

## Case study: Friends of Herringthorpe Playing Fields

---

### **Name of project or group**

Friends of Herringthorpe Playing Fields. Case study by Sam Lilleker, May 2022

### **Introduction**

Our fields have always been under threat of unwanted development which led to the group's initial creation, since then our primary activities have aimed to improve the site for people and wildlife.



Photo credit: Sam Lilleker

### **What actions did you or your group want to take and why?**

With the national decline in field sports and growing concern around climate change, biodiversity decline and the loss of green space we identified that isolated parts of the site which have been rewilding naturally are not only worth saving but joining together and enlarging to create a wildlife corridor. We also wanted to make the space more climate resilient by planting trees for shade alongside the main path. We also wanted to get an understanding of the baseline biodiversity already on the site.

### **What resources or support did you need/use?**

We help keep lines of communication open between users of Herringthorpe Playing Fields and RMBC to ensure that they respond to issues.

### **How did you empower or involve others?**

We hold short, monthly online meetings which are open to all. Meetings, social media via Rotherham Climate Action. We held three events between November 2021 and April 2022; an online awareness-raising event about nature's decline and how to help, an online talk about hedgehogs with Hugh Warwick and Jo Wilkinson and an in-person Hedgehog Festival at Dearne Valley College. RMBC gardening competition

## Case study: Friends of Herringthorpe Playing Fields

### How did it make you feel?

It makes me very happy and proud that as a small group we can have such a positive impact. I can think back to our first litter pick where we collected 50+ bags of rubbish we were exhausted. Now in 2022 More people take pride in the space and it's great to know I am involved in that change.



### What changes have there been as a result of your actions?

142 new trees, a section of grassland under a new meadow management regime, 3 new litter bins and an agreement that no weed killer will be used on the site. We now also have a comprehensive set of plant records for the site. Our elected members are also aware of how we value our green space and want to protect it for the future.

### Have you had any memorable nature encounters while doing this?

Yes, I've saved a raven chick from a murder of crows and was also fortunate to stumble across a lovely patch of bee orchids.



Bee orchid (left) and common spotted orchid (right) by Sam Lilleker

## Case study: Friends of Herringthorpe Playing Fields

### How have the actions been shared or inspired others?

Whilst recording plants I have interacted with a lot of different people and shown them photos of plants found around the playing fields I hopefully inspired some curiosity into the natural world and the interesting things that can be found on our doorstep!

### What's next?

We are building on our successes and are working on future plans which more people can get involved with in person, such as bulb planting and wildflower plug planting.



“No mow” areas in spring and summer by Sam Lilleker

