

Fairfield Association - FFOG Report for AGM 2021

1. Our agreement with Natural England (which provides our main source of income) has been renewed until March 2023. We are on one year renewals, until at least 2024, after which we will need to apply under a different funding regime and also seek other sources of income. We are making good contacts for help with this – Lancashire Wildlife Trust, RSPB and the manager of Gaitbarrows National Nature Reserve at Silverdale

2. We already have a partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust to create or improve ponds in Flora Field and the Hay Meadow for the benefit of Great Crested Newts. They have been landscaped to cater also for the needs of birds (waders and swallows and martins collecting mud for nests) and dragonflies . Further work is about to start in other wet areas. This is a very useful partnership as they pay for and execute the work with a team, experienced in conservation.

3. The meadows were not cut for hay this year but grazed off by the cattle. Over the years as the wildflowers have developed the quality of the hay has become less nutritious and it has tended to rot in the bales. We hope to continue this management in the future.

4. Our annual ash die back survey showed no further deterioration this year. We will continue to monitor but there doesn't appear to be a rapid decline.

5. Last winter Lancaster and District Bird Watching Society set up a bird feeding station near the bottom of the Pony Wood Path which attracted large numbers of birds and bird watchers. Notable were linnets and reed buntings, both species in decline. Sightings were recorded on the nearby white board which will shortly be reinstated following repairs to the vandalism in the summer. We will also continue feeding, although the conditions in the field are less favourable, with little bare ground.

6. There is to be further sapling planting complete the planting in Pony Wood, gap filling in some of the hedges and creating new hedges along the Fauna path. This will be in sections so the view across to Aldcliffe is preserved. On Dec Saturday 12th we need all hands on deck for a planting Woodland Trust hedge saplings

7. A "Volunteer picnic" was held in the orchard this summer, which was very successful and will become an annual event .

We estimate that there are about 50 volunteers who work tirelessly on the reserve – people from the outside are amazed that 50 plus acres can be managed by volunteers and it is a truly amazing effort.