

Woolsington Parish Council: Biodiversity Project 2020

A journey around Newbiggin Hall, Bedeburn and Lowbiggin

Woolsington Parish Council has just completed the first year of an ambitious Biodiversity Project.

Each year, plans will be drawn up for wildlife benefits; the aim is to improve habitats for insects, bees and butterflies and in doing so enhance important green spaces for residents and visitors alike.

The Newbiggin Hall, Bedeburn and Lowbiggin areas already contain wonderful landscapes, veteran trees and areas of lovely scenery. The Biodiversity Project is specifically designed to build on and enhance these natural assets.

Here are just a few examples of the Parish's natural beauty and what has been achieved this year.



Chionodoxa and snowdrops populate the banks at the entrance to Gala Field eve every spring.





Newbiggin Lane: Cherry blossom time



A line of beautiful white cherry blossom trees form a commanding scene through the heart of the Parish

Not only are they attractive themselves and uplifting for all those who see them, wildflowers are an essential supply of nectar and pollen for insects.



The Sovereign Lodge site and surrounding area





Gala Field: summer meadow



Natural wild flowers, together with spring and summer bulbs, and herbaceous perennials, are vital for bees, butterflies and insects. Their berries and seeds also provide food for birds and mammals.





Bees enjoying the sedum spectabile and allium





Swallows and Swifts are on the decline nationally.

The Biodiversity Project aims to increase the insect population which itself will help encourage more of these birds to return.

The beautiful Swallow (right) and Swift (above) were photographed flying in the Parish in July 2020.

Tit boxes are also being installed in woodland areas and in school grounds throughout the Parish.



Bird boxes located at Simonside Primary School.

The main focus of the Biodiversity Project in its first year was the planting of spring bulbs, namely daffodils and crocus, with help from pupils from a local primary school and members of the community.



Corner of Newbiggin Lane & Trevelyn Drive



Gala Field (East entrance)

Crocus are vital to the survival of bees since they flower in early spring when nectar and pollen are scarce. (see Newcastle City Council Bee Strategy, part of its Biodiversity Action Plan)

Gala Field (West entrance)





Daffodil displays outside Sovereign Lodge Care Home



The Newbiggin Hall area is also the site of many veteran trees, dating back to the days of the old Hall itself. Here are three examples:



Ash: Newbiggin Lane



Willow: Briardene



Willow: Lowbiggin

This magnificent Ash on Newbiggin Lane (see above left & below) is thought to be over 200 years old. At one time it would have been a tree in a hedgerow. It has been measured and photographed as part of the Northumbria Veteran Tree Project. It is also recorded on The Woodland Trust's Register of Important, Veteran + Notable Trees, as are the 2 Willows above.



Our natural landscapes.

The Parish is fortunate to have these views of open, arable fields. However, they are earmarked for housing and in a few years this scene will look very different. The Biodiversity Project is especially important at this time of development and it seeks to mitigate the losses to wildlife.



Looking north from Lowbiggin. On the right you can see the old track from Lowbiggin to Woolsington. This spot is known to be a favourite of butterflies.



Public footpath onto the golf course



Cheviot Hills from Lowbiggin



Crop fields north of Lowbiggin

In the future Woolsington Parish Council Biodiversity Project plans to further enhance the existing landscaped green spaces of the area,



In Lowbiggin



In Bedeburn



In Newbiggin Hall

For any further information about the Woolsington Parish Council Biodiversity Project please contact the Chair, Councillor George Pattison, at woolsingtonpc@gmail.com