
HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW

4th ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 1190864

1. Charitable Purpose and Main Activities 2023-2024

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 fourth year and third meadow flowering season. 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 and has been described as the best restored meadow in the Forest of Bowland in terms of diversity by the Forest of Bowland meadow expert.

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 2023 to March 2024, progress has been extremely successful, due to a strong, experienced team of Trustees and an expanding volunteer force.

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. Rising costs of fencing material resulted in shortfall of funding but the shortfall was met by a combination of the Charity and the Countryside Access team at Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The lower fencing which we are responsible for has been replaced, a short additional section repaired, one of the pedestrian access gates and the main field gate has been replaced. This funding also allowed for the donation and fitting of disabled access handles for the pedestrian gates.

National Grid Landscape Initiative Funding via Forest of Bowland National Landscape facilitated hedge laying along one of the boundaries. This was executed by volunteers managed by The Lancashire and Westmoreland Hedge laying association. This was a very successful two-day event with expert tuition from Joe Craig and David Whitaker for people requiring hedge laying certification. We are very grateful to the team from Lancaster City Council who chipped all the resulting hedge brash for us.

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape Hay Time Project officer Carol Edmondson has continued to support the Charity's work. Carol has organised all the meadow surveys and soil sampling. She also helped organise the National meadows day bio blitz on the meadow in July 2023, wildflower immersion walks and an Earthworm sampling event with *Kieron Brown* for the public.

Lancaster City Council workmen stripped off the overgrown footpath through the meadow and the meadow now has full disabled access via the footpath.

Two gate signs were designed and erected on the main entrance gates. We are grateful to *Cumbria Wildlife Trust* for the use of wildflower drawings for the design.

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Lancaster City Council, from whom the Hermitage Field is leased to the Charity, continued to provide use of a poly tunnel and watering facilities at their White Lund Depot in Morecambe for the third successive year, enabling the propagation of plug plants needed to complement the seed sown directly onto the field. They have also generously funded all the peat free compost we use.

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 organised groups. 2,516 wildflower plug plants have been planted into the meadow in 2023/24 and this has resulted in 187 logged hours of volunteer time with an additional 216 polytunnel hours growing plug plants. Volunteers attended weekly sessions held at the poly tunnel throughout the Winter and Spring months and joined in the outdoor plug planting sessions held in the Field during the Spring and Summer. They also helped to control the numbers of weeds such as Dock. 15-ton bags of cut dock heads have been removed from site and composted in Lancaster City Council Public Realms composting facility.

We were delighted to welcome a group from British Standards Institute Lancaster who donated a volunteering day to the Charity.

Our records show that since the charity was set up, we have planted 16,787 wildflower plug plants, most of which have been grown from collected local seed in the polytunnel, spent 941 hours planting plugs into the meadow, and logged 893 polytunnel hours to grow the plug plants. It's an incredible effort from our 55 volunteers.

In addition to the above, volunteers collected local wildflower seeds to grow as plug plants. This is a time-consuming project.

Hermitage Field Community Meadow was nominated for, and won, a Lancashire Wildlife Trust Action For Nature Award winning the Rural Community Group Nature Champion award for 2023 for the work to transform the field into a species rich wildflower meadow.

On May 10th 2023 Trustees and volunteers were invited for afternoon tea at County Hall, Preston, to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles along with other local environmental groups.

Non-chemical weed control

The Trustees continued the 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.

3. Supporting others.

We have grown and donated plug plants and wildflower seed to local meadow projects including Lancaster City Council Grassland Project at Manor Crescent in Slyne, Hala, Miss Whalley's Field, Fenham Carr Meadows, the Orchard in Williamson Park and the project at Lawson Meadow near Aughton.

4. Health and Well-being

In connection with the Bay Recovery Project (helping people to get outside and connect with nature) we welcomed visitors from the Connecting People and Nature Project organised by Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The groups visited to volunteer, walk and enjoy the outdoors. These included a group of ladies from Nelson. These were highly successful and enjoyable events.

The meadow looked stunning for many months of the year and was well used and appreciated by local walkers, artists, photographers, horse riders, tramper, wheelchair and pram users, people taking exercise and visitors.

5. Community Events

Bio Blitz.

A Bio Blitz was held in July 2023. This was jointly organised by us and Carol Edmondson, Forest of Bowland National Landscape. This was a highly successful event. The results were all recorded on iNaturalist and appear on our website. This project is regularly updated with new sightings. [Hermitage Field Community Meadow · iNaturalist United Kingdom](#)

Guided walks

We held two floral immersion walks and ran an additional walk for Rob Zlock from North Lancashire Wildlife group. 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 meadow was cut and hay collected and removed at the end of August 2023.

6. Publicity

Our main sources of publicity are the website which is updated regularly by Trustee Richard Evans. The website visually demonstrates that the Charity is active and making progress in all the ways it purports to do.

www.hermitagefieldcommunitymeadow.com

Charity events are circulated on local Facebook websites in addition to the website.

Two large sturdy colourful interpretation boards explaining the meadow history and the meadow creation process are located in two entrance areas of the meadow

Leaflet

A leaflet was designed by Trustee Lois Browne and printing was arranged by ex- Trustee Judy Powell with thanks. This is available on the website electronically and displayed locally.

7. 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, 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 £4,327.

These funds were carried over from the previous financial year. During the financial year additional funding was provided by DEFRA RPA, National Grid and Lancashire County Council. Kirkby Lonsdale Gardening Group made a donation after Erica Sarney presented a talk on the history of the meadow at one of their meetings.

The account balance at the end of the financial year was £ 3,648.

Reserve Policy

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

8. Acknowledgements

The Trustees formally acknowledge the generous continued financial support from funders.

Our thanks are offered for the following donations

- Bowland Haytime Project seed and plug plants, meadow advice and surveying.
- Lancaster City Council - pallets of peat free compost and use of poly tunnels.
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Ali White – use of wildflower images
- National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative. £1757.60p
- National Hedge laying association for running training events
- Lancashire County Council – Connecting People and Nature £100.
- Kirkby Lonsdale gardening group £75 for a meadow talk.
- Countryside Access officer Forest of Bowland National Landscape for gate and disabled opening donations.
- Subash at OneSCmedia for website support.
- Halton Lune Trust for grant funding.

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

9. 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.

Trustee Board members 2023/24

Mrs Erica Sarney BEM – Chairperson

Mr Timothy Paul Sarney BSc Hons

Dr. Katharine Milnes

Mr Richard Evans

Lois Browne appointed September 2022

Pamela Woolgar. Resigned 14/8/23

Judy Powell appointed September 2022. Resigned 15/02/24

We would like to thank all trustees past and present for their hard work for the charity.

Management

The Trustees meetings continued to be held bi-monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of the month by video link. The Trustees find this method efficient and effective for planning, discussion of Charity business and decision making

Erica Sarney 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.

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

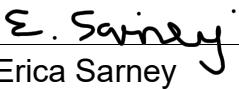
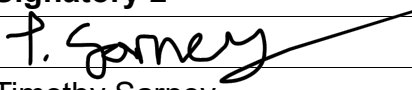
Crook O'Lune

Lancaster, LA2 9HU

10. 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	Timothy Sarney
Position	Chair of Trustees	Trustee

Date	27th November 2024
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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW

1190864

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2023

To

31/03/2024

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					
LANCS CC GSF	100	-	-	100	-
LANCS CC NATIONAL GRID	-	1,758	-	1,758	-
DEFRA RPA	-	325	-	325	-
KIRKBY LONSDALE GARDENING G	75	-	-	75	-
DEFRA RPA FENCING GRANT	-	980	-	980	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	175	3,063	-	3,238	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	175	3,063	-	3,238	-
A3 Payments					
FIELD LICENCE	-	150	-	150	-
PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	-	291	-	291	-
FIELD PREPARATION / MANAGEMENT	38	2,858	-	2,896	-
TOOLS & EQUIPMENT	59	-	-	59	-
SOFT GOODS - SEEDS PLUG PLANTS	20	13	-	33	-
PUBLICITY	-	488	-	488	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	117	3,800	-	3,917	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	117	3,800	-	3,917	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	58	737	-	679	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,101	3,226	-	4,327	-
Cash funds this year end	1,159	2,489	-	3,648	-

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	1,159	2,489	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	1,159	2,489	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

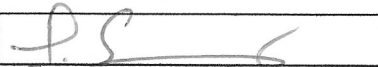
	Details	OK Unrestricted funds to nearest £	OK Restricted funds to nearest £	OK Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	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
	TIMOTHY SARNET	9/10/24
Richard Evans	RICHARD EVANS	6/11/24