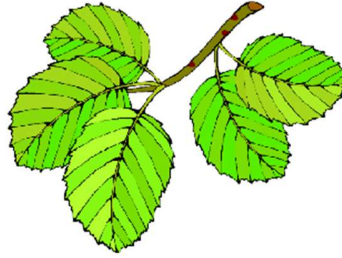


MANOR
WOODS
VALLEY
GROUP



Annual Review June '23- June '24

Introduction:

This was another busy year, with lots of volunteering activities organised. This review gives only a flavour of our work over the past 12 months; for a more complete record see our Facebook page.

Thanks for the support:

We are enormously grateful to the many organisations that have supported us throughout the year with the activities and events summarised below: Bristol City Council Parks Services, ParkWork, Zion Community Space, Forest of Avon Trust, West of England Combined Authority, Bristol GoodGym, University of the West of England students, University of Bristol students and staff, Quartet Community Foundation, Your Park - Bristol and Bath and Bristol Parks Forum. We are especially grateful for the volunteering support of local residents, especially during our bulb planting project in the winter. They have contributed a lot of time and effort in helping to maintain Manor Woods Valley for the benefit of wildlife and people, and are good company and fun to be with.

Habitat Management:

Manor Woods Valley is probably one of the most biodiverse areas in Bristol (various woodland types, Manor Woods Orchard and other small areas of fruit trees, several different wildflower meadows and the Malago). Managing and improving these habitats remains a priority, particularly in response to the ecological emergency. This year we again focussed on cutting back Brambles, planting native spring bulbs and raking arisings from wildflower meadows.

Flowers and Animals:

The Orchard and nearby areas continue to support large numbers of Slow-worms, although they are present in all other parts of the reserve. These areas are also home to a wide variety of wildflowers, orchids and grasses, and butterflies, moths and other insects.

Survey work carried out during the year showed that a wide range of birds use Manor Woods Valley. We also updated our annual butterfly report, and updated our mammals of Manor Woods Valley report to include the confirmed presence of Harvest Mice (based on the finding of disused nests during the winter).

We received reports from University of Bristol school of geography students on the soils of the woodlands and the presence of lichens on the site.

Orchard Activities:

In October more than 40 volunteers harvested over 700kgs of apples. The apples were juiced by a cider maker in Gloucestershire in return for 96 bottles of Manor Woods Orchard apple juice. Half of these were donated to Carpenter's Food Bank in Withywood and the rest were used as refreshments for volunteers.

Our January Wassail is becoming an increasingly popular feature. This year over 150 people attended. We were entertained by the Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Choir, and partook of apple juice and apple cake whilst thanking the trees for the bounty and scaring away evil spirits to ensure a good crop this year.

We held our second 'Blossom Day' in April, when we showed people around the orchard and Marian Green told them about the range of plants of present and how they were used as foods and in traditional medicines.

Despite the lateness of planting, the majority of fruit trees, donated from the One Tree per Child campaign, that we planted around the site in the late spring of 2023 have survived and are growing away.

Non-native Invasive Weeds:

Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam is present in Manor Woods Valley. We passed the results of our annual survey of the former to the Parks Services, who are treating it, very effectively, with herbicide. Each year we also remove any Himalayan Balsam that we find along the Malago. This invasive plant is now hard to find and will likely be eradicated in the very near future.

Litter Picking:

Manor Woods Valley is a relatively clean place to walk and play in and is a safer place for wildlife, thanks to the care taken by the vast majority of users of the nature reserve and a dedicated band of regular litter-pickers. We continue to supply free litter pickers to those who ask for them. This has proved a great success. We have a new committee member, Tom Pearce, who is dedicated to running regular litter pick events. Dog fouling and fly tipping continue to present health hazards to people and wildlife. The fly tipping of large quantities of car tyres into the Malago near to the Vale Lane entrance appears to be happening more frequently.

Wellbeing:

Our wellbeing co-ordinator, Clive Weston, has run a monthly series of his well-received 'quiet and thoughtful' walks every month throughout the year.

Thanks to funding received from Quartet's BYCA grant, three Forest School sessions, led by Jay Croney and Eddie Nuttal, were run in Manor Woods Valley at the end of May. Children were actively engaged in a variety of outdoor play and forest school activities, including, shelter building, adventure play, whittling, fire building and outdoor cooking and much more. These activities not only provided endless fun but also helped the children develop essential skills and a deeper connection with nature. We are looking forward to hosting more children in the near future and continuing our journey of outdoor exploration and learning.

The new accessibility friendly barrier, funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) have been promised by BCC, but have still not been installed.

Other Activities:

In March we hosted a quarterly Bristol Parks Forum meeting in Headley Park Church hall.

2023-24 The Year in Numbers

964+ (515 regular sessions, 215 bulb planting + 216 students) - total hours of volunteering on site (equivalent to 141 person days) excluding surveys - down from 1047+

98 - volunteers (incl. 17 students) - up from 69+ total volunteers

216 - hours of student volunteering - down from 297+

13 - active student volunteers - down from 17

52 - total volunteering work parties (incl. students) - up from 50+

11 - (Wed p.m.) student volunteering work parties - down from 17

23 - wildflower bulb planting occasions

144 - wildflower bulb planting 'person sessions'

3000 - wildflower bulbs planted

13 - guided walks – unchanged

1645 - Facebook followers - up from 1450+

22.6K - people reached on Facebook – up 6.1%

338 - members (supporters on mailing list) - up from 297

3629.52 - income £ - up from down from £348.03

1753.68 - expenditure £ - up from £1560.08

70 - trees planted in Manor Woods Orchard since 2018

96 - bottles of apple juice made – no change from 2022

48 - bottles of apple juice delivered to Withywood Food Bank – down from 60

150+ - people attending wassail – up from c100

June 2023/May 2024 incl. Money

June 2023 Start Balance: £4640.07

Income June 2023 to May 2024 incl.: £3629.52

(Donations £309.02 incl. £120 from private supporter, WECA grant for bulb planting £1120.50, Quartet Community Fund for forest school £2200)

Expenditure June 2023 to May 2024 incl.: £1753.68

(Bulb planting £1510.80, venue hire £130.00, bank charges £3.80, stationery £65.44, apple harvest £43.64)

May 2024 End Balance: £4640.07



Manor Woods Valley Group Priority Activities Plan 2024/5

Activity	What	When	Lead
Nature conservation and recovery			
Respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies	Support and promote Bristol's Ecological Strategy and Action Plan at every opportunity. Liaise with local wildlife and 'friends of' groups to contribute to local habitat connectivity	Ongoing Ongoing	
Maintain and improve wildlife habitats in MWV	Cut back new bramble growth in the orchard, orchard triangle and rabbit field. Carry out annual ruderal growth cut in above areas. Continue to develop the new small wildflower meadow near Valley Heights by raking, scarifying and seeding.	Throughout spring and summer September/October August/September	
Improve aquatic life of Malago	Carry out litter and fly tipping clearances Review and undertake where reasonably possible actions recommended in BART report	Occasional Winter 2023-4	
Continue eradication of non-native invasive weeds	Conduct annual survey of Japanese Knotweed and report findings to BCC Carry out annual removal of Himalayan Balsam plants from river banks	May July/August	
Maintain new tree plantations (Hope Wood, Orchard, Butcher's Broom Spinney, '23 fruit trees)	Carry out regular inspections of trees and repairs and replacements where necessary. Remove overshadowing vegetation	Ongoing	
Keep MWV clear of litter and fly-tipping	Carry out regular ad-hoc litter picking and organised litter-pick events Report fly-tipping to BCC	Ongoing	
Respond to local development plans	Assess impact of planning proposals on MWV and respond accordingly	Ongoing	
Wellbeing			
Support health and wellbeing and social prescribing in MWV	Maintain 'classroom' base Liaise with and advise provider groups	Ongoing	Clive
Maintain and promote the exercise trail in MWV	Cut back new growth brambles and overhanging vegetation on trail	Spring and summer	Peter
Support student research studies and volunteering programmes	Commission and support research and wildlife surveys Support UWE volunteering programme	Ongoing October to April	Peter
Learning and fun			
Harvest and juice fruit	Harvest apples and arrange juicing Organise annual wassail Organise annual Blossom Day	October/November January April	Peter
Organise guided walks	Organise themed walks on history, ecology, wellbeing, etc Promote the self-guided walk leaflets	Ongoing Ongoing	
Organise Forest School courses	Subject to funding	Ongoing	Jay
Infrastructure			
Continue with repairs to the Woodland Path	Commission ParkWork to carry out emergency repairs, subject to funding	Ongoing	Martin
Keep paths accessible	Cut back encroaching vegetation along all paths Campaign for more accessible entrances	Spring/summer	
Communications			
Promote information about MWV and related events	Publish monthly newsletter, use social media (FB), website and posters	Ongoing	
Interpretation Boards	Update and install new interpretation boards	Ongoing	Peter