join us on these –
contact us via website

www.hamiltonnaturalhistory.org.uk

Also, the Lanarkshire BSBI recorder
(Michael Philip) is always keen for people
to send him plant records or join Team 77
on surveys.



Hedgerow Survey 1982 Jim Brockie

He can give you more information/links
or send out newsletters/programme etc,
email botany@opus44.co.uk

HNHS noted that Jim Brockie MBE died on
14 February. He was instrumental in setting up
Chatelherault Country Park and was the first
manager of it. He was also a member of HNHS.

HNHS at Bothwell Bridge



Focus on....

Lanarkshire Green Network



Lanarkshire's Natural Health Service

The Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership has now been in existence for just over a year, and amongst other things we've been busy gathering information about the many different organisations that help people to get involved in outdoor activities and volunteering.

Only 34% of adults in South Lanarkshire visit the outdoors at least once a week despite the fact that 59% of us live within a 5 minute walk of a green space.

This is much lower than the national average and we're keen to encourage more people to go outside whether it's to walk, cycle or to take part in an activity. Whether it be a park, path, woodland or allotment; using greenspace close to where you live can help you relax, make new friends, explore your local area and enjoy your regular dose of exercise.

Find your green space on the greenspace portal www.bit.do/lan-greenspace or check out organisations that offer green health activities on Locator www.locator.org.uk/

If you fancy doing some volunteering then you can search for green opportunities here: www.vaslan.org.uk/volunteering

Organisations that offer green volunteering opportunities have formed the Green Volunteering Network and are getting together bimonthly to talk about shared issues, offer support to each other and come up with ideas of what else we can do to encourage people to get outside. If you'd like to join us you'd be very welcome.

Finally, Volunteers' Week runs from 1 – 7 June and this year we're going to be using a green theme to celebrate volunteering. There will be resources available soon on the VASLan website. We know volunteers don't grow on trees, so let's use this opportunity to spread the word.

For more information about getting involved in the green volunteering network, to find out more about Volunteers' Week or to get your organisation, activity or opportunity registered with us, contact Sarah, Green Health Volunteering Development Officer at sarah.burgess@vaslan.org.uk or on **07591 252138**.

A year at Holmhills Park Community Woodlands...

The Friends of Holmhills Wood community woodland are lucky enough to have their own resident photographer Andy, and some of these shots showcase the site beautifully!

Hopefully this encourages you to get out and document your own site or somewhere you love throughout the year...







Get buzzing!

There have been lots of articles in newspapers recently about the loss of insects, both in numbers and in diversity. This has a massive effect on the natural world as insects and other invertebrates play important roles, for example in the food chain, by breaking down waste and by pollinating plants.

Buglife estimates that one in three mouthfuls of our food rely on this pollination, and that 80% of wildflowers do too. Pollination is carried out by insects you will recognise such as bees and butterflies but also by lots of different types of flies, beetles and moths.

There are various reasons for the decline in insects such as:

- Use of pesticides and other chemicals
- Loss of wildflower meadows and other habitats
- Intensive land use such as farming



Orange-tip – J Hawell



Peacock butterfly

We can help insects locally by providing better places for them to feed in our gardens and other greenspaces. Insects can help control pests in your garden, and you can grow herbs such as mint and chives that can then provide for you as well. Some ways you could do this include:

- Plant various flowers to provide nectar all year round. The Royal Horticultural Society has advice and species lists.
- Manage your site, or part of it, less intensively – leave grass to become long and let shrubs and trees flower. Messy areas with dead wood and leaves are great homes for lots of wildlife.
- Don't use chemicals such as weedkillers.

You might see some areas of long grass and wildflowers on Council land where we are trying to make a difference too. If you would like any advice, check out the websites above or get in touch on cag@southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Get in touch!

To see previous copies of this newsletter visit www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk and search for "Volunteer Newsletter".

If you would like to join the volunteer network, suggest courses or events, or would like any more information, please get in touch with us using the details below.

Contact us

We have a Facebook page! This shows events and lots of information on local wildlife and activities.



Like us at "[South Lanarkshire Countryside Rangers](https://www.facebook.com/CountrysideRangers)"
www.facebook.com/CountrysideRangers

Email: cag@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Phone: 0303 123 1015

Write to: Countryside Ranger Service, Calderglen Country Park, East Kilbride G75 0QZ

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 0303 123 1015 Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk