

Name of project or group

Dore & Totley Golf Club, Bradway Road, Sheffield, S17 4QR



What actions for nature did your group want to take and why?

David Stevenson is the current club captain. For his one-year tenure, his chosen project theme is 'Making time and Space for Nature.' He aimed to make the golf club more friendly for nature and wildlife, whilst educating members and visitors as to the importance, and hopefully inspire other clubs to do the same.

What resources or support did you need/use?

David has recruited a team of 30 enthusiastic volunteers, 5 of which were present at a meeting with the Community Nature Advisors from Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust.



The group asked Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust to visit the site and suggest some areas for improvement so that they could make time and space for nature.

The group have used this advice along with resources in the Sheffield Nature Recovery toolkit to make improvements to their grassland and wooded areas.

They also tapped into an initiative set up by the Royal and Ancient Golf Clubs which was linked with the RSPB, and had a site visit from the RSPB to advise on installing bird boxes.

How did you empower or involve others?

David explained that club members were enthusiastic about the project, and were willing and able to do much of conservation work themselves. One member has access to equipment such as a digger and another has garden centre contacts for supplying plants. Others are also making monetary contributions towards the nature project.

After the meeting with SRWT the enthusiastic volunteers have been carrying out much of the work recommended, beginning with digging out a pond in an unused and boggy area of the site. They are starting to transform the area to be a wildlife habitat for mammals, birds and invertebrates.



Pond site prior to development



*After initial digging of pond area
A wildlife camera has been
installed next to the pond to
capture activity*

The volunteer group has also put up a second barn owl box in the area adjacent to the pond, The other was installed at the furthest point of the course.



A dawn chorus survey was also carried out by the keen members of the group and a total of 26 species were heard in a couple of hours, a couple of which (lesser whitethroat and bullfinch) had not previously seen on the course.

A further 64 bird boxes and a number of bat boxes have also been added with a number housing breeding birds. Although some of these bird boxes have not lasted and we have decided to make our own.

We installed a bird feeding station near to the club house and that attracts a lot of birds as well as rats at times.

In the woodland area where the congested trees were leaving no light for ground flora the group have created glades to open up and let light to the woodland floor.



Before with overgrown woodland planting



Glade creation by the volunteers

Areas of wildflower meadows have also been sown at one of the tee off points on the 13 hole. This wasn't as successful as we had hoped but with support from SRWT we have been able to identify what went wrong and plan for future wildflower areas around the site. We are keen for this to be populated by bees, butterflies and other flying creatures.

How many people have been involved?

There are approximately 25 people in the 'Making Space for Nature' group and of these there are 12 people who are there in all weather conditions doing the work on the ground. Some of the 25 people contributed financially to the project and some just like to be informed via the whatsapp group.

How did it make you feel?

Most of the birdies and eagles before this project were obtained on the golf course but it's just fantastic and thoroughly enjoyable to see all the wildlife on the course whether it's a Barn owl or a Buzzard. We have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the project and sharing what we have seen with others in the club. We would love to share this with other people if they are interested in making their course better for nature. It's such good fun and it's easy to make space for nature.

Being part of the group has been very rewarding, it's great to get out and do something positive for nature and we are looking forward to doing more actions for nature with the group.

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

We have spotted a lot more wildlife on the course and made changes that will lead to more wildlife being present. We want to change the public's perception of golf courses and with this project we are actively doing that.

We have created a pond with financial support from the members of the group, put up bird boxes, planted wildflowers although it wasn't as successful as hoped but we did see butterflies and some colour on the course. We have seen more interest within the club for the project and people are asking questions. Members of the board are interested in the project and the grounds staff are becoming more involved in how to manage the grounds more environmentally friendly.

There are a lot of changes still to be made but we are excited for the future,

Have you had any memorable nature encounters while doing this?

Being a golf course that is backed onto at least 3 sides by Urban Sheffield but also Derbyshire and farmland It creates a wildlife corridor. We have seen deer, badger, fox, stoats and recently a barn owl. There has been a pair of breeding Green Woodpeckers which have been sighted on many occasions whilst playing golf and on the nature practical days. 3 of the young were once having a wonderful time in one of the bunkers which was a delight to one member.



We had a dawn chorus and heard over 26 different birds on the course. There is an active badger set on the course and there have been sightings of foxes, roe deer and some stray flock of sheep which have been spotted on a camera designed to pick up vandalism, which was a happy accident.

Over 35% of the bird boxes we put up in the last year have had signs that they were used although some weren't so successful as they were predated but we think that was because of the poor quality of the boxes. We are hopeful that this year with the current bird boxes built by the group from designs on the RSPB website they will be longer lasting and be more suitable for wildlife.

From creating the new pond we have ducks coming to the pond and we hope we will get amphibians in it in the future and we plan to do a survey later in the year and we hope to find other than golf balls.

We had 2 sightings of a barn owl hunting and hopefully this is a result of us putting up 2 barn owl boxes on the course which was the first sighting in 25 years.

How have your actions been shared or inspired others?

There are over 400 members of the golf club and David as part of his term as Captain has sent regular newsletters to the members about the actions that the group has made. The members of the golf board have been engaged with the project. Even people who are

not members of the group have been actively interested in the project and keen to spot wildlife when they are playing on the course and we get really excited about seeing it too,

It feels like the project is going viral. When we go up to the club house there is always someone talking about birds, the project and the wildflowers. There is a lot of interest and its growing all the time,

David and the group are keen to help and inspire other golf clubs in the Sheffield and Rotherham area to become more nature friendly. The group are keen for their details to be shared and for other groups to get in touch with them if they would like to know more. They are also planning on having information shared on the club website to show to prospective members.

What is next?

We have done a lot on the course for birds. The plan is to have over 100 boxes onsite and this year we would like to do more for flowers. With the guidance from SRWT and the toolkit we know how to prepare and plant the site. We would like to create homes for hedgehogs, bats and wildflower areas for the invertebrates.



We will have about 7 or 8 working days throughout the next year. There is more work to do on the pond with planting. Ash dieback has meant we have cut down some trees which will be turned into habitat piles for insects and hedgehogs. Removal of the invasive species in line with the recommendations of SRWT.

We would like the club to do an environmental review of the pesticide use, water usage and make sure that we are being environmentally aware, sustainable products and materials are purchased through the greens staff and using friendly gardening practices.