

HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW



HERMITAGE FIELD
COMMUNITY
MEADOW

2nd ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 1190864

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1. Charitable Purpose and Main Activities

The Hermitage Field Community Meadow Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was registered on 14th August 2020 with the objective of promoting for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment by promoting biological diversity.

The Charity is now in its second year and the objective to engage with people from the locality to bring about the transformation of the neglected Hermitage Field into a species rich wild flower hay meadow for the public benefit has progressed in leaps and bounds, resulting in making the growing, planting and field management activities of the first full year a resounding success.

2. Achievements & Performance

Volunteers

The Poly Tunnel Project

An annual lease for the use of a Poly Tunnel at Lancaster City Council's Westgate Depot was obtained to enable the propagation of plugs from seed to supplement purchased supplies to be continued in 2021. Some improvements to the tunnel facilities and provision of materials were made by the lessor with others promised such as an automated watering system which was not installed this season. The use of this large aerated covered growing space provided the base from which volunteer involvement in the Hermitage Field Community Meadow project could flourish despite the working condition restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Kept as safe as possible with the strict observation of Health and Safety Procedures and Risk Assessments that the Trustees had specifically devised, 23 individual volunteers repeatedly returned to join in the growing sessions. Amongst their noted benefits were the improved feelings of being valued, well-being and motivation; safe companionship during the periods of restrictions; contributing to a good cause; learning about propagating and caring for wild flower species, and meadow making in general.

The Poly Tunnel project was a triumph; 402 hours of volunteer time spent there were recorded and in the region of 10,000 plug plants were propagated for planting out in the Meadow, thus adding considerable value to the grant funding that had provided for the purchase of materials, equipment and seed.

The Plug Planting Project

In the Spring and Summer months, younger local youth groups with their group leaders and people from the local communities joined the Poly Tunnel Volunteers in the plug planting sessions at the Hermitage Field. Participants were representative of all the user groups that funders had sought to see benefiting

and more besides joined in.

Enjoyment of the freedom of feeling safe in the wide open space when they were unable to meet indoors was palpable. The physical exercise and the knowledge that in years to come they would be able to return to see the fruits of their labours was a bonus.

Amongst the many comments overheard were *"It's beautiful here"* and *"It's magic running through the wild flowers"*

Volunteer hours recorded for the plug planting sessions totalled 414, which when added to the 402 spent in Poly Tunnel totalled 816 hours overall. A huge sum of 'in kind' value added to the generous donations and grant funding received.

During these organised Community plug planting sessions 9,451 plugs were planted out in the Hermitage Field by the end of the summer.

In addition there were several larger scale planting events including one held on a perfect summer's day in mid August commemorating the memory of former Lancaster City and Halton Parish Councillor Paul Woodruff who ran the nearby popular Woodies Snack Bar for many years. Over 50 people of all ages, family groups and individuals attended and had an enjoyable time helping to plant over 1,170 plug plants followed by well earned refreshments when the work was done.

Field Management

An aspect of field management this year where volunteers have been crucial was in undertaking weed control, a labour intensive and essential on-going activity. This involved removal of huge quantities of dock weed and Himalayan Balsam by physically digging up the roots of these invasive weeds, a very labour intensive method necessary as we manage the meadow without using herbicides or pesticides. In addition, volunteers assisted with the removal of part buried farming litter, black baling plastic, the residue of previous activities on the field and not conducive to the current conservation redevelopment.

The Trustees, also volunteers, were central to overseeing and joining in the work being undertaken throughout the year, recruiting, co-ordinating, training, motivating and supervising the volunteers, assisting in the physical work of planting and weeding and ensuring seasonal deadlines were met.

The lead role and bulk of this work was carried out by Chair of the Trustees, Erica Sarney, whose indefatigable efforts to date have been fundamental to the success of the field transformation. She has also built up the important public profile of the charity, networking with local farmers, land owners, environmental charities, local government officials, central government agencies, Forest of Bowland AONB and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, and undertaken public speaking engagements, all of which have ensured the Charity's profile has been kept in the public eye. Alongside Erica, her fellow Trustees have overseen administrative,

financial, grant application and project development roles.

Other Project Beneficiaries

With the quantity of plug plants grown it was possible to donate plants to other meadow projects in the locality including Greaves Park, Miss Whalley's Field and Claver Hill in Lancaster; Pollinator Patches across the district; the Millennium Cycleway & Bay Gateway, Life 4 a Life site at Crook O'Lune, Halton Co-Housing, Forest of Bowland and Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB's, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, local schools, community projects and individuals.

Publicity

During the year the website host used by the Charity was transferred to One SC Media, a progressive media company based in Lancaster set up and operated by Subhash Chatterjee, a student at Lancaster Royal Grammar School. The website was redesigned and new menus were added to document the work being undertaken in the development and progress of the Hermitage Field Community Meadow. A donation feature has been added and a 'History of the Hermitage Field' section. Photographs of every stage of volunteer involvement and activity throughout the year are featured, as is the paid for and donated contractor field management work such as harrowing, weed control, grazing, seed harvesting and cutting and baling.

There is plenty of scope to create interesting content to record the development of the Hermitage Field and acknowledge the groups and individuals who are helping to realise the Charity's vision. The Trustee's are able to manage the site to ensure it is kept up to date and to upload written and pictorial content which can be viewed at www.hermitagefieldcommunitymeadow.com

3. Financial Review

Overview

The 2021/22 financial year began in a healthy position. The Halton Lune Trust and the Areti Charitable Trust consented to the unspent portion of their grants awarded in the previous financial year being unring-fenced and brought forward. This enabled the completion of essential seasonal land management work, the purchase of meadow seed for the 2021/22 season and to purchase mature plug plants to supplement those grown 'in house' thus negating the need to secure new grant funding for those purposes during this financial year. Expenditure on volunteering, educational and community involvement activities which provided public benefit were also covered by these funds.

The DEFRA Plantlife Green Recovery Challenge Fund

Extended until May 2022, the aim of this countrywide project was to tackle climate change and improve bio-diversity by restoring nature to the countryside and to encourage people to connect with nature.

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The Trustees were delighted to be invited to become involved and at this stage in restoring the Hermitage Field the funding of essential management costs and seed purchase and working alongside others with knowledge and expertise in meadow making was a huge bonus.

Funds were not drawn down from the project therefore do not appear in the Charity accounts, the payments of goods and services supplied were settled by the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust as expenditure on approved activities were incurred.

Due to an underspend, funds were being made available to the Charity for the purchase of interpretation boards and field gate signs and these were being designed as the financial year ended. Production and installation on the Hermitage Field would be sometime during Summer 2022.

A successful application was made to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for a Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier Payment, which although a relatively small sum which will require supplementary funding to be sourced, it will nevertheless help towards the cost of renewing stock fencing and a field gate which the Charity is responsible for repairing under the terms of the Field lease. The first of two staged payments will be made at the end of 2022 and the work will be carried out in 2023.

Reserve Policy

The Trustee Board did not consider it necessary at this stage to establish a reserve policy. The recurring annual running costs of the Charity are low and closely controlled. The resource most depended upon to meet the Charity's objectives in these first years is 'hands on' volunteer help, which so far the Trustees have been able to attract and retain in sufficient numbers.

Acknowledgements

The Trustees formally acknowledge the generous continued financial support of:-

- Halton Lune Trust
- The Areti Charitable Trust
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund
- Life for a Life Memorial Forests, and for also assisting with seasonal field management.

Also the following for a wide variety of donations

- Lancaster City Council for the provision of Poly Tunnel facilities and growing materials.
- Forest of Bowland AONB - for the donation of plug plants
- Subhash Chatterjee - for designing the new website
- Marianne Van Tucker, Andrew Burningham and Arabella Lennox-Boyd for seed donations

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The Trustees would also like to thank Individual volunteers, too numerous to name them all, but without whom we could not have made so much progress in successfully transforming the Hermitage Field Community Meadow this year.

We would also like to acknowledge the help and support of the many groups who came to help with the planting of plugs in the Hermitage Field during the summer of 2021, Caton Brownies and Guides, Wray scouts, Halton Beavers, Abbeystead Youth Group.

4. Structure, Governance & Management

The Hermitage Field Community Meadow (HFCM) is a Charitable Incorporated organisation (CIO). The current governing document is set out in the HFCM Constitution dated 10th July 2020.

Trustees 2021/22

The Constitution sets out the eligibility, appointment terms and responsibilities of Trustees. Five Trustees were appointed initially to form the charity, Erica Sarney for a term of 4 years, all others for a term of 3 years.

In December 2021 Claire Cornish tendered her resignation with immediate effect. During her term of office Claire had contributed her wealth of experience in meadow making both in the poly tunnels, where she generously gave many hours of her time guiding volunteers in seed sowing and the propagation of wild flower plug plants, and also on the field site planting out. She made a major contribution to devising general health and safety and specific Covid 19 risk assessments for volunteers working in both settings. At the Trustee Meetings Claire's contributions to the Charity planning and field management matters ensured confident and well considered decision making. Claire continues to support the Charity as a meadow adviser.

Following Claire's departure the Trustee Board devised material and a procedure for recruiting replacement Trustees. Accordingly, in March 2022 we were pleased to be able to appoint Richard Evans.

Trustee Board members 2021/22

Mrs Erica Sarney BEM - Chairperson

Miss Claire Cornish BA(Hons), MSc, MIEEM, Cenv - resigned December 2021

Mr Timothy Paul Sarney BSc Hons

Mrs Pamela Margaret Woolgar

Dr. Katharine Milnes

Mr Richard Evans - appointed March 2022

The Trustees have continued the established practice to meet bi-monthly on the 2nd Monday of the month. Meetings are held on Zoom as necessitated by the pandemic restrictions, this method has worked well and the intention is to

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continue on this platform for the foreseeable future. In addition, when Covid restrictions were lifted, Trustees met on the Hermitage Field to observe plug planting outcomes, assess progress and consider field management requirements.

Erica Sarney has continued to manage the day to day work of the Charity and is the main point of contact for liaising with key partners, funders, contractors and other meadow makers. In addition she has driven and managed the very successful volunteer sessions at the poly tunnel and on the Hermitage Field.

5. Reference and Administrative details

Charity name:- Hermitage Field Community Meadow

Other name the Charity uses:- HFCMeadow

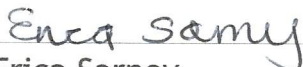
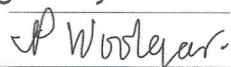
Registered Charity Number: - 1194864

Charity's principal Address:- Hermitage Lodge
Low Road
Crook O'Lune
Lancaster
LA2 9HU

6. Declarations

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the Hermitage Field Community Meadow Charity Trustees

	Signatory 1	Signatory 2
Signatures		
Full Name(s)	Erica Sarney	Pamela Woolgar
Position	Chair of Trustees	Trustee

Date December 12th 2022



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW

1190864

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2021

To

31/03/2022

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
DONATION	30	-	-	30	-
REFUND	11	-	-	11	-
REFUND	33	-	-	33	-
LIFE 4 A LIFE DONATION	300	-	-	300	-
GRANTS	-	-	-	-	5,510
LEGACY	-	-	-	-	200
LOANS	-	-	-	-	500
FUNDRAISING	-	-	-	-	50
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	374	-	-	374	6,260
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	374	-	-	374	6,260
A3 Payments					
FIELD LICENCE	-	150	-	150	150
PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	-	291	-	291	291
FIELD PREPARATION / MANAGEMENT	-	434	-	434	108
TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT	-	390	-	390	191
SOFT GOODS - SEEDS PLUG PLANTS	-	1,120	-	1,120	718
PUBLICITY	-	60	-	60	-
LOAN REPAYMENT	-	-	-	-	500
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	2,445	-	2,445	1,958
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	2,445	-	2,445	1,958
Net of receipts/(payments)	374	- 2,445	-	- 2,071	4,302
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	750	3,552	-	4,302	-
Cash funds this year end	1,124	1,107	-	2,231	4,302

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	COOP BANK ACCOUNT	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	1,124	1,107	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Richard Evans
Erica Sarney

RICHARD EVANS
ERICA SARNEY

21/12/22
21/12/22