



Llandough Allotments (Corbett Road)

Biodiversity Report (2020)

1. Introduction

The Biodiversity Group exists to promote and monitor biodiversity within the Corbett Road Allotments. With the support of Llandough Community Council and other groups it supplies and installs bird boxes, wildflower seeds and flowering bulbs as well as engaging in other strategies to ensure the allotment site remains a rich and diverse environment.

The five tenants who currently constitute the Biodiversity Group are; Roger Chandler (plot 5), Katherine King (plot 41), Howard Kirk (plots 30,32 and 33), Andrea Jones (plot 59) and Alun Hutchings (plot 61). New members are always welcome and anyone wishing to join the group should contact alun.hutchings@gmail.com.

The group publishes a biodiversity report each year that details its activities for the reported year along with any planned actions for the next. The following report relates to the year ending December 2020.

2. Habitats



The group monitors all habitats on the site and maintains all its bird boxes, undertaking repairs and replacements as necessary. New boxes are funded by the Llandough Community Council and anyone wishing to apply for a small bird box should contact a member of the Biodiversity Group who will include the requirement in the next funding round. An audit of the boxes is undertaken each year in the month of September to establish occupancy and review positioning as required.

2.1 Audit

The 2020 audit took place in October and the inspection team consisted of Roger Chandler, Katherine King and Alun Hutchings. A total of 31 bird boxes were in existence and the findings of the audit are summarised below. Precise details of the audit appear in Appendix 1 of this report.

2.1.1 Audit Findings:

- Of the 31 bird boxes assigned, 4 were missing (plots 4, 6, 32 and 50) and 1 (plot 32) was damaged beyond repair. The damage appeared to be the result of woodpecker activity and wet rot.
- Of the 28 extant bird boxes, 14 contained nesting material. The precise year of nesting could not be determined.
- 1 bird box (plot 12) although showing evidence of having been nested could not be disassembled for cleaning.
- Evidence of a wasps nest was found in one bird box (plot 67)
- Dead chicks were discovered in bird boxes on plots 20A, 43 and 62B. Reasons for this could not be established although heat stress due to incorrect positioning as well as disturbance are considered likely reasons.
- Bird boxes were generally in a poor state of repair.
- All identified bee boxes remained in place.
- All identified ponds remained in place.

2.1.2 Outcomes:

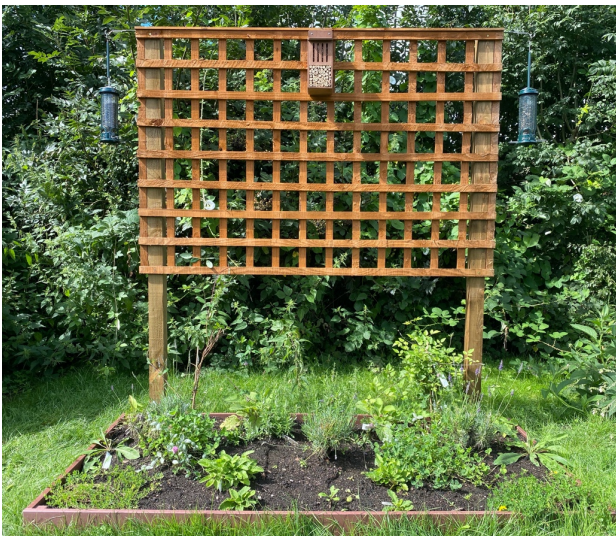
- 1 damaged bird box (Plot 32) was removed for disposal. The plot holder, who was informed, requested a new box to be re-sited on the pollarded tree to the right of his shed.
- Of the 14 nested boxes, 13 were cleared of all nesting and other material, and 12 were re-positioned.

2.1.3 Recommendations:

- To approach the council and request a funded replacement scheme for bird boxes.
- Immediately attend to those boxes in need of urgent repair.
- Offer advice to tenants on the most appropriate sites for bird boxes.

Following the audit, an approach was made to the Community Council to fund additional bird boxes with a view to replace the one found damaged during the audit and to further enhance the nesting capacity within the site. Another four Small Bird Boxes were purchased along with three Starling Boxes and a Tawny Owl Box. Please see Appendix 2 of this report for the Biodiversity Map and details of all habitat locations.

3. Community Wildlife Garden



In 2020 the Biodiversity Group was successful in obtaining funding under a “*Local Places for Nature*” initiative for the creation of a wildlife garden. Delivered by the organisation “*Keep Wales Tidy*”, this initiative included a trellised installation for the cultivation of a number of plants to encourage biodiversity, bird feeders, habitat boxes and bulbs for autumn planting. The flowering plants which are positioned at various sites include Snowdrop, English Bluebell, Wood Anemone and Fritillary. In addition to those bulbs provided by “*Keep Wales Tidy*” an additional 90 Daffodil bulbs were purchased from allotment funds and these were also planted in during the autumn of 2020. The Biodiversity Map in Appendix 2 illustrates all planting locations.

4. Wildlife

The Corbett Road Allotment site is a haven for a rich variety of wildlife, and in 2020 the Biodiversity Group received many reports of sightings and photographs. Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 documents many of these species.

5. Social Media



Tenants are familiar with the Llandough Diggers Allotment Facebook Group and communications relating to biodiversity matters can be posted to this group. A Llandough Allotments Instagram discussion page was made available in 2020 for anyone who is interested to post their wildlife photography for others to enjoy.

5. Objectives for 2021

5.1 Green Flag Award

The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Purpose & aims

- *To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.*
- *To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.*
- *To establish standards of good management.*
- *To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.*
- *To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.*

In the autumn of 2020 an application was submitted to “*Keep Wales Tidy*” for the Corbett Road Allotments to be considered for a Green Flag award. An inspection of the site along with its management practices will take place in the spring of 2021 and if successful an award may follow in late summer.

5.2 Wildlife Audit

The bird boxes and other habitats will be audited during September of 2021 with any necessary maintenance undertaken as appropriate.

5.3 Wildlife Surveys

A variety of factors including habitat loss and over-use of pesticides has had a devastating effect on wildlife in the UK and elsewhere, and developing a clear understanding of what is happening to local species populations will be a vital part of stemming these losses. Allotment tenants can help with this by getting involved in some of the many wildlife projects and the following are examples of just some of the surveys that tenants can engage with.

Big Garden Birdwatch - January, (RSPB)

Operated by the RSPB, this is the Nations biggest citizens science project.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch>

Big Butterfly Count. - July/August (Butterfly Conservation Trust)

Aiming to assess the health of the environment, this project has become the world’s biggest survey of butterflies.

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/about>

Bee Walk

Bumblebees are in decline and two species have already been lost. Aiming to measure the abundance of bumblebees this project involves walking a set route monthly from March to October

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/surveys/>

UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (POMS)

POMS involve a variety of surveys of pollinators. For example the FIT Counts survey is a simple 10 minute survey from April to September that you can do as often as you like.

<https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/pollinator-monitoring>

Grass Snakes

The grass snake is the UK's only egg-laying snake and is found throughout England and Wales. Females lay their eggs in June and July and prefer rotting vegetation in which to lay them, and since compost bins provide the perfect incubator it is not surprising that they are frequent visitors to allotment sites. Grey-green in colour, grass snakes often reach over one meter in length. They are protected by law and it is illegal to deliberately kill, injure or sell grass snakes. The Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust is interested in mapping egg sites throughout the year and anyone interested in getting involved can find further details via the following web link:

<https://www.arc-trust.org/news/compost-for-victory-grass-snakes-need-your-help>

5.4 Birdlife

It is hoped that additional bird boxes (robin/wren/starling) will be purchased and installed in 2021 along with a peanut feeder that would be suitable for larger bird species whilst deterring squirrels.

6. Conclusion

The Biodiversity Group keeps detailed information of the range of wildlife and habitats indigenous to the area and this documentation is updated regularly to ensure it remains current. To assist with this endeavour it would be appreciated that sightings of birds, animals, reptiles, insects or unusual plants be reported to a member of the Biodiversity Group or to any member of the Allotment Committee.

Several wildlife identification guides are available for tenants to use, and these guides are to be found in the silver chest near the Lower Car Park. Please be aware that any guide must be returned to the chest following its use and not removed from the site.

For details of the Allotment Committee and the Biodiversity Group, please refer to the notice boards.