

. BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 84 – August 2022

Training in Conservation

With support of the Edward Harvist Fund we are embarking on a training programme in conservation for all residents who would like to register. The training will take place once per month at Fryent Country Park on selected Sundays up until the summer 2023. Details of dates, and how to enlist can be found on the web sites www.brent.gov.uk/events or www.barnhillconservationgroup.org (on this site you need to hover over Fryent Country Park) Anyone can enlist for free.

The objective is to encourage everyone to appreciate what biodiversity is all about, to become familiar with the diverse variety of plants, birds, butterflies, insects and invertebrates, amphibians and mammals which all have to co-exist in the Park within their own individual habitats. Also how ponds streams and ditches are integrated with each other.

As well as a tour of the Park and an explanation about what we do to promote biodiversity, there will practical work with instructions on use of tools safely. These include slashers, shears, pole saws, and small saws which will also give members the opportunity to manage the growth of the vegetation by scalloping, pruning, cutting back bramble and overhangs, to increase the light coming through.

Bernard

Maintenance of Roe Green Walled Garden

As has been mentioned in previous newsletters, this Garden needs a lot of maintenance, requiring a great deal of practical know how.

In the last few months we have had four problems to deal with. Firstly water heater broke down and had to be replaced. Then we found that a branch of a tree was growing inside the gap between the layers of bricks in the Garden Wall. Thirdly an underground water leak in the lawn. Then we found that the door of the workshop would not close properly due to expansion in the hot weather.

Thankfully we have as one of our volunteers John East who is a jack of all trades. He installed a new water heater, and, forming a team with Colin, succeeded in extracting the branch from the wall, and making good the brickwork with lime mortar cement. John has located where the burst water pipe is two feet underground, and we will bring in specialist teams to fix it. Finally he made the necessary adjustment to the door clearance to enable the door to fit. In between times John and Colin find time to repair the mower and also sharpen the tools.

John is one of the earliest of our volunteers to arrive at the garden, when one of his jobs is to collect the rainfall statistics for submission to the Environment Agency.

While on the subject of maintenance we have had repeated problems with sections of the roof falling off the barn in the heavy winds. In view of the necessity of the barn for us, Vrinda decided that we should apply for a grant through NCIL to repair the roof and carry out other structural improvements. Vrinda took the application for the grant in hand and did an excellent

presentation which impressed the audience. The result was that we have been awarded the grant for the work. Bernard

How to make comfrey fertiliser

Inspired by Gardeners World I decided to pursue the idea of making a comfrey tea fertiliser to use around the Walled Garden. With copious amounts of this beautiful wild flower I set about the task, under the beady eyes of Kim I first had to wait for the long flowering period loved by the bees to be over. This achieved, the leaves were removed, placed in a large container submerged in water and left to ferment. Two weeks later woahhhhh! I wasn't prepared for the awful stench that greeted me on lifting the lid; not for the faint hearted. The tea was duly diluted and fed to a group of plants, which I am sure was appreciated. This is work in progress and the results will need to be monitored. Anne

Bumblebee - friendly Brent

As well as honey bees there are over 260 species of bumble bees and solitary bees in UK. Unlike honey bees which live in hives, bumble bees nest in the wild. But bumble bees are in trouble as since the 1930s we have lost 97% of our species rich meadows, which one of the main habitats for bumble bees. Two species have become extinct and many more are in decline. Bumble bees are the main pollinators for flowers, fruit trees and vegetables so we need to encourage our bees as much as possible.

At Fryent Country Park we have our flower rich meadows and at Roe Green Walled Garden we have 36 of the most important flowers to help and encourage bumble bees to nest and live in our gardens. Our flowers are rich in pollen and nectar.

A bumble bee nest is ruled by a queen who is helped by smaller worker bees. Bumble bees patiently work on a particular area till it is fully pollinated. This has been particularly visible at our Garden recently with a host of bumble bees buzzing around the lavender for long periods. Bumble bees do not swarm, are not aggressive and seldom sting.

Do visit Roe Green Walled Garden to see the flowers that would help our bumble bees, such as comfrey, mint, lavender, ceonothus, foxglove, chives and scabions. Can you help in garden by growing these flowers? Kim

We are open at Roe Green Walled Garden Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 2pm. Sundays we are out in Fryent Country Park from 10 am to 12.30 pm carrying out conservation project work, subject to social distancing. Our new programme of projects will start again in September. Please see the web site below for details, or telephone the Garden. Feel free to join us in our conservation projects at Fryent Country Park or Roe Green Walled Garden. We are still collecting old pottery garden pots. We also collect scrap metal such as copper, brass, aluminium, which help in fund raising.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Open day on topic of bumble bees
General Meeting

Saturday 24 September (11am to 4pm)
Saturday 1 October 10.30am

Note: these dates were previously 17 and 24 September respectively

Contact number: Garden 0208 206 0492 (answerphone if we are unable to answer)
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