

HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW



3rd ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

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 third year and second meadow flowering season and feedback from expert advisers has confirmed that the transformation of the Hermitage Field, at this relatively early stage in the life of the project, has exceeded expectations.

2. Achievements & Performance

Community Engagement

It was the original intention by incorporating 'Community' into the name that the Charity would collaborate with many local partners to achieve its objectives - that the Hermitage Field could be enjoyed by the local community and benefit the natural environment. In this regard the evidence suggests that in this reporting year, April 2022 to March 2023, progress has been hugely successful, not least due to the indefatigable efforts of the Chair and Founding Trustee of the Charity, Erica Sarney supported by a strong team of hard working Trustees.

Agency partners

DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), who awarded the Charity a three year grant under their Countryside Stewardship Scheme to cover maintenance of the Hermitage Field perimeter fencing and a gate.

Lancaster City Council, from whom the Hermitage Field is leased to the Charity, provided use of a poly tunnel and watering facilities at their White Lund Depot in Morecambe for the second successive year, enabling the economic propagation of plug plants needed to complement the seed sown directly onto the field.

The Forest of Bowland AONB whose *Bowland Haytime Project Officer Carol Edmondson* has taken a great interest in the Charity's work and has given invaluable support to the development of the Hermitage Field including providing expert advice and access to funding via the *Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund*.

and

Cumbria Wildlife Trust, who also provided expert advice and generously approved use of wild flower art work for the design of a publicity leaflet, interpretation boards and field gate signs.

Volunteers

A key collaboration in making a huge difference to the success of the transformation of the Hermitage Field has been the individual volunteers and the organised groups. This year over 600 hours of volunteer time has been logged by 50 volunteers, many having attended the weekly sessions held at the poly tunnel

throughout the winter and spring months as well as joining in the 16 outdoor plug planting sessions held in the Field during the Spring and Summer and also helping to control the numbers of weeds such as dock weed and creeping thistle which spread voraciously if not controlled.

Non-chemical weed control

The Trustees agreed a policy of not using any form of pesticide on the Hermitage Field due to the adverse impact it would have on the biodiversity that the Charity aims to encourage and protect, so the only option has been to physically dig out unwelcome and persistent weeds.

Supporting others

Overall 9,500 plug plants were grown from locally sourced wild flower seed and over half of these, plus another 500 donated from Bowland Haytime Project, were planted on the Hermitage Field. The remaining plug plants were donated to local meadow projects including Lancaster City Council Grassland project, Miss Whalley's Field, and Borwick village green.

Health and Well-being

Help with the plug planting was also provided by organised group sessions provided for the Bay Recovery Project - a well-being programme offering people around Morecambe Bay the opportunity to get outdoors and connect with nature.

An expected and intended outcome for all volunteers helping with the project has been the benefit of improved sense of well-being gained from the safe socialisation indoors and outdoors which was so welcome and necessary after the constraints of lockdowns and contact between people enforced by the pandemic.

Ultimately the general public, local residents and visitors to the area who use the Hermitage Field footpath on a daily basis throughout the year in the pursuit of exercise and leisure activities, are able to gain enjoyment from the enhanced landscape and connect with nature.

In the spring and summer months they can now also see first hand how pollinators, essential for agriculture and deemed under threat from extinction, insects and wildlife hitherto absent from the Hermitage Field in recent years, are returning in their numbers and variety of species to this newly created habitat.

Community Events

Bio Blitz

A Bio Blitz is planned for July 2023 and is to be conducted by Carol Edmondson, Forest of Bowland AONB. It will provide the first opportunity to record as many as possible of the wildlife species that can be found on the Hermitage Field at the height of the summer and it has the potential to become an annual event. A large number of volunteers of all ages will be required to help with the collection of specimens. Expert helpers will assist in identification and logging results.

Guided walks

Guided meadow walks are being planned to take place in the Summer when the Meadow is in flower and bat walks will be held at dusk in the Autumn.

These are exactly the type of activities that the Charity set out to become engaged in to encourage public participation and to promote interest in biodiversity and provide public benefit.

Field Management

The Charity has engaged with a number of local farmers and contractors who have provided paid for and volunteer help to manage the field site at key stages of the year.

In late winter months livestock grazing was followed by harrowing in preparation for seed sowing. In August, at the end of the growing season, the hay was cut and dried in situ to disperse seed, then removed.

The hay was taken for composting as it cannot be guaranteed to be free of contamination due to the level of use in the Field for exercising dogs.

Moles

The Trustees considered the issues of moles in the Hermitage Field. The use of traps would not be permitted due to public access but in any case would this method would not have been an option. A policy to treat moles as part of the natural biodiversity was favoured as moles are not considered to be disruptive and there are a number of benefits to existing in harmony with them.

Moles are known to aerate the soil and control certain insects that can attack grasses and plants, by eating their larvae. Mole hill soil can provide mud for use by Thrushes, House martins and Blackbirds when nest building, they can also provide nest sites for solitary mining bees. Many of the mole hills in the Hermitage Field are flattened and the bare soil sown with seeds and plug plants.

Publicity

During the year Trustees have been working on three main publicity projects for which funding was in place.

Interpretation Boards & Field gate signs

Two large sturdy colourful interpretation boards explaining the meadow history and the meadow creation process were commissioned during the year. Colourful images of the species of meadow flowers and pollinators that the public could expect to see on their route through the Hermitage Field were used.

They were located by each of the two entrance gates to the field and similarly styled welcome signs for each gate have also been commissioned.

All were funded by the Green Recovery Challenge, the board installation taking place in the Spring and the gate signs later in the season.

Thanks to Trustees Erica Sarney for managing this project with alacrity, Richard Evans for compiling and editing the text and Tim Sarney for carrying out the installations.

Leaflet

A leaflet to be launched in time for the second meadow flowering season of Spring/Summer 2023 took several months in planning the detailed content and illustrations to be used. Much consideration was given to the design of the layout and permission was sought where copyrights applied.

Trustees Judy Powell and Lois Browne are to thank for taking this on as their first project and creating a delightful and informative leaflet which was due to go to press as this financial year ended. It will be placed in locations throughout the surrounding area to inform and attract visitors to the Hermitage Field.

Website - www.hermitagefieldcommunitymeadow.com

The decision taken in the last financial year to move the Charity website to a new host provider has proved to be beneficial. Not least because of the improved design and appearance but also for the relative ease of use for updating the site with new material and information.

Trustee Richard Evans is to thank for diligently adding content to document activities throughout the year with accompanying photographic records and Erica Sarney for maintaining the Blog.

Richard has also created a comprehensive ***Sponsors and Supporters*** page which highlights the wide range of benefactors who have given to the Charity.

Planned activities are advertised including volunteer sessions and special events and contact and comments are invited from website users.

A future plan is to enable sightings of plants, insects and wildlife to be reported and recorded to help in compiling a data base of species.

A donation facility has yet to reap rewards but the Trustees are hopeful that this may happen over time.

The website visually demonstrates that the Charity is active and making progress in all the ways it purports to do.

3. Financial Review

Overview

Key requirements of funders are the extent to which the Charity engages with people from the local communities, encourages them to become involved and that there are benefits to be gained from this.

The restoration activities have been particularly successful in appealing to men,

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women and children in a wide mix of age groups, volunteering opportunities and events have been enjoyable and educational.

Meadow making knowledge has been imparted, expertise shared and exchanged with the outcome that the conservation and restoration of the Hermitage Field and the profile of the Charity within the meadow making sector in general has been enhanced. In turn this has fostered goodwill which will remain a valuable resource for the future.

These areas of engagement have added considerable value 'in kind' to the grant funding and donations received during this financial year.

The general public using the Hermitage Field for leisure pursuits form a much wider demographic of which more detail may be captured in the future.

Funding

The Charity account balance at the start of the financial year was £2,231. These funds were carried over from the previous financial year. Consent was requested and provided by funders where applicable to carry forward and/or reallocate funds unspent in the previous financial year. The bulk of these carried over funds were from the Arete Foundation Grant.

In November 2022 the Halton Lune Trust awarded the Charity a new grant of £2,650 for field management costs in 2023.

The account balance at the end of the financial year was £4,327.

Reserve Policy

The Trustee Board has not considered it necessary to establish a reserve policy as yet. 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 - New award received November 2022
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund (funding ended May 2022)
- Life for a Life Memorial Forests

Our thanks are offered for the following donations

- Bowland Haytime project 20kg of seed and plug plants
- Peter Blackwell, Bell Sykes, Slaidburn - help with seed sowing
- Life for a Life Memorial Forests for assisting with seasonal field management.
- Lancaster City Council - pallet of compost
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Ali White - use of wildflower images
- Plantlife - 500 plug plants

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.

4. Structure, Governance & Management

Structure

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.

Governance

The Constitution sets out the eligibility, appointment terms, and responsibilities of Trustees. In August 2020 the Charity was entered on the Register of Charities. There were five founding Trustees to serve as follows, Erica Sarney for a term of 4 years, all others for a term of 3 years. A maximum of seven Trustees can be appointed.

In March 2022 it was unanimously agreed that the Charity would benefit by increasing the the Trustee appointments to the maximum of seven. Skills and experience that were deemed to be needed to develop the Charity were identified and the vacant positions were advertised widely across the local area. In September 2022 two new appointments were made.

Trustee Board members 2022/23

Mrs Erica Sarney BEM - Chairperson
Mr Timothy Paul Sarney BSc Hons
Mrs Pamela Margaret Woolgar
Dr. Katharine Milnes
Mr Richard Evans
Judy Powell appointed September 2022
Lois Browne appointed September 2022

Management

The Trustees meetings continue to be held bi-monthly on the 2nd Monday of the month by video link. The Trustees find this method efficient and effective for planning, discussion of Charity business and decision making and also in terms of cost and time.

Occasionally informal meets take place on the Hermitage Field to observe and 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. She has also managed the very successful volunteer sessions at the poly tunnel and plug planting sessions 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 | <i>E Sarney</i> | <i>P Woolgar</i> |
| Full Name(s) | Erica Sarney | Pamela Woolgar |
| Position | Chair of Trustees | Trustee |

| | |
|------|------------------|
| Date | 11th August 2023 |
|------|------------------|



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW

1190864

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2022

To

31/03/2023

Section A Receipts and payments

| | Unrestricted funds to the nearest £ | Restricted funds to the nearest £ | Endowment funds to the nearest £ | Total funds to the nearest £ | Last year to the nearest £ |
|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A1 Receipts | | | | | |
| Donation | 10 | - | - | 10 | 330 |
| Halton Lune Hydro Grant | - | 2,650 | - | 2,650 | - |
| DEFRA RPA | - | 284 | - | 284 | - |
| Refund | - | - | - | - | 44 |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total (Gross income for AR) | 10 | 2,934 | - | 2,944 | 374 |
| A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table). | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total receipts | 10 | 2,934 | - | 2,944 | 374 |
| A3 Payments | | | | | |
| FIELD LICENCE | - | 150 | - | 150 | 150 |
| PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE | - | 291 | - | 291 | 291 |
| FIELD PREPARATION / MANAGEMENT | - | 270 | - | 270 | 434 |
| TOOLS & EQUIPMENT | 33 | - | - | 33 | 390 |
| SOFT GOODS - SEEDS PLUG PLANTS | - | 29 | - | 29 | 1,120 |
| PUBLICITY | - | 75 | - | 75 | 60 |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | 33 | 815 | - | 848 | 2,445 |
| A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table) | | | | | |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sub total | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total payments | 33 | 815 | - | 848 | 2,445 |
| Net of receipts/(payments) | - 23 | 2,119 | - | 2,096 | - 2,071 |
| A5 Transfers between funds | - | - | - | - | - |
| A6 Cash funds last year end | 1,124 | 1,108 | - | 2,232 | 4,302 |
| Cash funds this year end | 1,101 | 3,226 | - | 4,328 | 2,231 |

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 | 1,101 | 3,226 | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | Total cash funds | 1,101 | 3,226 | - |
| | (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s)) | OK | OK | OK |

| | Details | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| B2 Other monetary assets | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |
| | | - | - | - |

| | Details | Fund to which asset belongs | Cost (optional) | Current value (optional) |
|----------------------|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| B3 Investment assets | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |

| | Details | Fund to which asset belongs | Cost (optional) | Current value (optional) |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |
| | | | - | - |

| | Details | Fund to which liability relates | Amount due (optional) | When due (optional) |
|----------------|---------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| B5 Liabilities | | | - | |
| | | | - | |
| | | | - | |
| | | | - | |
| | | | - | |

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

| Signature | Print Name | Date of approval |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| <i>Richard Evans</i> | RICHARD EVANS | 9/9/23 |
| <i>Erica Sarney</i> | ERICA SARNEY | 17/9/23 |