

FFOG report for AGM 2025

Management of the Reserve

Ash dieback

Last winter our tree surgeon felled three ash trees in Little Wood that were suffering from ash die-back and being close to the footpath deemed unsafe. Dead wood was left and brash piled along its length to provide a valuable habitat. We continue to monitor all the ash trees in the reserve, in particular the young ones that could be a safety hazard.

Hedges

An area in West Field along the eastern boundary by the Long Pads has been prepared for sapling planting this winter. The aim is to widen the hedge but keep it low. As the field is at a lower level than the path this should grow into a thick wide hedge which is good for wildlife whilst maintaining a view over the ponds.

The hedge going around Pony Wood is due for laying over the next two winters at which stage the bird cherry, which obstructs the view of the castle, will be laid into the hedge.

Various

- As always volunteers have worked hard to keep paths open and the reserve looking good. A special thanks go to Rebekah Keyes who organises the volunteers.
- We are still using pink paint (not harmful to the environment) to highlight dog poo. By far the majority of dog owners are very responsible – just a few spoil it for everyone.
- Cyclists also remain an issue. Thanks to Mark Tanner, Google has changed the designation of the FAUNA path to ‘walk with your bike’ – this is not what we asked for but is an improvement.
- The orchard has looked lovely this year, thanks to Anne Greenwood and her team, and features in Thrive magazine, which you can [access from the website](#).

Paths

A contractor has improved the access to Townley Close. More work is needed on the paths. For example, work on the ends of the board walk is planned and we will apply for external funding to repair the path surfaces.

Cattle

The White Park herd stands at 15 animals. The grazier hasn't introduced a bull this year so there will be no new calves next year.

Projects

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) mosquito project

For the second year we are taking part in a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) mosquito project. The project measures the incidence of mosquitoes across the country, the species present and whether they carry the Usutu virus which is harmful to blackbirds. The trap is located in a suitably damp, well concealed area.



Bird feeding station

The bird feeding station will be set up again soon, providing much needed food to help birds such as chaffinch and reed bunting through the winter. This supplements the bird food margins, which in recent years have been less productive.

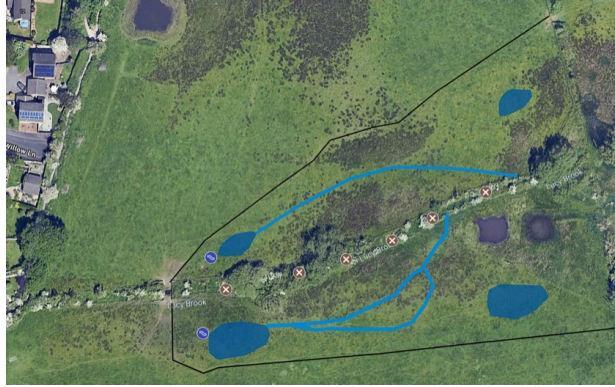
We hope that people will continue to record sightings on the white board by Little Wood, which many people look at.

iNaturalist project

We have set up a project using iNaturalist, the free app and [website](#), where people can record and share their different wildlife and plant observations. So far, we have 400 species recorded by 37 different observers.

Lucy Brook funding bid

Finally, the funding bid has gone in for developing the area around Lucy Brook to create ponds and channels to improve the area for wildlife. If successful, work with the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and Northern Merseyside will start next spring. We have had a tremendous response to our consultation, with more than 200 overwhelmingly positive comments. The plan shows the location, with the public footpath from the orchard to the brook crossing at the bottom, with Alder Pond on the top left.



More [details are on the website](#).

The photo below shows a nearby pond, patrolled by hawker dragonflies, created by LWT in 2021.

