

Kingfisher



Sheffield &
Rotherham



In this edition...

The perfect
home for a South
Yorkshire belle

A natural remedy
that's winning
hearts and minds

How you
can help...

We're ringing alarm bells for bluebells.

South Yorkshire's bluebells
and their ancient woodland
homes are under threat.

Turn to pages 14-15 to
find out how you can help.

For other ways you can support us, visit
wildsheffield.com/how-you-can-help

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust

Victoria Hall, 37 Stafford Road, Sheffield S2 2SF

☎ 0114 263 4335

✉ mail@wildsheffield.com

Find out more
wildsheffield.com

Volunteers

Chris Measures, Andrew Parker, Chris Prime, James Carter, Julie Riley, Sam Edwards, Hannah Bainbridge, Claire Smyth, Paul Winks, Deborah Dawson, Douglas Ross, Josh Parker, Anne Baber, Jenny Barratt, Ruth Beeley, Christine Prime, Julie Sadler, Jane Swift, Mike Swift, Cei Tuxhill, Bob Croxton, Christine Handley, Peter Wolstenholme, Graham Thorpe, Kieran Hickey, Richard Pethen, Paul Jarman, Ann Clegg, Dave Higgins, Rachael Durham, Kate Darby, Matt Coster, Kevin Gribben, Aled Vaughan, Alice Parry, Ellena Carannante, Mike Lawlor, Laura Marshall, Paul Wilcox, John Allen, Rob Carr, Helina Parnamagi, Gordon Corrie, Richard Barnes, Gary Lafferty, Ian Falconer, Martin Brook, Sylvia Smietana-Zarada, Ride Sheffield, Dawne Laming, Karon Mayor

Trustees

Christopher Pennell MBE - Chair	Andrew Perrins
Philip Warren - Vice Chair	Tony Whiting
David Bird - Treasurer	Frazer Snowdon
Tom Dodd	Krys Craik
Alice Puritz	Barry Higgins
Suzanne Leckie	Clare Lea
Andrew Parker	

Corporate members

E.ON UK plc, Northend Creative Print Solutions, P J Taste, Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Amey Hallam Highways

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust is registered as a charity no. 700638 and company no. 2287928. Kingfisher is edited by Jane Campbell and Nick Howard, designed by Angela Zeballos angela@az.design and printed by Northend Creative Print Solutions on FSC mixed credit paper.

If you have any comments or suggestions for future issues, you are welcome to write to the editors at the Trust's postal address, or via email at kingfisher@wildsheffield.com

Front cover image: Tom Marshall
Pages 14-15: Jon Hawkins, Richard Bowler and Tom Marshall



Surely spring is the best time of year to see nature and wildlife?

Once the bluebells appear I always feel we are well in to spring. Definitely a time to celebrate that we have made it through another winter. Native bluebells are really stunning - not only as swathes under a woodland canopy - but also up close and in detail. They are much more delicate than the Spanish bluebell, a really, really deep purple blue with an elegant droop and finer leaf. And a slightly heady sweet scent on a warm day. Often interspersed with stitchwort, the bluebell is one of a dozen or so plants that indicate ancient woodlands - somewhere that soils have been left undisturbed for hundreds of years, part of our history and really precious places to look after.

But our native bluebells are disappearing - vulnerable to the more dominant Spanish bluebell and with their wider woodland habitat often under threat of disturbance. So we are working hard to protect our native bluebells for the future - for example managing our woodlands so that they provide the dappled shade required and weeding out Spanish bluebells when we see them. And of course we campaign to save local bluebell woodlands from being lost to development.

But with your help we can do more - please consider increasing your membership subscription so that we can put more funds into our woodland campaign work and management. Your increased support will help us to protect and increase the native bluebells on our nature reserves as well as support our work to save local bluebell woodlands. To find out more about our beautiful bluebells please turn to page 14.

I hope you manage to get out and enjoy spring - please do share your bluebell pics with us!

Thank you for all your ongoing support, as always,

Chief Executive

Contents...

CONSERVING
OUR WILD PLACES

Championing
South
Yorkshire's
wild places

4-5

WORKING WITH
LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Fieldwork
and outdoor
learning
experiences for
schools

6-7

PULL OUT AND KEEP
ACTIVITIES GUIDE

Spring 2017
Calendar

8-9

TAKING ACTION
FOR NATURE

Standing up,
speaking out

10-11

WORKING WITH
LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A natural
remedy that's
winning hearts
and minds

12-13

WILDLIFE FEATURE

The perfect
home for
a South
Yorkshire
belle

14-15

THE LAST WORD

How we make
a difference

16

A big thank you to all our partners and funders:



Championing South Yorkshire's wild places

Your support has helped our conservation team manage wild places and champion great conservation across all 584 hectares of our 12 nature reserves and beyond. Read on for a round-up of our latest work.

Harvest mice found at Woodhouse Washlands



© Richard Bowler

Evidence of this delightful little visitor has recently appeared on one of our newest reserves. On a site visit in January, three harvest mouse nests were found in the southern part of Woodhouse Washlands nature reserve, near Beighton. Reserve manager Nabil Abbas was delighted: "The last record of this charismatic small mammal was some six years ago, so it's great to see that the population is still thriving on the nature reserve."

The UK's smallest species of mouse, the harvest mouse weighs just four to six grams, which is less than a two-pence coin. They build a spherical woven nest out of grass, positioned in tall grasses or reeds, and they are unique amongst British mammals in having a prehensile tail, which they use to help them climb.

Better habitats for woodland birds



© Margaret Holland

Restorative boost for Blacka Moor

The heathland at Blacka Moor is now looking thoroughly spruced up, following a successful twelve-month restoration project and a grant of nearly £15,000 from the Veolia Environmental Trust. The project has taken a three-pronged approach to restore this precious Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) heathland. Firstly we were able to replace dilapidated fencing and gates, to allow us to continue conservation grazing on the reserve, whilst still enabling safe public access. Secondly, we've targeted invasive species by spraying and cutting bracken, and cutting back encroaching



© Nabil Abbas

rhododendron and birch. Finally we have cut two long firebreaks into mature areas of heather, which will reduce the risk of fire spreading across the site in the event of a wild fire.

Bags of help for our reserves

Who would have thought that carrier bags could be responsible for helping wildlife? Bags of Help is Tesco's local grant scheme and raises money from the 5p levy on plastic carrier bags to support community green space projects across the UK. There are clearly plenty of wildlife enthusiasts shopping at Tesco because they have voted for our projects time and again - and the funding has helped us carry out vital work on our reserves:

In 2016, £12,000 from Bags of Help allowed us to:

- restore heathland in the heart of Greno Woods, clearing back bracken and scrub
- improve Greno's invertebrate habitats amongst the woodland understorey and the fringes of woodland 'rides'.

In 2017, £12,000 from Bags of Help is funding:

- the improvement of habitat along the Rivers Don and Rother in Rotherham (starting soon)
- this includes riverside and wetland planting, reedbed management and the removal and disposal of invasive plants.

A big thank you to Bags of Help and to all the Tesco customers who made all this work possible!

In 2017, Bags of Help votes are taking place every month and we have yet again been nominated. If you are a Tesco shopper, please keep an eye open for the voting station near the checkout and vote for Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust!

At Wyming Brook nature reserve near Redmires Road we have just secured funding to carry out woodland and heathland restoration to continue to provide better habitats for a number of key woodland species. This is part of a longer term work programme, and we are extremely grateful to BIFFA Award, who stepped in when other funding streams came to an end. We have been monitoring wood warblers at the site for five years and in 2016 we recorded the highest number of singing male wood warblers in this period thanks to this funded work. But we need to do more. Pied flycatcher numbers have plummeted in the Rivelin Valley area since the 1990s, so we are now looking for ways to provide more of their favourite habitat.



© Nabil Abbas

A better deal for trees and woodlands in your local area

How many people do you know who love living in Sheffield and Rotherham because of the amount of easy-to-access green space right on the doorstep?

Sheffield alone is estimated to be Britain's greenest city, with almost two thirds of its area made up of green space.

Trees and woodlands in particular are a topic of hot debate at the moment, with grassroots campaigns underway to protect street trees and Sheffield City Council's Trees and Woodlands Strategy recently undergoing public consultation.

So what experience can the Trust bring to this debate - and how do we manage our trees and woodlands to ensure that they will be there in years to come for the benefit of people and wildlife alike?

Greno Woods reserve manager Chris Doar explains: "Sheffield has fantastic woodland, much of which is hundreds of years old. When we take on new woodland we put plans in place which will protect and enhance it for hundreds of years to come. Each woodland is, of course, unique, but as a rule we try to create a 'diverse woodland structure', which means nurturing trees from young to old, and ensuring the woodland has a healthy understory and ground flora."

Pollarding is one way in which we ensure the trees on our reserves have a long and healthy life. It may look brutal, but it allows the trees to put on healthy new growth while retaining old rotten wood in the base of the trees, providing essential habitat for fungi and wood-boring insects.

Over winter we have been re-pollarding old crack willows at Woodhouse Washlands (see image below). Reserve manager Nabil Abbas says, "Pollarding is a traditional tree management practice, where the upper branches of a tree are removed. It must be carried out at regular intervals of several years to achieve the best results. The age of historically pollarded trees provides evidence of how pollarding can extend a tree's lifespan."

"When the Trust takes on new woodland we put plans in place which will protect and enhance it for hundreds of years to come."

Chris Doar, Greno Woods reserve manager

Elsewhere on our reserves we are improving our woodlands with the removal of invasive species such as rhododendron from areas like Strawberry Lee Plantation. These invasive shrubs form a dense cover which, if unchecked, will spread throughout the woodland, smothering native species. While most of the rhododendron is scheduled to be



© Nabil Abbas

Let's celebrate our trees and woodlands

Tree lovers across Sheffield are being asked to submit their favourite tree into a fantastic competition called Great Trees of Sheffield 2017. You probably have a favourite tree (or group of trees), perhaps near your home or on one of our nature reserves, so why not help us celebrate trees by submitting yours into the competition?

The deadline for the contest is Monday 1st May, and the winner will be chosen by a panel of celebrities and tree experts including Chris Packham and Jarvis Cocker.

We have entered one of our favourites, the enormous Black Italian Poplar which towers over Woodhouse Washlands. With a height of 35 metres and circumference of 4.3 metres, it really is a great tree.

f /GrtTreesOfSheffd

#gtos17

treehunter.co.uk/projects/proj-2017

removed, we are retaining a band of it along the north and west margins of the woodland, as an important wind and noise buffer, sheltering the habitat within.

You may also spot standing dead trees amongst the woodlands on our reserves: we create these to provide habitat for fungi, invertebrates and birds such as nuthatch and great spotted woodpecker. At Fox Hagg we have a four-year plan in place to improve habitat for willow tits by creating high stumps as future nest sites. There are currently two breeding pairs in the Rivelin Valley and we hope to see this doubled if other landowners in the area are able to adopt similar practices on their sites.

Turn to page 15 to find out how you can help support trees and woodlands in your local area.

Fieldwork and outdoor learning experiences for schools

Spring is fast approaching and our outdoor learning team are gearing up to take some very exciting opportunities out to schools in Sheffield and Rotherham.

Thanks to support from players of the People's Postcode Lottery and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, we have been working hard over the winter months designing experiences which teachers across the region have told us they need for their schools. These experiences are rooted in the Wildlife Trust's first-hand expertise caring for our local landscape and the wildlife that depends on it, and we are proud to offer children and young people so many opportunities to experience beautiful wild places right on our doorstep.

We have designed a range of activities which meet the needs of a range of educators, from early years professionals to secondary subject leaders and university heads of department.



© Jane Campbell

"Parents and education leaders alike want the very best learning environment for their students, in a setting where they will find both academic success and a wealth of enriching experiences. Outdoor learning is a critical part of this mix. Our outdoor learning sites are immersive classrooms where the challenges that we face every day as managers of this precious landscape - from surveying rivers to identifying invertebrates - come alive for pupils through first hand experiences."

Chris Smith, the Trust's outdoor learning team leader

Free and fun outdoor learning experiences for primary pupils

We work with thousands of primary school pupils every year in South Yorkshire, and we are passionate about getting outdoor learning into every school in the area. In 2017, thanks to the players of the People's Postcode Lottery, we are offering free outdoor learning experiences to schools who have not yet had a chance to work with us, including:

- fully-funded outdoor learning sessions for 30 primary-aged children for schools with little or no outdoor learning provision
- travel bursaries for schools who struggle to fund transport for trips out of school
- fully-funded Forest School sessions for primary pupils with additional pastoral needs moving up to secondary
- travel bursaries for a Wild PE course for a class of 30 primary school children on school grounds and in Greno Woods
- travel bursaries for secondary school fieldwork groups.



© Helena Fletcher

PRIMARY TOPIC TICKLIST:

Pick a session from our range of experiences below.

Woodland Creatures

Habitat Studies

Seasonal Change

Seeds to Trees

Living Ponds

Local History

Stone Age

Wildlife Filmmaking

Academy of Danger

Wild PE

an obstacle course taster session

Energy Experience

at E.ON's Blackburn Meadows renewable energy plant

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Science: plants and animals, seasonal change, working scientifically, living things and their habitats, electricity, evolution and inheritance (KS1/2)

History: local history (KS1/2), Stone Age to Iron Age (KS2)

Physical Education: skills and performance development (KS2)

Geography: rivers, vegetation, the water cycle, natural resources, geographical skills and fieldwork (KS1/2)

New outdoor learning network for educators

Advice and training for early years settings

Learning outdoors is particularly important for younger children - and our new package of advice and training for the early years has been designed to help settings who want to make their outdoor learning offer more attractive for parents.

Beauchief Pre-school have been one of the first to take advantage of this new offer. Supervisor Helen Wasnidge said, "The Wildlife Trust visited us in our setting and helped us think through how we could take the children outside more and make the most of our outdoor area. We were so inspired that we applied for funding to improve our outdoor space. The Trust supported us with training which was fun, inspiring and gave us some really easy to use ideas."



Limited offer: free fieldwork trips for secondary schools

In 2017 we are also teaming up with E.ON to create an exciting new fieldwork destination at E.ON's renewable energy plant in Sheffield and the nearby Blackburn Meadows nature reserve.

Thanks to funding from E.ON, we are offering a limited number of free trips to investigate renewable energy at the biomass plant for secondary schools from the Sheffield and Rotherham area in early 2017.

We also have a limited number of free river studies fieldwork trips to offer for KS3, 4 and 5 Geography students.

If you are interested in visiting this incredible site, learning about renewable energy and finding out about the area's strong heritage of power production, email us at schools@wildsheffield.com

Member's voice: getting outdoors is a chance to boost learning

By Sarah Jaggard, Year 5 Class Teacher and Outdoor Learning Co-ordinator at Oughtibridge Primary School

As an Eco School and a partner to Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Oughtibridge Primary School in Sheffield teaches children about lots of different aspects of sustainability, from energy efficiency to caring for the natural world.

With a busy school day and academic results to achieve, some schools may think, 'why bother?'. Well, aside from the obvious environmental and health benefits, we found it helped us reach out to the local community. We ran learning events for the children and their families, which helped us make links with parents and local residents. The families said it made them feel fitter and better, and their children had the opportunity to visit local allotments and woodlands and had a go at cycling and scooting to school.



Our work on sustainability supports many areas of the National Curriculum including Science, Maths and PHSE for both primary and early years. Setting up a Forest School gave children the chance to deepen their learning and understanding of National Curriculum concepts through discovery and hands-on exploration of the world around them. Forest School also develops pupils' resilience and problem solving skills all of which gets them ready to take the next step in life.

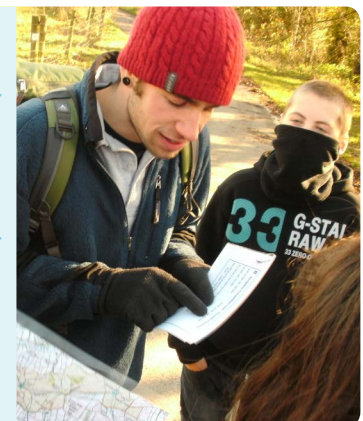
There are so many activities and initiatives which schools can get involved in, from creating a school garden to visiting a local nature reserve. Even the smallest activity can make a big difference and bring learning to life. There is a lot of support available from organisations like Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust - so why not get in touch with them and give it a go?!

TOPIC TICKLIST:

Renewable Energy River Studies

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Geography: KS3, 4 and 5 fieldwork requirement



We are very excited to be launching a new outdoor learning network with Learn Sheffield in Sheffield and the surrounding areas. Our programme of activities will give educators a chance to learn from schools already doing great outdoor learning themselves,

and to take inspiration and top tips from experts in the great outdoors. We will be exploring opportunities for online discussion and resources sharing too. Go to wildsheffield.com/teachwildnetwork for dates and sign up.

@TeachWildSheff

wildsheffield.com/schools

schools@wildsheffield.com

0114 263 4335

March

Monday 13th
Centenary Riverside
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Thursday 16th
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 17th
Woodhouse Washlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Sunday 19th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 24th
Greno Woods
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Saturday 25th
Blacka Moor User Forum
Totley Sports Club pavilion
10am - 12noon

April

Saturday 1st
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Monday 3rd
Crabtree Ponds
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 12.30pm

Tuesday 4th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Thursday 6th
Moss Valley Woodlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 7th
Victoria Hall: Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 12noon

Monday 10th
Centenary Riverside
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Tuesday 11th
Ecclesall Woods Wild Play: Easter: Signs of Spring
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
10am - 12noon
& 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Wednesday 12th
Ecclesall Woods Wild Play: Easter: Signs of Spring
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
10am - 12noon

Thursday 13th
Greno Woods Wild Play/Wild Side: Easter: Signs of Spring
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Wild Side: 10.30am - 12.30pm
Wild Play: 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Tuesday 18th
Ecclesall Woods Wild Play: Signs of Spring & Bluebells
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
10am - 12noon
& 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Wednesday 19th
Ecclesall Woods Wild Play: Signs of Spring & Bluebells
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
10am - 12noon

Thursday 20th
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm
Greno Woods Wild Play/Wild Side: Signs of Spring & Bluebells
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Wild Side: 10.30am - 12.30pm
Wild Play: 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Friday 21st
Woodhouse Washlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Thursday 27th
Fred Rumsey – All About Bluebells
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Presentation Evening,
37 Stafford Road
6.30pm for 7pm - 9pm

Friday 28th
Fred Rumsey – Bluebell Field Trip Greno Woods
10am - 3pm

Saturday 29th April
Bluebell Family Crafts and Walk
Grenoside Reading Rooms
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
11am - 2pm

Sunday 30th April
Bluebell Family Fun Day
Norfolk Heritage Park Centre
12pm - 4pm

May

Tuesday 2nd
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Thursday 4th
Moss Valley Woodlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 5th
Victoria Hall: Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 12noon

Saturday 6th
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Monday 8th
Crabtree Ponds
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 12.30pm

Centenary Riverside
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Saturday 13th
Moss Valley Woodlands: Reserve Advisory Group (RAG) Walkabout
10am - 1pm

Sunday 14th
Moss Valley Woodlands: Wildflower Identification Workshop
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
9.30am - 4.30pm

Thursday 18th
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 19th
Woodhouse Washlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Sunday 21st
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 26th
Greno Woods
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Tuesday 30th
Ecclesall Woods Wild Play: Woodland Activities
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
10am - 12noon
& 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Wednesday 31th
Ecclesall Woods Wild Play: Woodland Activities
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
10am - 12noon

June

30 Days Wild! Do something wild - a Random Act of Wildness - every day throughout June! Keep an eye out for more on our Facebook page.

Thursday 1st
Greno Woods Wild Play/Wild Side: Woodland Activities
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Wild Side: 10.30am - 12.30pm
Wild Play: 1.30pm - 3.30pm
Moss Valley Woodlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 2nd
Victoria Hall: Wild at Heart Wildlife Gardening
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 12noon

Saturday 3rd
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Trees of the Moss Valley with Dr Patrick Harding
ONLINE BOOKING ESSENTIAL
9.30am - 4.30pm

Monday 5th
Crabtree Ponds
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 12.30pm

Tuesday 6th
Wyming Brook & Fox Hagg
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Monday 12th
Centenary Riverside
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Thursday 15th
Blacka Moor
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 16th
Woodhouse Washlands
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Friday 30th
Greno Woods
VOLUNTEER WORK DAY
10am - 3pm

Find out more...

For more information about all our events, including exact meeting points, please visit wildsheffield.com/whats-on or call 0114 263 4335.



Volunteer Work Days

Why not lend a hand at your local nature reserve, get some healthy exercise and help us to keep our wild spaces looking lovely? Everyone is welcome, no experience is needed and we will provide equipment and training. Contact the reserves team on nature.reserves@wildsheffield.com

Wild Play

Come and join us out in the wild. All Wild Play (all ages) and Wild Side (8-13 years) events cost £3 for members and £5 for non-members. Online booking is essential - please visit wildsheffield.com/whats-on For more information contact the Wild Play team on playwild@wildsheffield.com

Your wildlife in pictures...



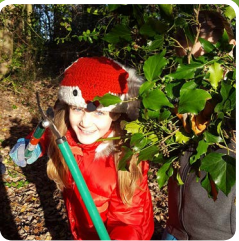
First photo of a jay in the garden this year!
Nicola Dell



Frosty sunrise at Hollin Edge Farm.
Valley Boy



This one must have come down with a bang!
Nabil Abbas



Another lovely Wild Play!
Charlotte Ansell & Lily Burton

Be social...

share your sightings
send us your
photos and videos



Standing up, speaking out

Thanks to your support, we have had a busy winter campaigning for a better deal for our wild places - especially our urban trees and woodlands. So what has changed since the last *Kingfisher* update - and how can you help?

A way forward for street trees?

You cannot have failed to notice the street tree felling debates that have been raging in Sheffield for more than 18 months now. Much has happened since the last *Kingfisher*, including a huge public backlash and an apology from the Council.

Whilst we recognise the need to manage street trees across the city over time, we have called into question the Council's decision-making process behind the fellings, its whole-scale approach, the transparency with which it is operating, the role of the Independent Tree Panel and the quality of the consultation process in the build-up to felling.

For our part, we have reflected on our many years experience of managing urban woodlands, and in December our CEO Liz Ballard put forward ten positive, practical steps that the Council could take to improve the management of the trees - such as rotational management and habitat offsetting - and to improve the way it works with local communities. We have met a number of times with Councillor Bryan Lodge to reinforce these points, as well as with local interest groups.

The Council has now committed to communicating more effectively, and we look forward to seeing these improvements in practice. We will continue to campaign for the future of our street trees. To keep up with this fast-paced issue, follow us on Facebook and Twitter (see below).

Robust strategy needed for Sheffield's trees and woodlands

We recently responded to Sheffield City Council's consultation on the draft Trees and Woodlands Strategy, so keep an eye on our website for our position statement, coming soon.

We welcome the overall vision of the strategy, but have highlighted the need for clearer, more measurable targets, especially in relation to overall numbers of new trees planted. We also took the opportunity to call for greater transparency and more involvement in the strategy from external organisations.

We believe this strategy has the potential to highlight the benefits that healthy, well-managed woodland can bring to urban areas, and the important role it plays in mitigating air pollution and flood risk, and providing recreational and tourism opportunities. Properly recognising the value of these varied and important roles can only help the Council plan more effectively for their management over the years to come. We are hoping to hear back from the Council this spring, and will continue to post updates to our website as we receive them.



Smithy Wood... delayed again

At the time of writing, we continue to work hard to save the ancient woodland Smithy Wood from having a motorway service area built in the middle of it. Our campaign has received a great deal of support, so thank you to everyone who contacted us since the last edition of *Kingfisher*. If you did, you will know that the planning committee has been delayed, possibly until 28th March. These dates have been changed several times, so please check our website or social media for the latest, and sign up for our e-newsletter (see below).

Can you help?

The impact of our work is magnified a thousand times when our supporters take a stand by our side. If you're feeling inspired, why not pick something to do from the list below?

- Come to the Smithy Wood protest, sign up to our Smithy Wood e-newsletter, and write to your local councillor. Visit wildsheffield.com/smithywood
- Get involved in your local street trees group and check whether any trees in your local area are affected at savesheffieldtrees.org.uk
- Share your thoughts about the flood protection proposals with us on social media or by email.
- Vote for your favourite tree in the Great Trees of Sheffield 2017 competition (see page 5).
- Tell us if you have a burning issue or a strong opinion to share!

Flood protection proposals prove controversial



© Rob Miller

© Sarah Sidgwick

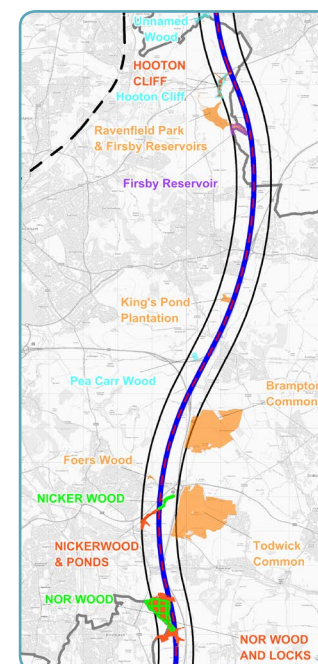
In the last issue of *Kingfisher*, we updated you about Sheffield City Council's flood prevention proposals, which included controversial 'flood storage areas' in valleys and parks that would fill in times of floods. We were pleased to then be invited to brief the Council's Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and to meet with Councillor Bryan Lodge about this issue.

We proposed that a whole 'toolbox' of resources is employed to protect homes and businesses against flood damage, including natural flood management solutions. Flood storage nature reserves - such as our Centenary Riverside reserve, pictured above - can be created in urban areas and are significantly cheaper to maintain than unsightly hard engineering options. 'Slowing the flow' can also protect against flooding by keeping water in upland areas through small-scale habitat improvements. We should be making space for water in ways that work with nature, rather than against it.

By the time this issue of *Kingfisher* lands on your doorstep, we hope the Council will have produced a shortlist of the proposed flood storage areas, to enable the debate to move forwards. We are making contact with various local groups ourselves and would like to hear from anyone with ideas about alternative options (see contact details at the bottom of page 10).

HS2 Phase 2b consultation

The consultation for the revised proposed route for HS2 Phase 2b - including the new preferred route through South Yorkshire - has recently closed. We have responded to the consultation, and have been visiting local wildlife sites to better understand the potential impact of the project. These sites are highlighted on the map (opposite - full version available on our website). Our response to the consultation will be on our website (see page 10) as soon as it is available, so do keep checking.



Hedgehog Appeal



A huge thank you goes out to everyone who supported our Hedgehog Appeal, whether you made a donation, reported a hedgehog sighting or made your garden a better home for hedgehogs. In total to date we have raised £620 towards our work to help local hedgehog populations - and our Hedgehog Heroes campaign saw people across Sheffield and Rotherham take action for hedgehogs too.

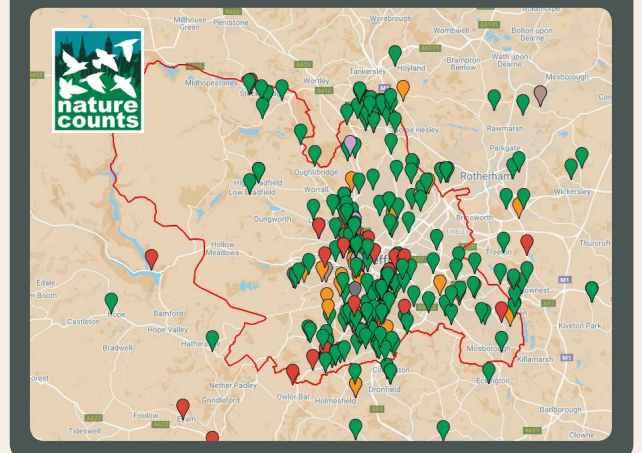
What have you helped us achieve?

200 participants in hedgehog-themed activities

3,500 hedgehog hero leaflets distributed

6 schools | 350 children took part in hedgehog tunnel surveys

350 mapped hedgehog sightings to date



Our network of nature reserves provides a vital sanctuary for hedgehogs, particularly in the more urban parts of the city, and later this year we hope to do even more on our reserves to help hedgehogs. We will be creating hibernation sites, as well as a veritable hog buffet of invertebrates, through better meadow management at Sunnybank, and by opening up the tree canopy at Crabtree Ponds.

If you would like to be part of this work to help our local hedgehogs thrive, please consider donating to our ongoing Hedgehog Appeal at wildsheffield.com/hedgehogappeal or by sending a cheque marked Hedgehog Appeal to Sheffield Wildlife Trust.

Don't forget to keep sending your sightings in to us - especially if you've seen hedgehogs in the western areas of Sheffield!

Contact our campaigns team...

@WildSheffield

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust

subscribe to updates at takeaction@wildsheffield.com

wildsheffield.com/campaigns

A natural remedy winning hearts and minds

Whether we realise it or not, getting closer to nature lifts our mood and improves our wellbeing. Connecting with the natural environment can bring huge benefits to everyone, whatever their age. We spoke to our Wild at Heart team, Jenny King and Susan Smith, to find out how the Trust is using nature as a therapy.



Tell us more: what is Wild at Heart?

Jenny: “Wild at Heart offers nature-related activities for people over 50 who live in Sheffield and Rotherham. Our programme of activities is designed to improve health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation and signpost people to a wide range of community activities - all through contact with the natural world.”

Susan: “We offer people a taster of things that can easily be adopted as hobbies. We want to get people out, help them meet new people, learn new skills, and enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits that come from being closer to nature.”



Above: Jenny King
Right: Susan Smith

Wild at Heart's Five Ways to Wellbeing

Connect

The groups provide an opportunity to meet others, chat and share an interest in our local environment.

Be Active

Weekly walks in local parks and green spaces to promote physical wellbeing and inspire regular exercise.

Take Notice

The variety of wildlife we explore in our sessions encourages participants to take a closer look at the wildlife on their doorstep.

Keep Learning

Our programme of events allows participants to learn from a number of local tutors, wildlife experts and artists.

Give

Participants provide support, advice and encouragement to other members of the group and can volunteer for a variety of nature-related activities within the Trust or wider community.

Who might want to get involved in Wild at Heart?

Jenny: “People join in on all sorts of levels but it’s the combination of learning, talking and walking that seems to appeal to everyone who comes to Wild at Heart. It’s a great way of keeping on top of your physical and mental health in a welcoming, social environment. If you’re over 50 and looking for gentle, regular physical activity but you don’t fancy an exercise class, then this a great alternative!”

Susan: “Our groups include a variety of people. Some are recovering from illness, others have caring responsibilities themselves. Others simply want to keep active and enjoy the interesting topics and varied activities we can offer. Some of these people may find it difficult to access regular health walks and benefit from the extra support the Wild at Heart team can give.”



Why can't people simply do this for themselves?

Jenny: “We know that people want to get out into our woods and green spaces and that it makes them feel better, but sometimes things get in the way. Some people struggle with transport or mobility: Wild at Heart provides transport to and from our sessions, and we make sure that the activities can be enjoyed by people with varying degrees of mobility.”

Susan: “It’s surprising how many older people lack the confidence. Sometimes it’s because they don’t feel safe walking and exploring alone - and that is where the supportive group environment of Wild at Heart really helps. Often we find that people are worried about coming to a group for the first time, but a reassuring phone call from us soon puts their mind at ease.”

Finally, what is your favourite part of the job?

Susan: “I especially love our wildlife gardening sessions which we hold every month in the Trust’s own wildlife garden, here in the Norfolk Park area of Sheffield. The sessions are designed to help people make a really personal connection with nature. In practice this means that some people come to share their knowledge and practical experience, whilst others take away ideas they want to try at home. Some just want to sit in the garden with a cup of tea and absorb the surroundings, because the wildness of the place and the people they meet all helps them feel better.”

Jenny: “For me it has to be the Signs of Spring walks we run. When I see our members - people who may not have made it out to a woodland in a long while - surrounded by a breathtaking carpet of blue, breathing in the beautiful scent of our native bluebells and soaking up the birdsong - I know it’s all worth it and we’re making a world of difference to people’s lives.”



The Wild at Heart Wellbeing Programme

For more details, including dates and times of our spring programme of events, go to wildsheffield.com/whats-on

Nature photography: Takes place twice a month, locations vary (details below).

Exploring Sheffield: Minibus trips to explore spring. Every Wednesday at Longley.

Wildlife Gardening: Once a month (see pages 8-9)

Lowedges Wild at Heart Group: Indoor-based nature conservation on the third Monday of the month at Lowedges Sheltered Housing Scheme.

If you would like more information about the Wild at Heart programme, please contact Jenny King or Susan Smith:

wildsheffield.com/what-we-do/wild-heart wildatheart@wildsheffield.com
 Wild At Heart - Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust **0114 263 4335**



One of the Wild at Heart participants, Anne, has recently retired from a busy career. She has joined in with a variety of Wild at Heart opportunities, including the Introduction to Photography course, Discovering Spring walks and the Nature Art group. She has enjoyed Wild at Heart so much that she is now helping behind the scenes with the project, to reach out to others in her situation.

It's helped me to lose weight

“Wild at Heart helped me lose weight, get balance in my life and improve my mood. It's been great!”

Anne, Wild at Heart Nature Photographer

Now I go down to the garden every day

“Thank you for the hedgehog boxes. Now I go down to the garden every day to check the food and have really enjoyed looking out for the hedgehogs.”

Mavis, Lowedges Sheltered Housing Scheme

It has made it possible for me to get out

“This is what I want to do: get out with nature and learn new things. The staff have been understanding of disabilities and made it possible for me to get to places. Thank you.”

Susan, Wild at Heart Spring Strolls

The perfect home for a South Yorkshire belle

Spring is fast approaching and one sure sign that sunnier days are on their way is being greeted on a woodland walk with the carpet of blue that is an iconic part of the quintessential English woodland we all know and love - especially here in South Yorkshire where we have the most publicly-accessible urban woodland in the UK.

Our native bluebells - *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* - are iconic for a reason. Half of the world’s population of these wild bluebells are found in the British Isles and when you spot your first English bluebell this spring, you can rest assured that you are wandering amongst trees that have towered, creaking and enchanted, for hundreds of years, through the English Civil War, the Industrial Revolution and two world wars. Ancient woodlands support more wildlife than any other terrestrial habitat in the UK and native bluebells are an important indicator species for them.

Bluebells appear regularly in English folklore and literature, top wild flower popularity contests and are even protected by law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - with a hefty £5,000 fine for digging up native bluebells. They provide an important early source of nectar, sustaining bees, hoverflies, butterflies and other insects.

And like all good things, bluebells take time and a finely balanced environment to flourish. The unique supply of light and damp of healthy woodland allows native bluebells to flower for a fleeting month usually between late-April and late-May. They take at least five years to grow from seed to bulb and typically take 35 years to spread just 50 metres.

A species under threat

Native bluebells themselves, as well as their ancient woodland homes, are threatened by a myriad of factors including human development and the rise of the Spanish bluebell - *Hyacinthoides hispanica* - which easily hybridises with our native variety, irrevocably changing its biological makeup with its paler complexion and stouter stance.

According to Plantlife, sightings of Spanish bluebells have increased by 52 per cent in the past 15 years, and those of hybrid bluebells have risen by 55 per cent, with many sightings found in urban areas such as Sheffield and Rotherham.

Popular with gardeners, Spanish bluebells can encroach ancient woodland where it is close to urban or suburban areas due to the fly tipping of garden waste, which allows them to sprawl deeper into the neighbouring woodland.

Everyone can do their bit...

Everyone can do their bit to alleviate this encroachment by planting native bluebells in their gardens instead of the Spanish variety and by disposing responsibly of garden waste.

This spring we are running a series of events across Sheffield and Rotherham to train people in bluebell identification

techniques and recruit citizen scientists to help map bluebell populations. These events, which are part of our Nature Counts project and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, will give us a better idea of the extent of the problem facing native bluebells and how best to focus our efforts to help them thrive. If you fancy getting involved, see our events calendar on pages 8-9 or visit wildsheffield.com/bluebells to find out more - and don’t miss our bluebells evening with Fred Rumsey from the Natural History Museum (see pages 8-9).

The bluebell’s ancient woodland dwellings themselves also face their own challenges, such as the threat of human development. We are campaigning hard to save the ancient Smithy Wood from becoming a service station and have been working to protect ancient woodland and wildlife on the proposed HS2 route. We will also be working with Sheffield City Council on their forthcoming Green Belt review. See pages 10-11 for the latest updates about our campaigns.

A bluebell success story

As well as educating the public and campaigning to protect our ancient woodlands (and trees), we also look after 12 nature reserves across South Yorkshire and have found that effective woodland management can make a huge difference to giving bluebells a helping hand. At Crabtree Ponds we have carried out a regime of scrub clearance and canopy thinning, protecting a small but important patch of native bluebells from encroachment.

Reserve manager Rob Miller is a particular champion of this work: “We’re delighted to have witnessed the bluebells thriving at Crabtree over the past five years. Since we carried out canopy thinning three years ago, the size of the patch has grown significantly and the displays have gone from strength to strength. I would be thrilled to be able to extend this kind of maintenance programme to other areas, and see other native bluebell patches grow too.”

This long-term, sustainable approach to protecting and enhancing our wild spaces, including our trees and woodlands, is essential if we are to retain the magic of our native bluebells and the ancient woodland they identify for future generations to come.

What else can you do?

If you’re not a budding citizen scientist - or even if you are - what else can you do to help? First and foremost, sustainable woodland management requires long-term funding and our local woodlands need greater investment if they are to continue to thrive. Funding to maintain our green spaces - from street trees to parks to ancient woodlands - is scarce, and we rely on the incredible support of our community of wildlife lovers in Sheffield and Rotherham.

If you are able to, please consider increasing your regular donation to the Trust either by using the attached form or by calling 0114 263 4335.

Bluebells in Sheffield and Rotherham

Bluebell displays are timed naturally to make the most of spring sunshine, before trees come into leaf, and the best time to experience this ocean of colour is when the sun is low in the sky. If you’re wondering where to spot your first bluebell this spring, look no further than our nature reserves. Here are some of our favourite places to spot bluebells:

Moss Valley Woodlands

On the southern boundary of Sheffield, Moss Valley Woodlands is home to a beautiful string of ancient woodlands in a secluded valley, just a stone’s throw from Norton and Jordanthorpe. Head to grid reference SK 371807 and you will find 26.3 hectares of semi-natural ancient woodland including Coalpit Wood, Long Wood, and parts of Bridle Road Wood and Newfield Spring Wood. There is limited parking on Lightwood Lane and Hazlehurst Lane and pedestrians can access the woods from Jordanthorpe or Coal Aston. There is good access on public footpaths throughout and on the bridleway route through Long Wood, but do keep an eye out for steep and uneven ground in places.

Other bluebell spots on our reserves:

Blacka Moor
Crabtree Ponds
Carbrook Ravine
Wyming Brook
Greno Woods

Find our reserves at:
wildsheffield.com/wildlife/reserves

Top tips from our reserve managers

“You can find bluebells at the north end of Wyming Brook, near the A57.” *Rob Miller*

“The best spot for bluebells at Blacka Moor is the woodland at the bottom of Lenny Hill.” *Nabil Abbas*

Make a difference today...

If you are able to increase your regular donation, please complete the form below and return to:

**Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust,
37 Stafford Road, Sheffield, S2 2SF**

If you are a UK taxpayer, please complete the Gift Aid declaration to boost the value of your donation by 25%.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to speak to someone, please call us on **0114 263 4335**.

Name
Address
Postcode
Email
Telephone
Membership No. (if known)

I would like to donate an extra monthly or yearly amount to help Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust protect and enhance wild spaces in my local area.

I would like to increase my regular donation by:

<input type="checkbox"/> £2 per month	<input type="checkbox"/> £10 per year
<input type="checkbox"/> £5 per month	<input type="checkbox"/> £20 per year
<input type="checkbox"/> £10 per month	<input type="checkbox"/> £30 per year
<input type="checkbox"/> £other per month (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/> £other per year (please state)

Yes, please claim Gift Aid on my donation
Are you a UK taxpayer? If so, every £1 you give could be worth an extra 25% to us, at no cost to you. Please help us increase the value of your donation by ticking the box below.

☐ **Yes, I am a UK taxpayer.** I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I wish Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust to treat this donation and all subsequent donations as Gift Aid donations. I will notify Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust if my circumstances or name/address details change.

☐ **No, I am not a UK taxpayer.**

Thank you for your support

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Registered charity no. 700638 | Company no. 2287928

How we use your contact details Under the terms of the Data Protection Act (1998), Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust will use the information provided by you for Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust’s nature conservation, administrative and fundraising purposes only. Your personal information will be removed from our contact list within one month of receiving a written request from you. We will not pass on your details to any third parties. By returning this form you are indicating your consent to receiving messages, invitations and information from us by mail, email or telephone. Manage your contact preferences by contacting us on the details on page 2.





Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust works for a better future for people, wildlife and the green spaces that they rely on.



Sheffield &
Rotherham

We manage **12 nature reserves**
over **584 hectares** across
South Yorkshire.



How your support can help...

An increase of...

£2 a month for a year could equip a volunteer with a bow saw to carry out coppicing at Greno Woods.

£5 a month for a year could clear 100 square metres of invasive holly at Moss Valley Woodlands to allow bluebells and wild flowers to thrive.

£10 a month for a year could fund an expert to scrutinise a planning application which could affect local woodlands and wildlife.

£10 a year could allow us to plant one metre of species-rich traditional hedgerow at Carr House Meadows.

£20 a year could help us install a pied flycatcher nest box at Wyming Brook - helping this threatened species to thrive in the area.

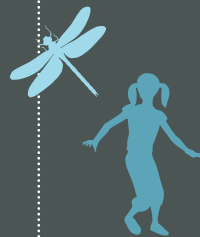
£30 a year could train a volunteer to identify and record bluebells and wild flowers at Crabtree Ponds.

With your support we can continue to see our local woodlands thrive and enjoy spectacular displays of bluebells for years to come. You can make a huge difference to wild spaces and wildlife in your local area.

By increasing your regular donation today, you could help protect our native bluebells, ancient woodlands, trees and wild spaces across Sheffield and Rotherham for future generations.

Please see reverse to increase your regular donation today.

We help people connect with the natural world.



Our goal is to make every child wild in Sheffield and Rotherham. We work directly with 4,000 children and young people every year, giving them wild experiences and promoting excellence in outdoor learning in schools.

Our innovative Wild at Heart programme has helped more than 4,500 older people feel better through active natural experiences.



Our conservation work helps the wildlife you love to thrive.



Nightjars are now breeding at Wyming Brook.

Overwintering snipe have doubled at Kilnhurst Ings.



Breeding pairs of wood warblers at Wyming Brook are the highest for five years.



We have found proof that otters are making a comeback on the Don, and we are taking steps to help them thrive.



We campaign for a better deal for people and nature locally and in the wider world.

We have challenged potentially harmful developments such as Smithy Wood services and HS2.

We have given expert evidence to Sheffield City Council on flood protection and street trees.

We are part of the Greener UK coalition, a national platform of major environmental and conservation organisations fighting for nature post-Brexit.

We identified the rare white-letter hairstreak butterfly on an Elm street tree scheduled for removal in Sheffield, keeping the tree standing to date.

Our Nature Counts project is collecting data on Sheffield's key species and habitats to produce an innovative State of Nature 'health check' for Sheffield.

We help people take action for wildlife and wild places.

Over 100 volunteers and almost 6,000 members work together with our staff and trustees to create a better future for people and wildlife in Sheffield and Rotherham.

We tell people about opportunities to take action through monthly e-newsletters, informative events, our seasonal *Kingfisher* magazine and regular updates on social media.

