

Meeting Notes from GCCG “Virtual” Quarterly Meeting 15th September 2021

Our wonderful meadow



Chairman’s welcome

We are nearly at the stage where we can meet in person once more but we have decided to exercise caution for now and continue with meeting “virtually” until we are confident the Covid risk is no longer presenting such a serious threat.

We have had a very busy quarter as you will see from the reports that follow.

Total income	92.50
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Outgoings	£
Total outgoings (as shown on bank statements)	0

Summary: Due to holidays the Treasurer's report was drawn up on 1 Sep 2021. A quiet quarter with income from memberships and no outgoings. Thank you!

As we currently have no other sources of income, we rely on the public for donations and for membership. If you would like to set up an online automatic payment, regular or one-off, the account details are as follows:

Gatley Carrs Conservation Group

Sort code: 01-01-75

Account no: 19082894

Thank you for your support.

Michelle Inwood

GCCG Treasurer

1 Sep 2021

Comment:

Thanks again to Michelle for her very efficient record keeping.

Alan Butler; Carrs Site Report September 2021

When I order 25 kilos of Bird Seed from Shenton's Farm Handforth, I know winter is on the way, very soon it's time to prepare the feeders and seed dispenser, just a couple of the jobs needed to be looked at around the Carrs Nature Reserve, to allow our daily volunteers to feed the birds to keep our feathered friend in tip top condition through the winter months.

It is a pleasure to be a part of this lovely Nature Reserve and Volunteer Group.

Many tasks have been completed with welcomed help from our WhatsApp volunteer group which has proved to be a success.



Dipping pond platform repair

June 20th

Cleared overgrowing Brambles away from a lovely Silver Birch tree on the middle pathway.

June 26th

Annual Balsam Bash, again great support from volunteers managing to keep this invasive plant under control.

Sign and Display kindly donated signs warning dog owners to avoid the pond owing to the landfill deposited in this area, that could cause injury to their dog's paws.

June 30th

Bramble reducing was carried out around a lovely “Hornbeam” and “Spindle” tree to allow more light around the area, and with the help of Stan Johnson corrected it’s growth to hopefully become straight again by putting new posts in at an angle from the base of the trunk.

July 16th

Andy Day and myself had the two strimmers busy working on the WFM helping Chris Mullin to reduce the grass height in preparation for the final planting of wild flower plugs, a little late in the season but they now look at home and are flourishing.

July 26th

After a press scare from a local resident complaining about Giant Hogweed being on the Carrs Reserve, I cut back anything suspicious that was overhanging around the Bridge and around the busy pathways, after a very urgent Council inspection it was confirmed, the Carrs does NOT contain Giant Hogweed.

July 30th

The Derek Brennan Bench was installed in memory of a valued member who gave a lot to the reserve over many years, he will be sadly missed.



On the same day we had a broken waste bin replaced with a smart new one near the Car Park.

As I write this report tomorrow is September 11th and it's the big Task Day of Willow Cutting so let's hope for a big turnout.

Regards and thanks for your help

Alan

Head Warden GCCG

PS

If you read this and are not already involved in volunteering, please think about it, and sign up to our volunteers WhatsApp group.

Message Peter on 07799 888049 and he can add you to the list.

We can never have too many helpers to preserve "Nature on your Doorstep".



Alan and his young helpers plug planting in the meadow

Comment

As ever thanks to Alan for his tireless work and constant attention to our site.

Alan needs more regular help just now as he is suffering with knee pain, so please contact him to offer help if you can.

Wildflower Meadow Report; Chris Mullin



Chris in his own “haven”.

My report in June stated, “...in terms of flowers the development of newly seeded and planted parts of the meadow is disappointing.” However, things were about to change! During a worryingly dry spell a significant number of volunteers helped to water the two main plots on the meadow, and a concerted effort over several days by more volunteers helped to virtually eliminate the cloying effect of the creeping thistles. We discovered that cutting the thistles off at ground level halted the process of photosynthesis

and thereby stayed the development of the plant. The wildflowers began to flourish!

In July and amid another dry period, Stockport Borough Council finally made good their promise and provided approximately 1000 plug plants. Worryingly dry periods seem to bring out the best in the people of Gatley. Help was provided by a group of seven children who started the process of planting and over the next few days other volunteers completed the project. As the ground verged on the solid, we discovered that the only way to get the plants into the soil was to create a suitable hole with a cold chisel and lump hammer! The plug plants were then regularly watered and a number immediately established and began to show signs of life. The most interesting thing to emerge from this experience was the resilience of the plants: despite being incarcerated in tiny plastic plant pots, transported across England in a heat wave and then planted beneath the full force of the summer sun they displayed an almost palpable craving for life. Within 24 hours roots were spreading in the search for moisture and nutrients! Wild by name and nature.



Making a Beeline for the riches of the meadow.

The feedback has been very positive and several visitors to Gatley Carrs have expressed enjoyment watching the meadow and the flower species

change as the summer has progressed. In addition, several people have appreciated the number, melody and variety of pollinators visiting the flowers. Me too!

In total 27 native species of wildflower have been sown; 9 annuals, 17 perennials and 1 biannual.



Full of life

Annuals

Black Medick

Common Poppy

Corn Camomile

Corn Cockle

Corn Marigold

Cornflower

Field Forget-me-not

Night Flowering Catchfly

Yellow Rattle

Perennials

Common Knapweed

Common Sorrel

Common St John's Wort

Cowslip

Goat's Beard

Greater Knapweed

Lady's Bedstraw

Meadow Buttercup

Musk Mallow

Ox-eye Daisy

Red Campion

Salad Burnet

Self-heal

White Campion

Wild Carrot

Wild Clary

Yarrow

Biennial

Wild Foxglove

Stockport Borough Council Plants (all perennials)

Bird's Foot Trefoil

Common Knapweed

Hoary Plantain

Common Toadflax

Meadow Cranesbill

Lady's Bedstraw

Oxeye Daisy

Cornflower



Corn Cockle

In General

As agreed, half of the meadow will, this year, be scythed with the remaining half mown by Stockport Borough Council. Care will have to be taken when mowing around the Japanese Knotweed.

The very short cut made by the mower, followed by the rotavator, will facilitate the sowing of Yellow Rattle seeds. There is a school of opinion which suggests that Yellow Rattle seeds require approximately four months of temperatures below five degrees Celsius to germinate in the Spring.

The process known as 'scarification' will also benefit the germination of the other seeds. Comparing Autumn and Spring sowings will be very interesting. As will comparing germination rates between seeds sown on ground mechanically mown and ground scythed.

I attended the scything course at Slaidburn and have since purchased a scythe. I may be able to put it to good use on the scything course at Priory Gardens, Sale. I am hoping to build a relationship with The Friends of Hullard Park who have experience of scything a wildflower meadow.

Comment:

Chris has done an extraordinary job in bringing life back to the meadow this summer. A truly remarkable transformation has been achieved and will hopefully lead to ongoing success in the years that follow.

The various images of the meadow on our Facebook page and enthusiastic comments of appreciation, also posted on there, reflect this success.

Social media report: Emma Burrows

Emma is unfortunately unwell at the present time.

Comment

We wish her a speedy recovery and look forward to her report at a later date.

Disabled /buggy path progress:

As some of you may have seen some of the stone required for the path diversion has now arrived on David Jefferies land, this is where the path will then be re-sited to allow the stream to be widened.

David called me to advise that he is awaiting further updates from the Environment Agency and Council and he will send me details as soon as he can.

Volunteer work;

We now have a **WhatsApp** group set up for contacting volunteers and advising when and what tasks need doing. This is now working very well.

If you would like to be added to this group please let me know, message me on **07799 888049** and I will add you into the group.

Any time you can spare all helps us enormously.

Fund raising; Our ongoing need

We are very grateful to the numerous people who have made donations during the year as they remain vital to our survival.

If anyone is experienced in sourcing funds and support grants we really could do with your help to assist us in any way you can.

Support from SMBC has increased recently but their funds are severely stretched at the best of times and even worse now due to Covid, so other sources are needed.

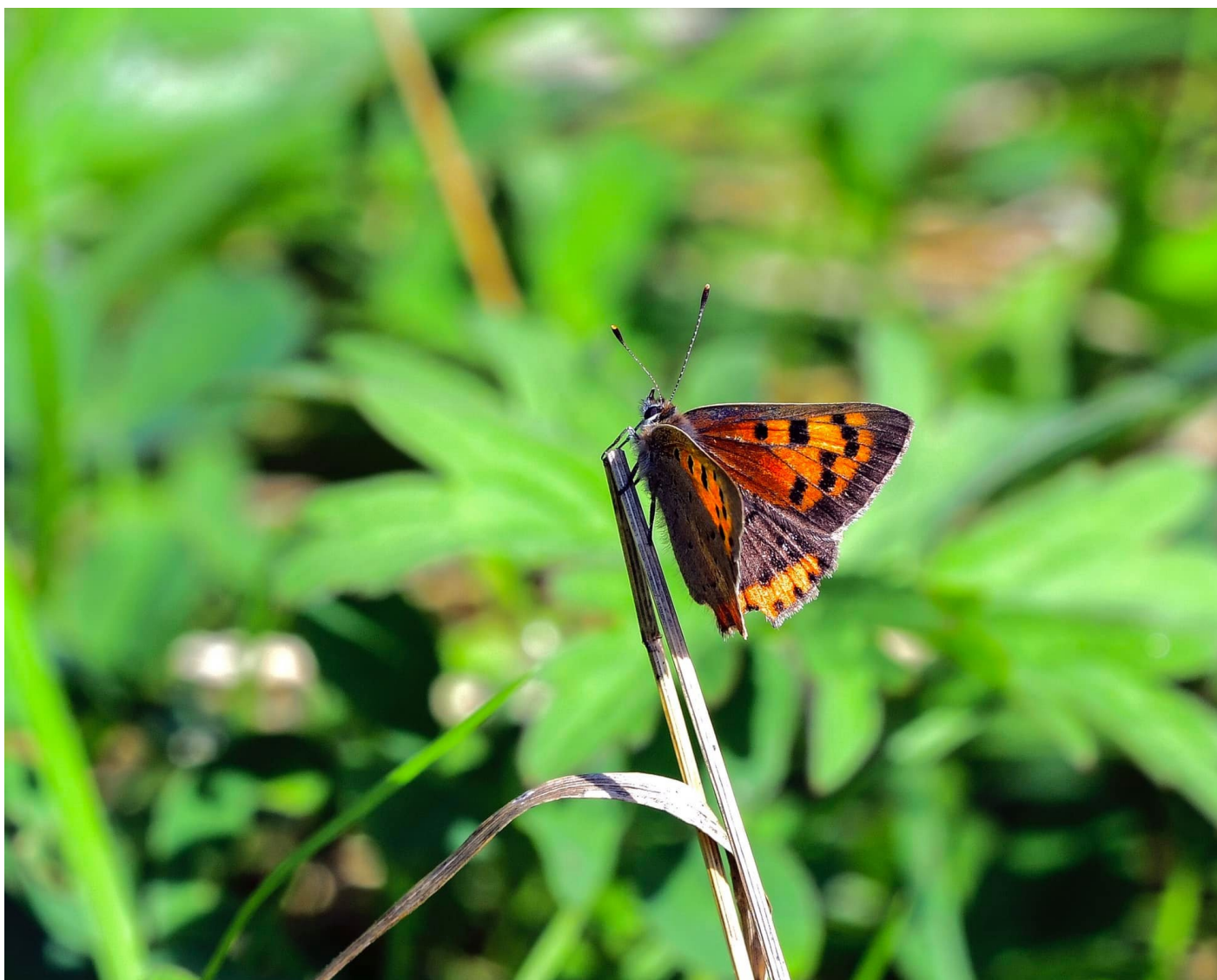
Please contact us if you can help.

Other happenings on The Carrs;

Please find below a selection of some of the interesting posts from our Facebook page over the last few months, as I know some of you don't use Facebook I thought you might enjoy seeing them.



Russ Booler, apparently new to painting, well a very nice start!



Small Copper Butterfly; Anthony Brathwaite



Sunflower photo by Alan Butler



Even the Chairman gets hands on to remove the pesky Balsam

AOB

Thanks for your continued support.

Peter

Chairman

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07799 888049

Next Meeting

Proposed next meeting- 14th December 2021.