
HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW

4th ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 1190864

1. Charitable Purpose and Main Activities 2024-2025

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 it's fifth year and fourth meadow flowering season. This has been an extremely successful meadow season both in terms of biodiversity on the meadow and enhancement of the meadow itself.

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 it's objectives - that the Hermitage Field could be enjoyed by the local community and benefit the natural environment. The evidence suggests that in this reporting year, April 2024 to March 2025, progress has been excellent. An experienced team of Trustees and a willing volunteer force have transformed this once neglected field into a species rich wildflower meadow.

Funders & 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 meadow and the gates and fencing which we are responsible for.

Lancaster City Council (LCC), from whom the Hermitage Field is leased to the Charity, allowed the Charity to use redundant polytunnel and glasshouse space for our volunteer team to grow and nurture wildflower plug plants for the fourth successive year. These are grown from local seed sources which are hand collected by volunteers. The Council also allowed the free disposal of green waste such as Himalayan Balsam and Docks from the meadow in the Westgate Public Realms recycling centre. They also fund the peat free compost we use which allows us to grow plug plants for Council sites and to donate to other groups.

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. With the help of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape team she also helped organise the National Meadows Day bio blitz on the meadow in July 2024 and an Earthworm sampling event with *Kieron Brown* for the public. Carol set up iNaturalist for the meadow site in 2023 and this has been a resounding success, turning up some interesting and unexpected local records. These are frequently updated by volunteers and can be viewed on the charity website.

Lancashire County Council provided the necessary ironmongery to facilitate upgrading the disabled openings on the pedestrian gates to improve access for disabled visitors along the concessionary footpath.

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 who donated time and effort to support our work. This year we have concentrated on growing and planting into

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Hermitage Field Community Meadow some of the rarer species of wildflowers found in The Forest of Bowland Hay Meadows and we are starting to see the emergence of Devils-Bit Scabious, Betony, Sneezewort, Saw-Wort and Great Burnet on the meadow. This reporting year volunteers have planted 1,877 plug plants on the meadow and donated 50 hours of volunteer time for planting, and more than 270 hours of volunteer time in the poly tunnels growing and caring for plug plants. In total 320 hours of volunteer time donated.

We were delighted to welcome a group from North Lancashire Wildlife Group (NLWG) to join us on the Bioblitz day and add to our wildlife records. They took part in a guided walk through the meadow. Erica Sarney, HFCM Head of Trustees wrote an illustrated article for their magazine about the efforts to restore the local meadows for their 2024 magazine

We had an excellent article about the meadow and the journey to restore it published in the Champion Bowland Magazine 2025. Here is a link to the magazine.

<https://www.forestofbowland.com/files/uploads/pdfs/FobMiniDisco25LoRes.pdf>

Our records show that since the charity was set up, we have planted in excess of 18,000 wildflower plug plants, all grown and planted by volunteers

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 and cut off the seeding heads. In the first few years of meadow restoration this resulted in 15 ton bags of weeds removed annually, this year we have managed to reduce that to 6 as the meadow is enhanced.

3. Supporting others.

As a charity we have put a concerted effort into helping and supporting others to restore wildflower meadows. We approached Lancaster City Council about Manor Crescent, an area of grassland which is part of their grassland Strategy but which residents were unhappy with. We assessed the area and designed a flyer for residents to explain how, as a partnership with LCC, the local community and ourselves, we would enhance the grassland. Volunteers grew 1,000 plug plants and along with LCC staff, local community volunteers and our own volunteers we planted them on site. Our volunteers are in the process of growing another 800 plugs for the site. We also donated our own hand collected seed. The transformation has been extremely well received.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust are restoring a local meadow on a site they manage in Aughton Woods, Halton with Aughton. We have grown and donated 750 wildflower plug plants for that meadow. Those plugs will be replenished by a visit to their reserve where their volunteers will donate time to grow plug plants from seed and division later in 2025

We have found that encouraging local groups to donate time to grow wild flower plugs with us is helpful to them as an educational tool, and also useful to us, as an additional volunteer force.

Halton Castle Hill Motte and Bailey. National Monument number 1012440. Our Trustees have agreed to provide advice for the management of low input ancient grassland meadow area on this ancient grassland site. We look forward to supporting this project in the future

by collecting and sowing seed and offering management advice.

Freemans Wood Meadow, Lancaster. We have provided support, management advice, seed from HFCMeadow and are in the process of growing 750 plug plants for their volunteers to plant out. In future their volunteers will volunteer with us to replenish this stock.

For the past two years, just before the meadow is cut, we have opened it up for local people to collect seed. This enables anyone wishing to grow wildflowers to have a free seed source from seeds on the meadow of local provenance. It has encouraged local volunteers to become more involved with the management of meadow sites in local parks.

4. Health and Well-being

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. During summer months the meadow is used by Piccadilly Garden for peaceful walks for people they care for who require additional support needs or have disabilities.

5. Community Events

Bio Blitz.

A Bio Blitz was held in July 2024. This was jointly organised by our Charity team, Carol Edmondson and Forest of Bowland National Landscape Hay Time team. 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 undertake in order 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 2024, by our local contractor EJ ward and sons.

6. Publicity

Our main source of publicity is 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 pages in addition to the website.

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

The meadow has been featured in Champion Bowland magazine and the North Lancashire Wildlife group magazine 2024.

Leaflet

A leaflet describing the meadow was designed by Trustee Lois Browne and this has been updated and reprinted. This is available on the website electronically, displayed locally and is now available to visitors as we have installed two waterproof leaflet boxes on the meadow.

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, have 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.

Funding

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

These funds were carried over from the previous financial year. During this financial year additional funding was provided by DEFRA RPA, and a donation from a member of the public.

The account balance at the end of the financial year was £ 2,704.

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 - plug plants, meadow advice and surveying.
- Lancaster City Council - pallets of peat free compost, use of poly tunnels with watering assistance and green waste recycling. The use of the poly tunnel and greenhouse have been an absolute game changer, enabling us to support and help many other charities and local initiatives with wildflowers. We would like to thank LCC for supporting this forward thinking initiative
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust – Plug plant advice.

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- Subash at OneSCmedia for free website support and domain renewal. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with this local business. Thank you.
- Bee Friendly Wildflowers for a donation from the Blue Festival, Morecambe, and plug plants, which we have been able to use to support other projects.
- Marianne Von Tucka and Andrew Burningham for generous yellow rattle seed donations.

The Trustees would also like to thank the many individual volunteers, too numerous to name, but without whom we would not have made so much progress in successfully transforming the Hermitage Field Community Meadow. Many have supported this project from its initiation and worked on many working parties over the years.

We would like to add a special vote of thanks to the team of verifiers at INaturalist who confirm our records.

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 2024/25

Mrs Erica Sarney BEM – Head of Trustees

Mr Timothy Paul Sarney

Dr. Katharine Milnes

Mr Richard Evans

Lois Browne appointed September 2022

We would like to thank all trustees 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.

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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

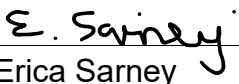
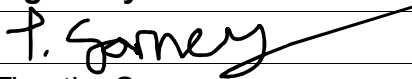
Crook O'Lune

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	14th December 2025
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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

HERMITAGE FIELD COMMUNITY MEADOW

1190864

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2024

To

31/03/2025

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					
DEFRA RPA	-	325	-	325	-
	10	-	-	10	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	10	325	-	335	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	10	325	-	335	-
A3 Payments					
FIELD LICENCE	-	150	-	150	-
PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE	-	291	-	291	-
FIELD PREPARATION / MANAGEMENT	138	660	-	798	-
TOOLS & EQUIPMENT	-	-	-	-	-
SOFT GOODS - SEEDS PLUG PLANTS	41	-	-	41	-
PUBLICITY	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	178	1,101	-	1,279	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	178	1,101	-	1,279	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 168	- 776	-	- 944	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,159	2,489	-	3,648	-
Cash funds this year end	991	1,713	-	2,704	-

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	991	1,713	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	991	1,713	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK


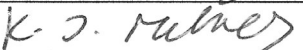
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	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
	TIMOTHY SARNEY	1/10/25
	Dr. KATHARINE MILNES	31/10/25