



**THE BYTHAMS WOODLAND TRUST**  
**(Registered Charity 1182600)**  
**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020/21**

**Introduction**

I am very pleased to be able to introduce the seventeenth Chairman's Report for the Bythams Woodland Trust (BWT) and to report on a year like no other that anyone has experienced.

**Covid 19**

The Covid 19 pandemic and the associated national 'lockdowns' which were implemented after March 23 have had a significant impact on the work of the Trust and on the site itself - but in ways that we might not at first have appreciated.

For the first three months of the year (April/May/June) the site was closed to visitors, but after the re-opening in July, there was a huge increase in users which, at times, almost overwhelmed the site. It is evident that as we were one of the few places that could remain open in the second half of the year, especially during lockdowns two and three, we attracted many new people to visit and take their exercise.

**Constitution**

There have been no changes to our constitution this year. We are a registered charity, but we have an up to date and strengthened constitution.

Our annual returns to the Charity Commission were submitted on time. New Committee co-options were made at the AGM in 2020 and all of these have made a positive contribution to the work of the Trust. The Management Committee met on six occasions, including the AGM, all via ZOOM virtual conferencing.

**Funding**

Not surprisingly, it was another relatively quiet year in respect of fund raising as no major applications were made. That said, we did receive a grant funding from the local CO-OP community scheme and also from the TESCO Bags of Help. We signed up to the SKDC Lottery which brings in a regular monthly payment.

We are always grateful to receive financial support from the Castle and Little Bytham Parish Councils, whose contributions are vital to help with the day to day running costs of the Spinney.

**Site Works**

The main focus of our regular work sessions is to maintain the site in a good condition to ensure a continued enjoyable use by visitors. And, in many ways, a positive outcome of the site closure during spring was the remarkable growth of trees and plants and use of the site made by natural wildlife. As there were no visitors, coupled with a warm and sunny spring, the site physically blossomed and bloomed and looked in as good health as at any time since we started the project.

Though our regular work parties did not take place when we were closed, we were extremely fortunate that Gavin Pye was able to use some of his furlough time to complete a wide range of repairs and improvements to the play equipment that we had been meaning to complete for some time, but never got round to doing.

Once the site re-opened, our work schedule during the year picked up in terms of general maintenance - mowing, strimming, leaf clearing, tree felling and gleaning fallen branches, coppicing and general tidying, building new steps, repairing play equipment, planting and weeding the sensory garden by hand!

During one of the wettest springs for decades, the site became very waterlogged and we had to re-create a whole new network of pathways using bark chippings in order that visitors could simply walk about without slipping over.

Another outcome from the winter season was the damage caused to the overflow car park which had to be closed off from October onwards. Plans are in hand to put in a hard surface area to allow for winter parking.

The Meadow is looking very much like the wildflower site we have always wanted and our seed planting during the past couple of years has paid off with a wonderful sward of meadow flowers in the summer - with most of the ragwort now pulled. We again contracted with Gilbert Elson to trim and shape all the hedges in February.

We added to our wooded area within the Meadow with whips of a variety of species given by the Woodland Trust as part of their Charter for Trees project.

### **Events**

A major disappointment was the cancellation of our 'live' Tree Dressing Day planned for November because of Covid 19 restrictions. However, as an alternative we organised a competitive virtual event, where we encouraged our visitors to dress a tree in their home or garden and then send us the images. We had some really excellent responses with some lovely designs and it was really hard to pick a first, second and third winner. Our thanks to all the entrants and it may well be that this becomes a regular Spinney activity.

### **Publicity and Promotion**

Judging by the numbers of people who visited the Spinney, our publicity and promotion in all its forms is working extremely well. We are getting many more visits not only from local people but also those who come in from much further afield. On some days the main car park and access road are completely full, so the overflow area on the meadow has proven to be invaluable.

Gavin Pye regularly updates our website at [www.bythamspinney.co.uk](http://www.bythamspinney.co.uk).

We are on Facebook ( [www.facebook.com/bythamsSpinney](https://www.facebook.com/bythamsSpinney) ) and our 'likes' have reached well over 4000. We have investigated how best we might optimize voluntary donations through <http://www.charitygiving.co.uk/bythamswoodland>.

### **Health and Safety**

This remains a key priority and a continuing requirement of our insurance arrangements. The Spinney is a natural wild woodland and there will always be an element of risk and adventure in what we do.

We had our annual ROSPA Play Area Safety Inspection Report in August and it is very pleasing to note that in all areas, there were no major issues. We have used the report to guide us as we carry out the repairs that were identified as needing remediation.

### **Future Plans**

High quality, regular maintenance and upkeep of the woodland and meadow will be critical to keep the site in good condition. We have discussed the need to make a substantial new grant application to one of the major charity funders to replace or upgrade the play equipment that was installed nearly 20 years ago and is nearing the end of its shelf life.

We commissioned a new playground design company to review our equipment provision and we received their designs at the same time as the start of the first lockdown. When we contacted them later in the year, to our disappointment we learnt that the company had been put into administration. Fortunately, we still have some good contacts in the play equipment sector, and at the time of writing, new design plans are being prepared.

The BWT is always looking for more friends to help with what we are trying to achieve at The Spinney and we welcome all offers of support. And of course, while the adults are working, we want to encourage children to come to the site to take part in some of the most fantastic play experiences that nature can offer – adventurous, dirty, rough, creative, destructive, imaginative, active, physical, healthy – the sort of play opportunities many of us probably had twenty or so years ago but sadly do not seem so prevalent today. In a post pandemic world, there is a strong national drive to compensate for the stresses and pressures put on children and families, and what is called the 'nature deficit' for children who may have missed out on the wonders of the natural environment. It is pretty clear that there is no such deficit at the Spinney.

### **Thanks**

There are so many people who deserve to be thanked for the tremendous time and effort that they have put into the Spinney during this most challenging of years.

All the Trustees and Advisors use their different skills and experiences to ensure that the BWT is well managed to do what needs to be done. We have a really solid Saturday morning maintenance crew who put in the time week in, week out. Many thanks to Sam, Gavin, Simon G, Richard, Simon C, Tim, Luke, Gillian, James and Thomas.

We have managed to retain our excellent team of Duke of Edinburgh students who have worked incredibly hard to help shift barrowloads of bark to put under the play equipment and create new paths all over the site. Thanks to James, James, Oliver, Oscar and Harry.

We have received great support from FOBS and those at the Bythams School, while Jo Schofield continues to make some amazing woodland creations at our events – both live and virtual.

Thanks to The Glenside News for regularly publishing our news and stories, Trevor Harris who services all our mechanical equipment, Tim Rasell who advises on plants and good horticulture tips, and Aqualoos who provide the much needed toilets for our events.

We are also very appreciative of our funders – the local Parish Councils, the Castle Bytham Mid-summer Festival Committee, and all those individuals who have made very kind donations throughout the year. Their continued support is greatly valued.

Finally, our warmest thanks must go to the local community and especially the children who use the site for their play, adventure, learning or simple relaxation and without whom, the whole thing would simply not be worthwhile.

Dr Patrick Candler, Chairman of BWT  
4.6.21



**The Bythams Woodland Trust**  
**Little Bytham**  
**Grantham**  
**Lincs**

Charity Ref 118 2600

**Annual Accounts**

**1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

Date	IN For	Amount	Date	Type	OUT For	Amount
	opening balance	£5,741.31				
7-Apr-20	Lottery SK	£41.50	26-Apr-20	bacs	H Sharpe wood chips	£588.00
9-Apr-20	CoOp	£632.64	15-Apr-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - wheel	£10.99
3-May-20	Tesco Bags Gnd Work	£1,166.00	3-May-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - fuel and paint	£43.66
12-May-20	Lottery SK	£38.00	12-May-20	bacs	IC Stafford	£180.00
21-May-20	Amazon Europe Core	£5.00	9-J un-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - paint & fuel	£95.88
2-J un-20	Lottery SK	£37.50	9-J un-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - cutting line	£13.85
3-J ul-20	Zellis donation	£210.41	30-J ul-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - wheel barrow	£58.68
7-J un-20	Lottery SK	£45.00	30-J ul-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - Verdon timber	£166.56
4-Aug-20	Lottery SK	£38.00	18-Aug-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - Screw fix	£17.97
4-Aug-20	Paypal	£7.26	14-Sep-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - T45 & Verdon	£19.59
8-Sep-20	Lottery SK	£55.00	24-Sep-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - T45 & Verdon	£99.94
8-Sep-20	Lottery SK	£41.00	28-Sep-20	bacs	Playsafety Ltd RSPA	£147.60
2-Nov-20	PayPal	£2.00	6-Oct-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - Signage	£39.12
6-Nov-20	LCF - CoOp	£1,596.48	22-Oct-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - Signage	£25.81
18-Nov-20	LBPC	£350.00	9-Nov-20	bacs	Gavin Pye - posts and rope	£198.24
10-Nov-20	Lottery SK	£42.50	7-Dec-20	bacs	Meadow cutting GH Elsen	£600.00
16-Nov-20	Amazon Europe Core	£12.03	9-Dec-20	bacs	M Truscott 2nd prize	£30.00
27-Nov-20	National Fund Donate	£170.58	9-Dec-20	bacs	R Fuller 3rd prize	£20.00
27-Nov-20	Next PLC	£200.00	10-Dec-20	bacs	J Skinner 1st prize	£50.00
16-Dec-20	Hermes	£300.00	21-Dec-20	bacs	H Sharpe wood chips	£588.00
9-Dec-20	Lottery SK	£42.50	12-J an-21	bacs	Hedge cutting GH Elsen	£240.00
23-Dec-20	Paypal	£25.00	15-Feb-21	bacs	Gavin Pye - fuel & barrow wheel	£32.54
29-Dec-20	D Morrow	£50.00	15-Mar-21	bacs	NFU insurance	£1,029.22
5-J an-21	Lottery SK	£39.00				
2-Feb-21	Lottery SK	£44.00				
11-Feb-21	Amazon Europe Core	£12.73				
11-Feb-21	Western Power	£71.40				
	Lottery SK	£44.00				
		£7.00				
	CBPC	£400.00			Closing Balance	£7,172.19
		£11,467.84				£11,467.84