

# . BARN HILL CONSERVATION GROUP

Registered Charity No. 1085476

## 'Keeping in Touch'

Issue 82 – December 2021

### **Accolades received for our work**

Fryent Country Park and Roe Green Walled Garden have been awarded the Green Flag by Keep Britain Tidy. In addition Fryent Country Park was rated the Country Park of the year by London in Bloom and Roe Green Walled Garden has been awarded the Gold Standard and best in the Small Conservation Area category.

### **Walled Garden**

We have been carrying out the usual autumnal maintenance activities in the Garden and buildings.

We were delighted to host seven Explorer Scouts in the garden to do voluntary work for part of their award scheme. They all worked really hard in bad weather to re-do our hedgehog street and stone village. They also expertly renewed all our plant labels and mug bird feeders. Well done to everyone and our thanks. You really deserve your award. Bernard

### **Fryent Country Park meadows**

In the UK we have lost 97% of our traditional grasslands since the 1950s. These important habitats now cover less than 1% of UK land and at Fryent Country Park we are part of the 1%. We have even increased these grasslands through the work we have done in Masons field, recently incorporated into the Park.

We have these flower rich grasslands and meadows that provide many benefits including locking carbon in the soil, and are also critical for our pollinators. These grasslands / meadows are important eco systems in the fight to reduce atmospheric carbon. Enjoy our meadows. Kim

### **Number crunching at the Park**

Litter collected by Barn Hill Conservation Group during 2021 - 336 bags and many large items ie tyres, mattresses, chairs, motor bikes, gas meter. Thank you to all who help by collecting litter.

### **The fish pond on barn hill**

The fish pond lies on top of Barn Hill north of the ordnance survey pillar. It is on the site of an old quarry used to win materials for road building. Years later the pond was dredged and the arisings form the mound on the east side, exposed as one of our Group project activities a short while ago. Rain is its only water source, thanks to the underlying layers of first gravel and then clay. The water level varies through the seasons, and overflows feed the seasonal pond down the slope.

When I have a spare moment, I enjoy gazing at the pond. It looks different every time, depending on the light, the breeze which stirs the water, the level of the water and the wild life. Most of the birds are ducks, water hens and the occasional heron. Egyptian geese have been spotted, probably visitors from the Welsh Harp reservoir. There used to be a lot of fish, including a 12 inch long coi which used to swim lazily around the edge but I have not seen it for months. The fish numbers have reduced, probably due to illegal fishing. During spring time children love to spot frogspawn, tadpoles and then frogs. There are all sorts of rushes within and around the pond. Barn Hill Conservation Group have tidied the pond and its surrounds many times, removing invasive plants. Ella and Godwin

## **The Gaderbrook Project**

Earlier this year we applied for and were awarded a grant for a special project by Brent's Heritage for Wellbeing Fund. It was decided to call this the Gaderbrook project.

The Gaderbrook is the open stream which runs at the lower (North) end of Lower Hydes East on the Barn Hill side of Fryent Way. Some of the water that feeds the stream comes from the surface-water drains on the roads. But much of it comes from the surrounding meadows of the Park, especially from the Kingsbury side starting up at the top of Salmon Street. The rainwater flows down the old ditches along the field boundaries and hedges from the higher fields such as Great Hillcroach and Gotsford Hill.

There is a lot of science now about the benefits of retaining rainwater where it falls rather than it just draining away rapidly. This helps prevent flooding lower down and has environmental benefits including for water quality, climate resilience and habitat improvement. So, a key aspect of the Gaderbrook project has been the constructing "leaky weirs" on some of the ditches to hold back the flow after a downpour.

So far we've had four Sunday projects dedicated to this work plus several smaller activities. A contractor has also done some work around Richards pond. We'll be back working along the Gaderbrook stream on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January. The team from Brent's Heritage for Wellbeing Fund are monitoring the project carefully so the more of us who can come along and join in the better.

Maurice

## **2021 Butterfly Transects at Fryent Country Park**

The Butterfly Transects are walked every week from April to September, and have been carried out every year since 1985

The butterfly species recorded this year were – meadow brown, speckled wood, brimstone, large white, small white, green veined white, orange tip, small copper, holly blue, red admiral, small tortoise shell peacock, comma, brown hairstreak, marbled white and ringlet, the most common being meadow brown and speckled wood

The number of butterflies in the Park are generally increasing, especially brimstone, ringlet, marbled white and brown hairstreak, speckled wood, and gatekeeper. Species that are declining are Essex skipper, small skipper, large skipper, small heath and small tortoise shell.

Results are shared with the UK Butterfly monitoring scheme, London Natural History Society, Greenspace, and Herts and Middlesex conservation

New butterfly walkers would be very welcome.

The butterfly team

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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 January. 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**

Next General Meeting      15 January 10.30 am

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

Email: barnhillconservationgroup@gmail.com

Our new Website: [www.bhcg.chessck.co.uk](http://www.bhcg.chessck.co.uk)