



Menston Area Nature Trust Annual Report 2024-2025

Reporting Period: 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

Prepared by Francesca Bridgewater, Chair of Trustees, and Chris Steele, Treasurer

Registered Charity No.: 1195510

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Contents

Charity Trustees.....2

Charity Structure & Governance.....3

Our Purpose.....3

Chair’s Report & Achievements.....3

 Weston Woods.....4

 Fundraising 2024-25.....6

Our Public Benefit 2024-25.....6



Figure 1Wild Garlic at East Wood, Weston

Charity Trustees

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Francesca Bridgewater | Chair |
| Christopher Steele | Treasurer |

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Emma Dalton | Secretary |
| Alison Davies | Vice Chair and Membership Secretary |
| Andrew Kelly | Publicity |

Charity Structure & Governance

The Trust is a registered charity set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The constitution governing the CIO was adopted on 13th August 2021. Only the Trustees are voting members of the CIO. Trustees can be appointed by a vote of other Trustees at any time, up to a total of 12 Trustees. The charity also has a further 60 associate members (non-voting) as of 31st March 2025.

Our Purpose

To promote the conservation, maintenance and study of places and objects of botanical, zoological, geological, ecological or scientific interest in and around Menston and elsewhere by:-



Figure 2 FoWW Community Consultation Event

A. Establishing, forming, owning and maintaining sanctuaries or reserves for the conservation of flora and fauna;

B. Promoting the education of the public, particularly young people, in the understanding, enjoyment and conservation of natural flora and fauna;

C. Promoting, organising and carrying out study and research in the principles and practice of nature conservation, and to publish useful results of such research;

D. Co-operating with other bodies of allied

interest where this may assist in attaining the aim of the trust;

E. Liaising with voluntary and statutory bodies, and private companies or individuals, involved in local land use and development, and to advise on the management of the sites.

F. Ensuring that any land acquired by the Trust be covenanted with the aim to maintain such as nature reserves or sanctuaries in perpetuity.

Chair's Report & Achievements

MANT has continued to be a force for nature within the village, running working parties to collect and sow wildflower seeds, survey earthworms, attack the spread of Himalayan Balsam, plant fruit trees and taking part in toad patrols. MANT has also written a report for the Menston Neighbourhood Plan with the help of the West Yorkshire Ecology Service, identifying current and future habitat corridors and hotspots in the village, and their importance for the wider nature networks. Miss Porritt's field was again conservation grazed, this year by White Park steers,

generously loaned from the Denton Reserve. We have continued to have a presence at various local events to provide education and information about the Trust and our work for nature.



Figure 3 White Park Steers in Miss Porritt's field

Weston Woods

Weston Woods, a 20 acre woodland near Otley, was successfully acquired by MANT in December 2023, with the help of the local community, who generously supported the fundraising required, and a loan from Julia Davies of We Have The Power.

MANT has formed an umbrella group called Friends of Weston Woods (FoWW), which encompasses all the local groups and individuals who are interested in the woods. A subgroup, called FoWW Steering Group and chaired by Jessica Penrose, is charged with managing the woods.

The first task has been to write a Woodland Management Plan. Surveys of flora & fauna have been conducted by members of Wharfedale Naturalists who have generously given their time and expertise for free. Thanks to a small grant of £1500 from the Rural Payment Agency we have been able to employ Gordon Haycock, an Ecologist, to help draw up the Management Plan.

Meanwhile FoWW has laid on activities for the local community, including a Fun Day, a Family Day and a bioblitz with local school children. With over 1 mile of dry stone walling, we have been very

grateful for the work of the Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Association members, and also local enthusiasts led by Matt Podd, who have made a great start on mending the walls.



Figure 4 Work on Rhododendrons in Weston Woods

In February FoWW spent a weekend removing some of the invasive Rhododendron, helped generously by the expertise of Protect Earth.

A small grant from Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) enabled us to employ an expert, Anni Raw, who guided us in running two Discovery Days to engage with the local community, find out their needs and encourage them to get involved. This work will inform some of the management of the woods going forward.

Fundraising 2024-25

Fundraising to repay the loan for buying the woods has continued unabated, with volunteering to help at the Ilkley Carnival, the Online Auction in the autumn and a Table Top sale being the main contributors. Sponsoring of 3x3m squares and other donations from individuals have helped reduce the loan to £2,769.88 by 31st March 2025.

MANT uses several platforms to allow donations. These include wonderful.org, kindlink.org, sumup machine via stripe and direct bank transfers. We are also part of Give as you live, an organization that allows people to choose us as a recipient of a donation from shops, whenever they shop online.

Our Public Benefit 2024-25

In our opinion, the Trustees have complied with our duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties.