

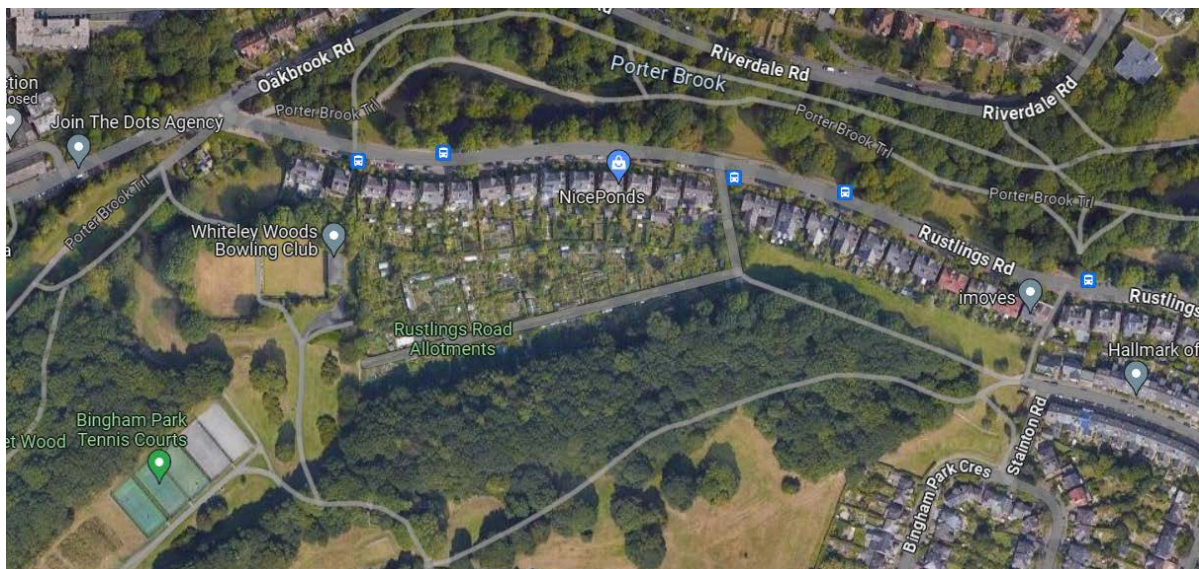
Rustlings Road Allotment Society

Name of author

Annie Russell, (photos: Mary O’Connell and Mel Ariño)

Introduction

Rustlings Road Allotments are situated in Bingham Park in the west of Sheffield and accessed from Wragby Road, S11. The park was gifted to the people of Sheffield for the benefit of their children, in 1911, by local businessman, Sir John Edward Bingham. The 64 allotment gardens occupy a strip of land running east-west, between the houses on Rustlings Road and Bingham Park Woodland. Each allotment has its own water supply and many have substantial greenhouses, built by allotment holders in the 1910s and 1920s.



Scale 0 |-----| 50m
Google Maps

What actions did you or your group want to take and why? (The inspiration and motivation)

We want to make our allotments a space for nature as well as food growing, and to record what we already have and are doing. We hope to build on what we have by sharing skills and knowledge, surveying what we have and asking experts for help and advice! We would like our allotments to become an inspiration for other allotment sites in the city.



Green roof for insulation and for wildlife



Broad beans well ahead



Currant bushes coming into leaf



Though the beds are tidy, there is always space for nature, as seen in this brambly hedge



Almost every plot has a wildlife pond. Designs are varied, but all contain frogspawn



Annie and her pond, which is also home to newts

What resources or support did you need/use?

We have asked for help from SRWT, Friends of the Porter Valley and South Yorkshire Bat Group for survey tips and ideas for enhancing the plots for wildlife. We have used the local pub for meetings. SRWT are hopefully able to lend us some surveying tools.

Sean from South Yorkshire Bat Group came and led a bat walk with plot-holders in July 2023. He fixed up a monitor that remained on the plots for a week and (although it is still awaiting full analysis) he thinks that it may have detected 5 species of bat flying over the allotments!

How did you empower or involve others?

We held a meeting for those interested in the project which was open to all plot-holders where everyone present contributed and went away with actions to take forward. We presented the project at the AGM and invited all plot-holders to the walk around with Ben Keywood and Mary O'Connell from SRWT. All members were invited to share what they are doing on a map of the site and we are planning to hold a series of skills sharing workshops, for example on pond creation. We also plan to have a noticeboard at the end of the track where all plot-holders can see what's happening. Allotment-holders from 13 plots (some of

which have multiple tenants) shared information about action they were taking for nature at our AGM. We have 9 members in the Whatsapp group, but have had others attend events. In reality there are many more people taking action for wildlife on the site but only a fraction come to the AGM or are in the society.



Ben Keywood offered many useful wildlife insights

Students from Greystones Primary School along with their teacher Mel (who have a school plot on site) created amazing artwork for a butterfly exhibition, entitled 'Community of Butterflies,' which went on display all along the allotment track.



Photo credits: Mel Ariño

Different plots featured different species of butterfly. Large White and Meadow Brown are featured below:



Photo credits: Mel Ariño

This was accompanied by information sheets about the best plants to plant for different species and their caterpillars, which were available for the public as well as plotholders.



Photo credit: Mel Ariño

There was an article in the Sheffield Telegraph (27th July 2023) about the exhibition:



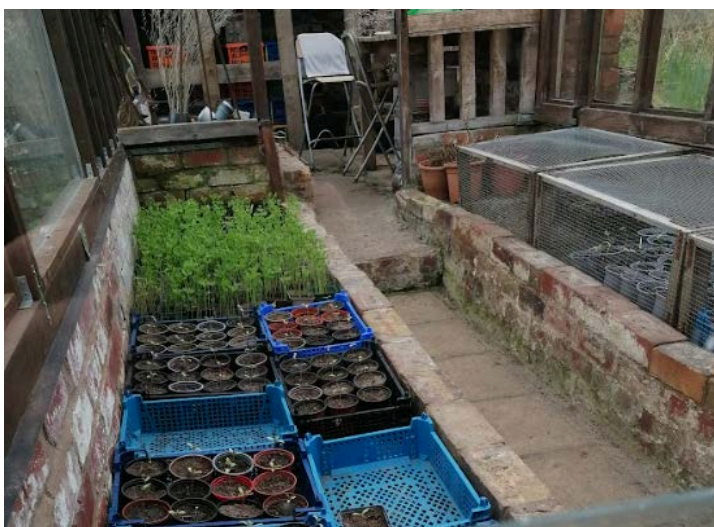
Photo credit: Mel Ariño

How did it make you feel?

Excited and hopeful, to realise that so many people are already doing so much. Also excited to be learning about ecosystems and surveying.

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

There is a real energy and positivity amongst plot-holders who are getting involved.



Seedlings growing on in one of the greenhouses; here



Children can play and learn

Have you had any memorable nature encounters while doing this?

There is always so much to see on the allotments, but cheeky robins showing off when we are doing the bird survey are always a delight.



Badger tracks between the beds



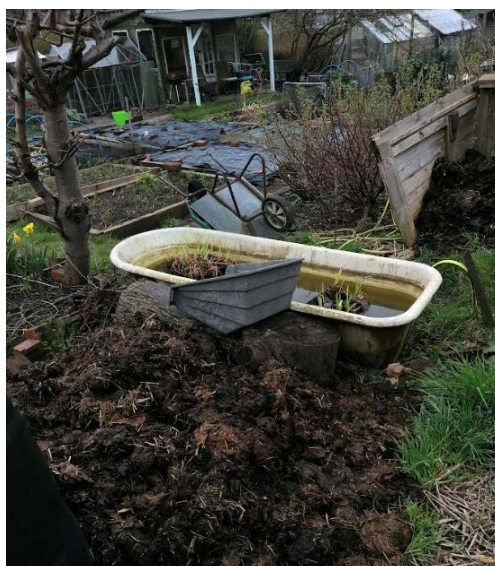
Bluetits nested inside this iron post!

How have the actions been shared or inspired others?

So far through this case study and hopefully through putting the site on the Community Action for Nature map.



Extensive raised beds;



Where there's muck.....

What's next?

Another meeting, share our skills sessions, surveys of amphibians, bats, birds and moths...
SRWT to make another visit, on a spring evening, particularly to record bats, moths, birds in nesting season...

For further information, contact Annie on annielizzy79@gmail.com