



**THE BYTHAMS WOODLAND TRUST**  
**(Registered Charity 1182600)**  
**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL TRUSTEE REPORT 2024/25**

**Introduction**

I am very pleased to introduce the twenty first Chairman's Annual 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 have been submitted. Committee co-options were confirmed at the AGM in 2024 and all of these have made a positive contribution to the work of the Trust. The Trustees and Management Committee met on three occasions, including the AGM.

**Funding**

After the incredibly successful 2023/24 year in respect of our fund raising, 2024/25 was relatively quiet.

No major funding applications were made and only smaller donations were received from the SKDC Lottery, with other funding from our local Parish Councils and the Castle Bytham Midsummer Festival.

**Refurbishment Works and Re-Opening**

At the beginning of the year, the site was still in the hands of the contractors and though we held a formal opening ceremony on 12<sup>th</sup> April, we were only able to open up to the public on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

Thereafter, there has been a significant increase in visitors who have really enjoyed using the new equipment.

**Site Works**

The purpose of our regular work sessions is to maintain the site in a good condition. Our fortnightly work schedule focusses on general maintenance - mowing, strimming, leaf clearing, tree felling and gleaning fallen branches, coppicing and general tidying, repairing play equipment, planting and weeding the sensory garden by hand!

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.

In the Spring, Simon Garbutt secured new funding from SKDC for us to plant a Coronation Orchard as part of our commitment to nature improvement and combatting climate change. We purchased 17 different species of fruit tree and associated tree guards and managed to get them in the ground before the end of March.

### **Publicity and Promotion**

At our formal opening morning we were able to thank our key funders - FCC Communities Foundation and SKDC for their support. Their representatives were invited to meet Trustees and key local supporters. We appreciated some good PR from the Stamford Mercury.

Thereafter, it seems that the Spinney simply promotes itself - mainly through word of mouth attracting new visitors as well as frequent returners.

We were aware that some users were disappointed in the delays in re-opening, but since then, the increase in usage has more than justified the new investment in the site.

Gavin Pye has regularly updated our website at [www.bythamspinney.co.uk](http://www.bythamspinney.co.uk) and took the lead on our social media platforms. However, we recognise that the web-site is in need of a refresh, so this will be a project for the coming year.

### **Health and Safety**

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

Our annual ROSPA Play Area Safety Inspection visit took place in August and it is very pleasing to note that in their Report, there were no major issues. We used the report to guide us with the management of our refurbishment programme.

### **Future Plans**

Our key action is to complete the upgrade of the site, especially the replacement of the embankment swing which had to be taken down during the refurbishment works. The main driveway has been greatly worn down and needs resurfacing. However, both these projects need new funding to make them happen.

### **Volunteers**

The BWT is always looking for more volunteers to help our work at The Spinney and we welcome all offers of support. We realise that not everyone can attend all our work sessions, but if you can do so when able, your help is greatly appreciated.

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, 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 very uncertain and changing world, there remains a strong national drive to compensate for the stresses and pressures faced by children and families. There is a concern about the 'nature deficit' for children who may miss out on the wonders of the natural environment. It is pretty clear that there is no such deficit at the Spinney as we have a wonderful natural play experience to offer.

What is more, as access and usage of the Spinney is free, it is a good place to visit at very little cost and is something that helps mitigate the present cost of living challenges.

### **Thanks**

There are so many people who deserve to be thanked for the significant 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 Gavin, Simon G, Richard, Simon C, Tim, Luke, Gillian, and Pete.

We also have had great support from our Duke of Edinburgh students - James, Thomas and Donald. Though these have formally finished their placements, we are delighted that they have said that they would continue to help out.

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.

Aside from the main funders referenced above, we are very appreciative of the help given by the local Parish Councils, the Castle Bytham Mid-summer Festival Committee, and all those individuals who have made very kind donations throughout the year. This 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  
26.8.25



<b>The Bythams Woodland Trust</b>
<b>Little Bytham</b>
<b>Grantham</b>
<b>Lincs</b>
Charity Ref 118 2600

<b>Annual Accounts</b>	<b>1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025</b>
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Date	IN For	Amount		Date	Type	OUT For	Amount
	Opening Balance	£ 31,139.32					
9-Apr-24	Lottery SK	£ 38.00		12-Apr-24	bacs	Grass cutting GH Elsen	£ 240.00
1-May-24	PayPal donation	£ 49.10		12-Apr-24	bacs	Gavin Pye - bunting	£ 20.44
8-May-24	Lottery SK	£ 45.00		17-Apr-24	bacs	Playscape Ltd	£ 12,000.00
8-May-24	PayPal donation	£ 9.66		17-Apr-24	bacs	P Candler - refreshments opening	£ 46.76
22-May-24	PayPal donation	£ 9.66		7-May-24	bacs	Hinch Plant - plannings	£ 4,500.00
4-Jun-24	Lottery SK	£ 36.00		7-May-24	bacs	Tim Smith pathways	£ 4,631.25
2-Jul-24	Lottery SK	£ 36.00		13-May-24	bacs	Playscape Ltd	£ 2,700.00
13-Aug-24	Lottery SK	£ 55.00		20-May-24	bacs	Simon Garbutt - seeds & plants	£ 227.79
3-Sep-24	Castle Bytham Mid Fair	£ 600.00		6-Jun-24	bacs	T HARRIS mower	£ 26.50
10-Sep-24	Lottery SK	£ 40.00		27-Jun-24	bacs	G PYE strimmer wire	£ 390.93
15-Oct-24	Lottery SK	£ 47.50		16-Jul-24	bacs	P CANDLER petrol	£ 8.45
5-Nov-24	Lottery SK	£ 37.00		31-Jul-24	bacs	T HARRIS mower	£ 28.00
3-Dec-24	Lottery SK	£ 42.00		2-Sep-24	bacs	PLAYSAFE Ltd BWT INVOICE 82694	£ 127.20
9-Jan-25	SKDC	£ 775.13		2-Sep-24	bacs	T HARRIS mower	£ 46.00
14-Jan-25	Lottery SK	£ 47.00		4-Sep-24	bacs	ANDREW MCDONALD - mower repairs	£ 30.00
27-Jan-25	Western Power	£ 72.00		23-Sep-24	bacs	G PYE Strimmer cord	£ 25.25
11-Feb-25	Lottery SK	£ 34.00		23-Sep-24	bacs	GH ELSEN Grass cutting	£ 720.00
11-Mar-25	Lottery SK	£ 34.00		27-Nov-24	bacs	P CANDLER benches	£ 644.48
				13-Jan-25	bacs	Simon Garbutt - seeds & plants	£ 555.68
				12-Feb-25	bacs	T HARRIS mower	£ 35.50
				14-Mar-25	bacs	NFU MUTUAL Insurance 2025	£ 1,385.16
				14-Mar-25	bacs	Simon Garbutt - seeds & plants	£ 177.42
						Closing Balance	£ 4,579.56
		£ 33,146.37					£ 33,146.37