



THE BYTHAMS WOODLAND TRUST
(Registered Charity 1182600)
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Introduction

I am very pleased to introduce the nineteenth Chairman's Report for the Bythams Woodland Trust (BWT).

Constitution

There have been no changes to our constitution. We remain a registered charity and 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 2022 and all of these have made a positive contribution to the work of the Trust. The Management Committee met on five occasions, including the AGM, either via ZOOM virtual conferencing or, more recently, live in Castle Bytham.

Funding

It was another relatively quiet year in respect of fund raising as no major applications were made. However, we were delighted to receive £3k from the Jack Patston Trust which will greatly help with our annual running costs. We also receive regular funds from the SKDC Lottery and received funding from our local Parish Councils.

On the downside, the container was broken into during the spring and all the mowers and strimmer were stolen. While this has proven to be very frustrating, we were able to settle quickly with our insurers, the NFU.

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. Our schedule during the year focussed on general maintenance – mowing, strimming, leaf clearing, tree felling and gleaning fallen branches, coppicing and general tidying, building new steps for the main slide, repairing play equipment, planting and weeding the sensory garden by hand!

During a wet spring, 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.

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 have started work to install an information point to advise visitors of the breadth of flora within the meadow.

We have maintained our wooded area within the Meadow and surprisingly, most trees managed to survive the very dry summer period.

Events

A major disappointment was the sudden cancellation of our Spinney Spring Thing which had been scheduled to take place on 19th March. Cold and wet weather was forecast on a site that was already sodden, so we took the view to postpone – sensible in the circumstances.

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 continue to get 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.

We are on Facebook (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

Our key plan is to implement a major upgrade of the majority of our play equipment, some of which has been on the site since we opened. We want to link this into our 20th birthday celebrations in 2023.

A design brief was prepared and sent out to 6 potential suppliers. We received 3 responses, each of which had their own interpretation of the brief with a different costing. We will need competitive quotes in order to comply with the requirements of likely funders as we will be seeking funds in excess of £100k.

However, even though we are only replacing existing equipment with something similar in each location on the site, we are required to get full planning permission and conditional planning was approved in September.

We then reviewed the tenders that we had received, given the time delays and the huge increase in equipment costs, and by December we were able to select a preferred supplier.

During January and February we worked on a major submission to FCC Communities who operate the Landfill Site at Colsterworth within which range we fit. A final 158 page application was submitted in early March for a decision in mid June. It is hoped that a formal announcement can be made at the AGM.

To complete all our improvement works costs in the region of £160k, so a further application was made to South Kesteven District Council under their Shared Prosperity Fund. We will know the outcome later in summer 2023.

Volunteers

The BWT is always looking for more volunteers 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 thirty 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.

What is more, as usage of the Spinney is free, it becomes a good place to enjoy at minimal cost something that helps mitigate the present cost of living challenges.

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 year.

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 said goodbye to 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 wish them all the best as they go off to University.

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

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; Aqualoos who provide toilets for our events; Gilbert Elson, who cuts the hedges and the meadow.

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
26.6.23

The Bythams Woodland Trust
Little Bytham
Grantham
Lincs

Charity Ref 118 2600

Annual Accounts

1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Date	IN For	Amount		Date	Type	OUT For	Amount
	Opening Balance	£3,855.18					
15-Apr-22	Lottery SK	£ 26.00		11-Apr-22	bacs	J Scofield Spring Thing 2022	£181.32
26-Apr-22	Donation C Applegate	£ 3,000.00		25-Apr-22	bacs	DBS checks Lincs CC	£30.00
4-May-22	Lottery SK	£ 26.00		27-Jun-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - tarmac & tea	£120.08
9-May-22	Amazon Europe Core	£ 9.87		5-Jul-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - tarmac & spray	£105.74
7-Jun-22	Lottery SK	£ 32.50		5-Jul-22	bacs	S & J Adams Lawnmowers Direct	£1,215.00
12-Jul-22	Lottery SK	£ 26.00		29-Jul-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - tarmac & spray 3	£60.23
9-Aug-22	Lottery SK	£ 26.00		19-Aug-22	bacs	SKDC planning application	£553.00
16-Aug-22	Amazon Europe Core	£ 6.47		5-Sep-22	bacs	Playsafety Ltd RSPA	£113.40
12-Sep-22	Lottery SK	£ 32.50		20-Sep-22	bacs	Meadow cutting GH Elsen	£600.00
23-Sep-22	Donation	£ 180.00		23-Sep-22	bacs	Meadow cutting GH Elsen	£60.00
28-Sep-22	Mid summer fair donation	£ 350.00		14-Oct-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - biscuits	£2.36
4-Oct-22	Lottery SK	£ 22.50		23-Oct-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - website domain	£28.62
15-Nov-22	Amazon Europe Core	£ 11.60		24-Nov-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - padlocks & fuel	£73.59
15-Nov-22	Lottery SK	£ 27.50		12-Dec-22	bacs	Gavin Pye - Xmas cheer	£18.51
17-Nov-22	NFU Claims	£ 64.34		21-Dec-22	bacs	S & J Adams - Spinney Meeting	£22.80
17-Nov-22	NFU Claims	£ 2,183.90		10-Feb-23	bacs	Hedge cutting GH Elsen	£240.00
2-Dec-22	A Hoyle donation	£ 154.44		30-Mar-23	bacs	NFU insurance	£1,052.14
6-Dec-22	Lottery SK	£ 26.00		31-Mar-23	bacs	Aqualoos - Spring Thing	£108.00
21-Dec-22	CBPC Jubilee Donation	£ 300.00					
10-Jan-23	Lottery SK	£ 28.00					
8-Feb-23	Lottery SK	£ 39.00					
7-Mar-23	Lottery SK	£ 32.00					
17-Mar-23	Western Power	£ 70.96				Closing Balance	£5,945.97
		£ 10,530.76					£ 10,530.76