

**Summer 2021**

# Friends of Cuerden Valley Park Newsletter

**Issue 7**



## Introduction from the editor

We flagged up our planned launch of a Wildflower Planting project in our last Newsletter. We started our fundraising campaign on 1 June and there are photos of volunteers breaking ground on page 2.

We also want to thank all those volunteers who put in so much time over the last few months to continue our annual efforts to reduce the areas where the Himalayan Balsam is adversely affecting native plants across the Park. We could see where progress is being made in the areas we revisited this year. It is an ongoing challenge and without our volunteers we would not be able to achieve the progress we are making. We had new and returning volunteers who came in all weathers and some of whom did some independent 'bashing' outside the organised sessions as well — we really appreciate everyone's hard work.

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## Thoughts from the Chair of the Friends: Jack Spickett

### Wildflower Planting Project

We've started! Back at the end of March Sarah, one of our hardworking Rangers, approached the Friends of Cuerden Valley Park and suggested the idea of expanding the areas of wildflowers throughout the Park and could we help with funding. This would not only give our pollinating insects a boost within the Park but would effectively provide a corridor of flowers joining up with the efforts being provided by our local councils. Thanks to your generous contributions we have already secured over 50% of our target, so rather than wait we thought it was safe to progress the project to its first stage. With the help of a local company (Zebra) offering volunteers alongside our own regular volunteers and Rangers we started preparing areas for seeding around the Wigan Road car park and subsequently further into the Park.

Prior to this we had formed a sub-committee that would liaise with the Rangers to identify suitable areas throughout Park and the types of wildflower we could safely introduce. Unlike some of the flowers used by our local councils we felt that it was important to preserve the integrity of the Park's flora by using only indigenous species, albeit perhaps brighter and more colourful.

Our intention is to start seeding this autumn with the hope of seeing the first flowers of our labours appearing next spring/early summer. We realise that this is going to be a long term project and that there may be some failures along the way, but we will learn and adapt and persevere until in the future our wonderful Cuerden Valley Park is even more beautiful and supporting a buzzing, fluttering, breath taking array of flowers and insects.



## Wildflower Planting Project Update



Keep an eye on our fundraising boards — one in the office window and one on the boarding under the café balcony — to see how far we have got towards our target. You can help by buying a virtual bag of seed for £3. You can [Buy virtual seed using this link](#), via the Support Us menu on the Park website or in the café at the till. The photos here were taken by Friends to provide a snapshot of the various activities and numerous volunteers involved in making a start on breaking the ground.



The five Zebra Volunteers catching up with each other on a break



They also show a few of the areas where we are planning to start our wildflower planting starting at Wigan Road and ending at the bottom of Snake Hill.

Ranger Phil and Iollan the new Parkland Manager worked with our park volunteers and five keen helpers from Zebra to start the necessary work to prepare the ground for seeding. We used the rotavator to make a start but there is more work to do before we can sow the seed.



A big thank you to all our volunteers





## Update from our Wildlife Officer, David Beattie

It has been an interesting summer with some notable wildlife sightings. Those of us who have been using the new footpath through the meadow in front of the café have seen scores of house martins and swallows feeding over our heads. One day I saw two Emperor dragonflies hunting there as well. The flowers have also continued the wonderful display that the snowdrops pioneered earlier. There was an abundance of bluebells in the woodland and a plethora of buttercups near Wigan Rd car park. The only disappointment was no showing of bee orchid in its usual spot, but we did have one at the entrance of the car park there.

Butterflies were low in numbers until August, however the moths I have been catching in my light trap have been great with over 120 different ones recorded. The best morning was 50 species from a total of 185 caught. After photographing them, we let them go. There were a few new to me, with the one pictured below my favourite. Pale Prominent.



I had two excellent bat walks in the middle of August and we were able to see Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule plus Daubenton's.

Horse chestnuts, Rowan berries, Sloes and Rose hips are announcing autumn is here so keep your eyes out for some of our winter bird visitors arriving.

### Update from Education Officer, Clare Thompson

Schools return to the park

*"It is so nice to have school children back in the park, it makes the building seem alive"*



To me this quote sums up how it feels to have schools return to the park, one of our charitable objectives is to provide education and it has certainly been a delight to see them return following this very challenging time. On our outdoor education days the children spend the majority of their day in the great outdoors where there is significantly less risk of catching Covid, as a result of this demand has been very high throughout the summer which has been fantastic.

Children have missed out on so much and myself and the education team understand just how crucial these education days are to their learning and overall wellbeing.

What an absolute joy it has been to have wet socks and wellies and the laughter of children back at the park. Here's to more of the same this year.

### Respect – Protect – Enjoy

We will shortly be announcing a competition to design a poster for our anti-litter campaign. This competition will be open to primary schools and the winner will see their poster on display in and around the park. During the Covid lockdowns we saw a huge increase in our visitor numbers, which of course is fantastic, sadly one of the down sides has been the increase in the amount of litter. This has been a national issue which you may have seen on the news. We hope this competition with school children will increase awareness to the problem and make people think about their actions.

The education department has also applied to Chorley Council for one of their small environmental grants which if we are successful hope to use on litter picking equipment to further enhance our campaign.

I wanted to say a huge thank you to the wonderful people who make the education programme possible, our fantastic volunteers. Thank you so much

## Update from Simon Thorpe, General Manager of the Park

It has been noticeably quieter in the Park this summer compared to last year, as the relaxation of Covid restrictions has meant people were able to visit and travel elsewhere. None the less the car parks and Café have been very busy and we're grateful to visitors for continuing to respect Covid precautions.

We were delighted to see primary schools return towards the end of the summer for river studies activities and our staff and volunteers realised just how much they missed engaging with some of our youngest visitors. Our Orienteering trail went live with a limited run of printed trail leaflets courtesy of the Asda Green Tokens funding and online maps available to print at home. We held two Forest Camps, the first in over a year due to Covid 19, and a pond dipping event in partnership with Love My River Chorley.

We've appointed 'New Ground' as landscape architects for our new wildflower meadow and footpath project in front of the Visitor Centre which we hope means we're getting closer to starting construction work. However, we've been hit with delays to reopening Stag Lodge car park due to electrical connection issues with September now a more realistic date.

### Staff changes

In August we welcomed two new members of staff to the Trust. The first is Iollan Banks, Parkland Manager, who

replaces the retiring Senior Ranger. Iollan's job is to lead on maintenance and conservation of the parkland and to make sure the Ranger team are well equipped to do the huge variety of work ahead.

In the Office we welcome Carol Chidley who has joined in a job share role as Officer Manager. We're currently recruiting for a co-worker to fill this job share post.

We are bidding a fond farewell to our retiring Officer Manager John Phillips, who has been a stalwart employee of the Trust for many years, and lynchpin on which staff, Trustees and volunteers have relied upon to keep the wheels turning. On behalf of the staff and Trustees I would like to wish him a well-earned, healthy and active retirement. John has assured us he will return as a volunteer, as he has made tackling Himalayan Balsam on the Park his mission in life!

### Tell us what you think?

If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions about the newsletter, fundraising events or volunteering please email [newsletter@cuerdenvalleypark.org](mailto:newsletter@cuerdenvalleypark.org)

We also said goodbye to Estate Worker Will Lewis who started with the Trust as a Myerscough College student placement before being joining us on a short term contract.

A big thank you to the Friends for all your support especially the Committee members whose hard work fundraising for the Park is much appreciated by the staff and Trustees.

## Next Food and Craft Market

26 September

10am to 2pm

Look out for our stall!

Macmillan  
Support  
Coffee  
morning  
Friday

24th September at 10am

We are pleased to be able to hold a coffee morning again this year to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support. We will be holding this outside on the grass area opposite the Visitor Centre. We will be selling home made cakes and any donations or helpers are welcome. Please contact the Clare in the café

