

Fairfield Association
Flora, Fauna and Orchard Management Group [FFOG]
Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 5th May 2016 7.00 pm
at Whitegates, Sunnyside Close

Present: Graham Brandwood, David Elliott, Glenys Ferguson (Mins), Tony Finn, Ian Fraser, Oliver Fulton, Helen Hicks, Sue Nieduszynska (Chair), Ian Procter, Hilary Short, Mick Short, Chris Workman (part)

1. **Apologies:** Dave Brookes, Rebecca Procter
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved
3. **Matters arising from Minutes:**
 - 3.1. **Horses on footpath (March item 6.7):** Following enquiries to local stables and involvement of the PCSO, it appears that the message has got through to the horse riders. There have been no further sightings for several weeks. Matter closed unless further reports received.
 - 3.2. **Dogs: warden and notices (item 4):** The Dog Warden has yet to be contacted about the regular dog mess at the Sunnyside end of the Pads path (**Hilary**). Notices about dog control during the bird breeding season have been posted in the Cromwell Road noticeboard, on Facebook and along the Fauna footpath. The latter have been torn down twice, and now very strongly stapled. It is not clear whether there has been much in the way of a positive response. The offer by Jon Carter (RSPB) to write a note about dogs for the newsletter was welcomed (**Sue**).
 - 3.3. **Plugs for Hay Meadow (item 5):** 70 plugs were planted in the wetter (southern) area on 27th April (see Ian's report at end for species list). Globeflower and Pink Purslane will be added when they can be sourced (**Ian**). It was noted that these plants favour acid soils, so any liming of the meadows should avoid this part.
 - 3.4. **Long Pads path maintenance (item 9.1):** Sue has been in contact with the County Council's Public Rights of Way Manager (David Goode). He is as yet unsure how much vegetation clearance the County Council will be able to undertake. **Ian** has added this task to the Volunteers' list as a standard item for regular sessions, and will involve an Associate Volunteer on a watching brief. With the hedges on both sides of the path now laid, it is hoped that the vegetation will be less intrusive anyway.
 - 3.5. **Thistle management regime and Orchard grass/nettle cutting (item 9.1):** **Ian** will begin implementation of the thistle management approach previously agreed by FFOG (12 November 2015 Item 8.7) as soon as the thistles are high enough. He reported a severe infestation of dock in the The Paddock. Spraying and digging out are not practical options. so the same plan may be implemented for dock too. **Oliver** will seek advice from his contacts. Mowing of the Orchard has already started. **David** and **Ian** will be meeting Keith Taylor to review the height of the lowest branches of the fruit trees.
 - 3.6. **Orchard monitoring (item 9.1):** Keith Taylor is prepared to assess the fruit trees again this year. Date to be arranged when the trees are in full bloom (**Glenys**).

3.7. H&S when working at height (March item 3.3): Hilary/Sue will remind Michael Sheppard about incorporating guidance into the FA's Health and Safety policy.

3.8. Easter Egg hunt (item 9.3): Meeting members were thanked for their efforts in preparing the Orchard for this event. Gratitude was expressed to Tony for organising a highly successful event, despite appalling weather conditions.

4. Rush control: The areas of rush in the Fauna fields have increased considerably since the reserve was created. Richard Storton (formerly RSPB) cut a third of the rushes in November 2014, but the beneficial effects of this were limited as the intended follow-up with weed wiping was unable to go ahead. Rush growth is reducing the areas of grass for the cattle to graze, and is less good for wildlife. And it appears that this problem is not confined to the FA's reserve. The desirable situation for breeding waders in particular (according to an RSPB paper on rush management circulated to meeting members) is for the area of rush to cover less than one third of the field. Its density is also important. An open structure, as is currently the case in School Pond and the new extension of rush in Big Meadow alongside the boardwalk, is the target. Exposed soil offers ideal conditions for rush seed to establish, so poaching by the cattle must be controlled.

4.1. Review of pony grazing: In an attempt to control the rush in Big Meadow by grazing, two Fell ponies were brought in from late December 2015 to late March 2016. However, there was plenty of grass when they arrived, and the grass was never reduced to a point when they would have been forced to eat mainly rush. Inspection reveals that quite a bit of rush has actually been grazed (it is not easy to spot from the footpaths as a dense outer rim hides many more open patches). However, there has been no significant impact on rush coverage, although it is possible that they have eaten down new growth areas and prevented further spread. Moreover, there was little grass left for the cattle in early spring, and the large feet of the Fell ponies caused poaching in places.

Whilst the effect of the ponies on the rush was questionable, the arrangements for managing the ponies worked well and their owner was pleased with their condition when they left. And their presence was clearly enjoyed by visitors to the reserve.

The impact of the ponies might have been greater on rush growth (a) if the winter had been harder (rush is still available when grass is frozen or has completely stopped growing); (b) if the ponies had arrived sooner and spent longer on site; (c) if there had been more than two ponies (d) if lighter Exmoor ponies had been used (although they might be less willing to go into the wetter areas).

The meeting concluded that pony grazing will never offer a complete solution to the rush problem and that it needs careful management to ensure that the amount of grazing available for the cattle is not seriously reduced. So this approach may be used again in future years. To keep options open, **Oliver** was asked to maintain his contacts and invite a local owner of Exmoor ponies to visit the reserve.

4.2. Options for rush control over the summer: It was agreed that something else should be done over the summer to try to make a significant impact on the rushes this year in Big Meadow, School Pond, Upper Sowerholme and the Hay Meadow.

Chris has suggested spraying the rush area with lime. Liming does not have an immediate effect and needs to be repeated annually. It is therefore a long term option, and better suited to on-going maintenance of the rush rather than more drastic control. It is attractive in that it might reduce the requirement to use glyphosate, but its practicalities and effectiveness require further investigation. It was decided to leave this for future discussion.

The solution favoured by the meeting is to cut the rush and follow this with weed wiping. The aim is to cut as early as possible after the 15th July, with a possible second cut as suggested by Claire Harris in late summer. To gain the maximum benefits from the cutting, this should be followed by weed wiping with glyphosate. Spot-spraying as an alternative has been approved by NE, but only for Big Meadow and other HK10 fields and confined to dense tussocks devoid of other vegetation. NE has also agreed to the burning of cut rushes from any of the fields in a corner of Big Meadow provided it is a safe distance from hedgerows, the burning is done on corrugated sheets and the ashes removed, so as not to increase fertility. (This will be cheaper than paying for the rush to be taken off site and cuttings cannot be left as they will mulch down to create an environment conducive to further rush growth.)

Further questions need to be answered:

- a) one cut or two?
- b) how much cutting? and where? (Claire has recommended trying to cut swathes into the middle as well as continuing the approach of November 2014 of reducing rush around the perimeter.)
- c) how much time should be allowed between cutting and weed wiping? (Should weed wiping follow immediately so that the glyphosate can penetrate the hollow stems, or should it be delayed for a certain amount of regrowth.)
- d) is it appropriate and/or practical to weed wipe in very wet areas such as Upper Sowerholme?
- e) what are the costs involved?

Sue will ask Ben Hibbins for more advice. **Mick** will try to make contact again with Richard Storton and approach Richard's recommended Contractor. Others facing similar rush control issues will also be tapped for information – RSPB (**Sue**), Lancashire Wildlife Trust (**Ian**), Cumbria Wildlife Trust (**Oliver**).

A firm plan for how to proceed this summer will be decided at the July FFOG meeting (**Glenys** for Agenda).

5. Management:

5.1. Improvement of the Long Pads path and creation of the Flora path: The planning application has now been approved. A condition is that Lancaster City Council's Tree Protection Officer must be consulted before anything is done that might affect the trees (concerns about the green path in particular). Permissions must now be sought for the access across Aldcliffe Road to the canal. **Hilary** will deal with the Canal and River Trust and ask **Dave** to contact the Highways Department. **Hilary** will also now start to consider sources of funding.

An FA Member has requested that he be allowed to fill in some puddles on the footpath in the region of the bend/Lucy Brook crossing. Permission was granted (**Glenys** to convey the message).

- 5.2. Resurfacing of footpaths:** No report (**Dave**).
- 5.3. Local Nature Reserve designation:** No developments (**Oliver**).
- 5.4. Arable update:** Last year's farmer has suddenly decided not to continue (although he is still prepared to supply phragmites from his farm if requested). Thankfully his suggested replacement, who has previously done some work on the reserve, has agreed to step in. Flora Field has now been ploughed and a crop of barley sown, including two, one hectare, patches with added wildflower seed (cornflower, red poppy etc.). Their success, impact on crop yield and regeneration needs to be monitored. David Morris (see 5.6) has suggested leaving a strip of the crop adjacent to the beetle banks uncut. This will provide more seed for the birds over the winter. However, the farmer may require compensation for the reduction in the crop. It was decided to defer decision on this until next year, once the new farmer is established (**Glenys** for future agenda). Left-over bird friendly seed (or substitute, if none left) will be scattered in the field after the crop has been cut (**Glenys** for Arrangements Calendar). Nearer the time, the new farmer will be approached about cutting the wildflower margin along with the crop, and possibly undertaking the second cut too. (**Mick**).
- 5.5. Grazing matters:** With the lack of grass in much of the reserve, Mick has approached Natural England about the use of West Field. Ben Hibbins has given permission for this field to be grazed by the whole herd for some periods this year, including during the nesting season, subject to the sward remaining above 5cm and the degree of poaching. Graham noted that there is a broken post in the West Field fence by the north gate, making the boundary with the Long Pads path vulnerable. This will be repaired immediately (**Ian/Mick**). Natural England has also given a dispensation for herd size to be 8 plus followers until the end of June. This is amenable to the graziers, who have plans to take two of the adults out of the herd in the next few weeks.
- 5.6. Adviser Visit by Claire Harris 11th March:** The FA's former NE Adviser was delighted with progress on the reserve, commenting particularly on the health of the saplings in Pony Wood. She is in favour of liming the wildflower meadows, as that has been the traditional practice. It was decided not to pursue this further at the moment (see also 4.2). Likewise her suggestions to improve the unproductive parts of the wildflower margin in Flora Field will be put on hold and other advice to 'be patient' will continue to be followed. Claire also noted that any inspection by NE will be focused on the indicators of success and mainly involve a 'count and measure' exercise.

On 4th May, Sue had an unexpectedly arranged, but highly useful, site visit with David Morris, RSPB senior reserves ecologist. Notes from this are being circulated to FFOG Members with these Minutes.

- 5.7. Gates: a) between Hay and Carr House Meadows:** The work is finally due to start on 16th May. He has been reminded to respect the health and safety of footpath users by Ian and David Hartley. The Contractor considers that he can work safely without closing the path. **b) West Field:** Volunteers have replaced the broken gate in the north west corner with a gate that has been lying unused in the Paddock.
- 5.8. Strengthening boundaries:** Mick and a team of Volunteers have replaced broken fencing posts along the west boundary of West Field and re-fixed the wire fence to contain the White Park cattle. The boundary along the Lower Sowerholme / Long Pads

hedge is also more stock-proof having been augmented with two strands of barbed wire. This should also be more effective in deterring any access by people or dogs. (**Glenys** to arrange for this to be monitored.)

5.9. Addition to Fields Access List: The addition of two new Associate Volunteers, Martin Clague and Julia Harrison, was ratified.

6. Monitoring:

6.1. Maintenance and HLS habitat inspections: Graham was accompanied by Oliver who will now be taking over on a temporary basis. Some of the main branches of the old sycamore in the Orchard are now distinctly unhealthy. **Ian** will contact the tree surgeon as a matter of urgency (and at the same time commission another routine tree survey, see item 8.1). The barley straw to treat the algae in Alder Pond has been replaced. Spare straw is in the shed and may need to be used in other ponds where algae seems to be developing. School Pond is suffering from poaching by the cattle accessing from the LGGS field rather than drinking from the water trough in the Gun Range. The first unauthorised campfire of the season was noted in Pony Wood. **People on FA business** who go up to Pony Wood were asked to take a variety of routes through the grass to avoid creating a tempting 'path'. **Ian** noted that maintenance of the Big Meadow fence by the Fauna footpath is back on his 'to do' list.

6.2. Replacement/additional photographer monitor: **Chris** has been standing in temporarily. He will arrange a more permanent replacement (Helen and/or a volunteer sought through the FA newsletter).

6.3. Bird monitoring: Sue circulated a list of species, with their locations, reported during March and April. This is a compilation of sightings posted on the FA's wildlife blog, sightings by her and Ian N. and any other observations (such as the Bird Walk).

6.4. Follow up to Butterfly talk: An extract from the talk given by Tom Dunbar of Butterfly Conservation on 7th April was circulated. In particular, it provides guidance on butterfly-friendly plants. These include thistles, regarded by Natural England as an 'undesirable'. **Ian** is alert to this conflict and intends to leave selected beds of thistles untouched to benefit butterflies as well as other wildlife (for example, in that part of Lower Sowerholme closest to the bee hives). A formal system for monitoring butterflies on the reserve is to be set up. At regular intervals between April and September, on a sunny day, a standard route will be walked and the numbers and types of butterflies noted. **Chris** can arrange advice and training as necessary through his contacts at the Wildlife Trust. **Sue** will advertise for a monitor.

6.5. Progress with this year's surveys: Dan Haywood has agreed to repeat his breeding bird survey, and his first visit is imminent. Graeme Skelcher will be monitoring the flora in Pony Wood on 7th May. Martin Sherlock has also indicated his willingness to survey the meadow wildflowers, but has yet to provide a date (**Sue**).

6.6. Bird Walk 20th April: 16 to 20 people joined Jon Carter for an enjoyable early evening walk around the reserve. 25 species were seen (listed by Sue, 5.3).

7. Volunteer activities:

7.1. Volunteer activities: Ian's full reports for March and April are attached. To ease the task of removing baby sycamores from the shed roof, a fine mesh netting will be installed in autumn to collect the seeds (**Glenys** to add to Arrangements Calendar). Germination of wildflowers sown by Dallas Road pupils in the plot behind the Fauna stones has been disappointing. With the School's agreement, Volunteers will fork over the plot and re-sow (**Ian**). Self-sown alder trees that have been taken out of the Big Meadow marsh will be replanted as hedging by the Fauna path alongside School Pond. They should fill gaps where less water-tolerant saplings have failed to thrive (**Ian**). The Ragwort Working Party convened for its first session on 4th May. Only 2 Volunteers and little ragwort to tackle yet, apart from in the Hay Meadow. A better turnout is promised for the next two sessions. **Ian** will start spraying in Big Meadow with glyphosate when the ragwort gets higher. It appears that ragwort can no longer be disposed of via green bins. **Hilary** will first check whether the permit to dispose of empty glyphosate containers (see item 7.2) also covers disposal of ragwort (in black bags?). If not, then **Mick** will approach **Dave** to raise the matter with Lancaster City Council. **Mick** will also investigate whether it can be disposed of through the biomass machine belonging to a local farmer.

7.2. Herbicide spraying course & H&S: Ian and Graham are now qualified (on a life-time basis) to apply herbicide on the reserve having passed two courses at Myerscough College on 24th March in

- *The Principles of Safe Handling and Application of Pesticides (PA1)* and
- *The Safe Application of Pesticides using Pedestrian Hand held Equipment (PA6)*

It is possible that others can participate in herbicide spraying under their supervision (**Ian** to investigate).

The courses provided a lot of information about safety aspects and legal requirements that has led Ian to make a number of small but significant changes. The courses stressed the importance of appropriate personal protective equipment, and specified the detailed arrangements required to store, mix, transport herbicide and to clean equipment. These are now formally encapsulated in a COSHH Assessment Form, which was signed at the FFOG meeting by Sue, Ian and Graham. A Site Environmental Assessment has also been completed. Both these assessments are valid for one year, and so need to be reviewed on an annual basis (**Glenys** to add to Arrangements Calendar). Hilary has obtained a permit to dispose of empty glyphosate containers. All these obligations are summarised in the *Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products* which has been circulated to FA Trustees and added to the end of these Minutes.

Enquiries made at the Myerscough course suggest that there is little chance of finding a contractor locally willing to help with spot spraying of ragwort.

Ian was thanked for all his hard work to ensure that the FA is able to continue to use herbicide where necessary in a safe and legal manner.

8. Standing items:

8.1. Arrangements: Chris will arrange a Bioblitz for early summer.

Sue will commission the latter survey of the wildflower meadows for before 15th July, and arrange a check of the composition and coverage of the wildflower and birds seed margins in Flora Field.

Ian:

- a) has his programme for tackling undesirables and invasive aliens in hand
- b) will arrange the Contractor to cut Hay and Carr House Meadows as soon after 15th July as the weather permits
- c) check the Hay Meadow to ensure there are no points where the cattle can readily get into Upper Sowerholme post haymaking.
- c) will contact Andy Lee to commission another tree survey and safety checks
- d) investigate the installation of a water trough in West Field to be filled by the nose pump (which the cattle are unwilling to use directly)

With the whole herd now permitted access to West Field (see item 5.5) it is hoped that the grass will not have to be cut for silage/hay this year. **Oliver** to monitor sward height.

It was agreed not to arrange the usual monitoring visit by an adviser for this June/July given visits in the last few months by Richard Storton, Claire Harris (item 5.6) and David Morris (item 5.6).

8.2. Financial control:

Item 4.1 – Total cost of pony grazing was just under £300.

8.3. Organised events: Tony reported that Year 3 pupils from Dallas Road School will be visiting the Orchard on 20th May and Year 1 from Rylands will be in on 23rd May for as part of 'Art Week'. (**Ian** to ensure the Orchard is prepared.)

9. AOB:

9.1. Flora Field: Sue reported her encounter with a person walking across the arable field, scrutinising the ground. (Possibly the same person who was challenged this time last year.) **Meeting Members** were asked to be alert. Reports of a camper in the field proved unfounded.

9.2. Greenspaces training sessions on trees: Four free training sessions (3hours each in September/October) relating to the management of trees are being arranged by Lancaster Greenspaces. It is hoped that at least one person will attend to improve the FA's competence in this area. **Sue** will ask **Ian N.** and **Ian** will advertise the opportunity via the Volunteers email list.

9.3. Postcode Local Trust funding: The FA, in conjunction with Beyond the Castle, has succeeded in getting funding from the People's Postcode Lottery for a project which will transform rank grassland into diversified meadow in the green space stretching from Lancaster Castle to the River Lune. There is funding for 4/5 schools to plant wildflower plugs over 2 days (£500) and also funding for 2 days training in wildflower meadow management which could take place in our hay meadow (£500 per day). These are

optional activities for the FA which **Sue** and **Hilary** will consider for the next FFOG meeting.

9.4. John Muir Trust: Hilary has renewed the FA's membership.

9.5. Scything course information: **Oliver** has been contacted by CWLT. He will confirm that this course is available to all-comers before circulating.

10. Date/place of next meetings: Thurs 7th July, Thurs 1st Sept both 7pm, Whitegates Sunnyside Close.

Ian Procter's Report on Volunteer Activities:

2nd March 2016

Five volunteers formed the Hedge Working Party(HWP), agreed the Site Specific Risk Assessment (SSRA) and made progress laying the Long Pads / Flora Field hedge.

9th March 2016

Eight members of the HWP agreed the SSRA and made excellent progress laying the hedge above.

10th March 2016

Four volunteers agreed the SSRA and burned the hedge brush in the Flora Field.

12th March 2016

The Saturday volunteering session attracted 21 volunteers on a cloudy, damp but warm morning.

- The west hedge of the West Field was trimmed down to encourage thicker growth. This was its first trim since being laid in the winter of 2013-14. The hedge is developing well although it needs a few more saplings in some gaps.
- A litter pick was done along this hedge and along the south hedge of the West Field. Some reinstatement of tree guards was done although more needs doing here.
- More bramble was dug out of the Orchard especially around the soft fruit circle and in front of the bench toward the southern end.
- The wire fence between the Long Pads footpath and the Flora Field was reinstated up to the section where we are still hedge laying.
- Further winter pruning of the fruit trees.
- The gap in the Orchard / Pads footpath at the bottom of the Towneley path was repaired.
- The tree guards around the new fruit trees were cut to shape to fit the trees.
- Horse manure was made available to the public for gardens and allotments.

15th and 16th March 2016

Two volunteers attended Myerscough College for courses in:

- *The Principles of Safe Handling and Application of Pesticides (PA1)*
- *The Safe Application of Pesticides using Pedestrian Hand held Equipment (PA6)*

22nd March 2016

Two volunteers attached two strands of barbed wire to the reinstated fencing along the Lower Sowerholme / Long Pads hedge to make it secure for the cattle and against pedestrian and canine intrusion.

Meanwhile seven volunteers replaced broken fencing posts along the West Field west hedge boundary and refixed the wire fence.

23rd March 2016

Six volunteers agreed the SSRA and continued the laying of the Long Pads / Flora Field hedge.

24th March 2016

Two volunteers returned to Myerscough Collge for assessment for the two courses above. Both volunteers passed and are now qualified to apply pesticide after the ending of 'grandfathers' rights'.

25th March 2016

Two volunteers transported a gate, formerly lying unused and overgrown in the Paddock, to the West Field. The broken gate in the north west corner was removed and replaced by the 'new' gate.

30th March 2016

The last HWP of the winter started with a heavy rain shower but we soon got underway and continued with the Long Pads / Flora Field hedge. We didn't quite finish it but it will still be there next October! At break time we celebrated with very small measures of prosecco and chocolate gingers (thanks Oliver). So, many thanks to the regulars: Graham, Martin, Ann, Oliver, Mark, Julia and until latterly Ken and Chris.

We took the opportunity to sort out the fallen willow in the Orchard, ensuring that it does not lean against other trees whilst farming it for withers.

During March Associate Volunteers

- Continued pruning the hedge between the Pads footpath and Big Meadow.
- Continued planting hedge saplings in gasps along the Big Meadow / Pads Footpath and Flora Field / Long Pads hedges.
- Began mowing the grass in the Orchard

New Associate Volunteers

Name	Date began	Job(s)	Shed key	Tools	Fields access
Martin Clague	Mar 2016	Ragworting	No	Loan of ragfork	Yes
Julia Harrison	Mar 2016	Ragworting	No	Loan of ragfork	Yes

4th April 2016

Two volunteers chain sawed the felled sycamore in Pony Wood into lengths suitable for volunteers to build log and habitat piles this coming Saturday.

We felled and cleared the sycamore growing out of the north hedge of West Field.

6th April 2016

Five volunteers agreed the Site Specific Risk Assessment and built a bonfire (using corrugated iron sheets) to burn the hedging brash in Lower Sowerholme. A stiff breeze made lighting the fire a challenge but once away kept the fire burning and then the dust gently dispersing.

This leaves the brash at the south end of Flora Field. This will have to wait until next winter as the field has been ploughed and there is no suitable site for a bonfire. It will do no harm and indeed increase the security of the field at that point.

8th April 2016

Two extra rails were added to the fence at the Lucy Brook crossing to prevent small calves getting under the fence.

Remaining horse manure was bagged up for gardeners' use.

9th April 2016

Seventeen volunteers reported for the Saturday volunteering session on a lovely spring morning.

- The shed roof was weeded to remove debris and the hundreds of sycamore saplings which have recently germinated. SUGGESTION: Use fine mesh netting to catch the sycamore seeds. This should save us a really tedious job.
- The felled sycamore in Pony Wood was converted into log and brash piles further back in the wood so as not to be as tempting for firewood collectors and camp fires. This also increases the safety of the location for school groups.
- The remaining hedge saplings were planted in the gap just beyond the concrete wall on the Long Pads footpath.
- Surplus sapling protectors were collected from the west and south hedges of West Field.
- The west fence of West Field was checked for possible lamb escape routes and possibilities blocked with brash.
- Potential fencing posts from the felled sycamore (4/4/16 above) were moved to the storage pile near the south gate of West Field.
- The corrugated iron sheets used for the bonfire (6/4/16 above) were moved back to the shed storage area.
- The stakes used to mark out the beetle banks for the ploughman were removed so as not to act as perches for corvidae threatening ground nesting birds. (Advice from one of our birders).
- A further gap was filled with stakes and withers in the hedge at the bottom of the Towneley Close path.
- Apple tree brash was tidied in the Orchard.
- Bramble was dug and /or cut out from the Orchard (alongside the Orchard House garden), from the Fauna path near the stones and from in the Paddock.

12th April 2016

Despite our efforts (see above) sheep once again got into the West Field. It turns out their entry point was at the far south west corner where we had discovered a gap in the new fence two years ago and stuffed it with hedging brash. But that rots and the sheep has pushed through it! A piece of wire netting was fixed in place to permanently block the gap.

27th April 2016

The rails fitted on 8th April (above) proved not strong enough so two volunteers bolted them into place.

Later we held the first of our summer evening volunteer sessions. Eight volunteers attended on a chilly but dry evening.

- We planted out wildflower plugs in the wetter area of the Hay Meadow. These included 10 each of Water Avens, Common Fleabane, Gypsywort, Ragged Robin, Sneezewort, Common Valerian and Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil. All of these are native to acid soils of north west England and were approved by Ben Hibbins (NE).
- Algae was cleared from Alder Pond and further barley straw added.
- A start was made on cleaning and repairing the gates damaged by the ponies. Curtailed by the sander battery giving out, a problem we have had before.
- An area of the Orchard around apple trees but overgrown with ivy, nettles and brambles was cut back. This continues work started last year and we must keep on top of it through the summer.

Associate Volunteers

- Planted saplings filling gaps in the Long Pads / Flora Field hedge.
- Gave the two chain saws their annual service
- Oiled the field gate locks
- Continued mowing the Orchard grass

Appendix to Item 7.2: Summary of the Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products

<p>Emergency Procedures</p> <p>Part A of the Code gives guidance on dealing with emergency situations involving pesticides.</p>	<p>Emergency action plans must be kept up to date and cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Contamination • Dealing with Spillage • Suspected Animal Poisoning • Fire 	<p>Working with Pesticides</p> <p>Section 4 of the Code provides guidance on:</p>	<p>Have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had suitable training? • Read and understood the product label? • Put in place measures to control exposure? • Carried out an environmental risk assessment? • Taken account of avoiding contaminating feed stores and areas to which livestock have access? • Met the conditions on the label for keeping people and livestock out of the treated area? • Obtained advice and received permission from the appropriate agencies before using pesticides in areas of special environmental status, in or near water, from aircraft and, where necessary, on public rights of way? • Given notice to neighbours, the public and beekeepers, if necessary? • Checked equipment to ensure it is in good working order? • Put emergency procedures in place? • Ensured the pesticide can be transported safely and legally?
<p>Training and Certification</p> <p>Section 2 of the Code provides guidance on training and certification.</p> <p>By law, if you use pesticides as part of your job you must have received adequate training.</p>	<p>In general you will need a Certificate of Competence if you supply, store or use agricultural Plant Protection Products or be supervised by a person who has the Certificate.</p> <p>You can get a list of local training providers and details of other relevant qualifications from CAPRE, BASIS, NPTC and Lantra. Contact information is in Annex D of the Code.</p>	<p>Disposing of Pesticide Waste</p> <p>Section 5 of the Code gives guidance on:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to handle, transport and prepare pesticides for use; • how to use them safely; and • what action to take after using them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your supplier if they will take the pesticides back. If not you can use a waste management company to dispose of the pesticides or you can transfer your own waste to a licensed treatment or disposal site. • In both cases you must ensure the facility receiving the waste is authorised for that type of waste by NIEA. • If the waste is hazardous you or the waste management company must purchase a consignment note from NIEA to accompany the movement of hazardous waste. • For further information on completing the consignment note contact NIEA. If you use a waste management company they will do this for you. • For non hazardous waste you must complete a waste transfer note. • Rinsed pesticide containers are normally deemed as non-hazardous waste and can be disposed of by using a licensed waste-disposal contractor or by taking them to a licensed waste disposal site. <p>Options for Disposal of Dilute Pesticide Waste include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying the contaminated water to the treated or untreated crop area within the terms of the product approval. • Storing the contaminated water in a suitable container until it is collected by a licensed waste-disposal collector.
<p>Planning and Preparation</p> <p>Section 3 of the Code provides guidance on what you need to consider before using a pesticide, to ensure that you apply it in a way that is safe and effective and meets the requirements of the relevant laws.</p>	<p>Check whether the product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is currently approved for the intended use and situation; • can be safely prepared and applied using the intended equipment; • can be used in line with harvest interval, access or application restrictions shown on the product label; • presents the least risk to the health of people, livestock, the environment (including surface water and groundwater) and other creatures in comparison to other suitable pesticides. <p>The COSHH Assessment</p> <p>Under COSHH regulations before using a pesticide, an employer or self-employed person must carry out a COSHH assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For five or more employees you must record the significant findings. • For less than five employees you do not have to record the significant findings but are advised to do so as good practice. <p>Protecting the Public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the label to find out if there is anyone you need to contact before you can use the pesticide you have chosen. • Although there is no legal obligation to do so, you should consider if you need to inform people living in the vicinity to be sprayed, that you will be applying pesticides in that area. <p>Remember, giving notice to neighbours does not remove the need for you to take measures to control exposure.</p> <p>Protecting Wildlife and the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should carry out an environmental risk assessment. The information on the product label will provide the basis for this assessment. • You can download environmental information sheets at the Voluntary Initiative website www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk. • You should contact beekeepers identified in your assessment each year to agree a spray programme before using a pesticide in that immediate area. Details of the locations of beekeepers can be found at www.ubka.org. <p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a small number of pesticides are approved for use in or near water and only those products can be used. • For further advice contact your local NIEA office. 	<p>Keeping Records</p> <p>Section 6 of the Code covers record keeping requirements.</p>	<p>You will need to keep records on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage • Pesticide Treatments • COSHH (See above) • Environmental Risk Assessments • Exposure monitoring • Exposure control measures • Health surveillance (if necessary) • Disposal records • Local Environment Risk Assessments for Pesticides (LERAPs)