

OPEN GREEN SPACES

AN INTRODUCTION TO MANAGING FOR WILDLIFE

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Flower child



Moss

Mushrooms



Foxgloves



Introduction

Meadows of swaying yellow, pink and white flowers, bees and butterflies; damsel flies dancing over squelching wetlands of bog plants, frogs and newts; waterboatmen skating the pond under dripping alder; voles tearing through grassy tufts as a barn owl watches from an oak branch... this is just some of the wildlife to be found on our doorsteps. Or it could be, given a few simple changes to the management of the green spaces and village greens in our villages and towns.

It talks honestly about some of the pros and cons of managing community spaces for wildlife then provides a series of options to take if you do decide to take the plunge and a barrowful of tips, tools and contacts to help you on the way.

Please note that this guidance is non statutory and should not be taken as a definitive statement of the law. Sources of further information are referenced throughout the guide.

What do we mean by open green spaces?

In this guide we mean those open green spaces that are within or near to towns or villages, that have public access and, primarily, a community function. For example village greens, informal play areas or verges.

Who is this for?

This guide is intended for Parish Councillors or community groups who manage or are thinking about managing open green spaces. You don't need to be an ecologist, environmentalist or even have any knowledge about plants or animals to read this. In fact if you are any of the aforementioned you'll probably find this a little basic.

Why are green spaces important?

They're spaces that are important to the community in some way perhaps as a recreation facility or just as peaceful places that look nice and help make our place feel like our place.

How this guide works

The guide is split into four sections.

They can also have a value as places for plants, insects and animals and for people to learn about the natural world. This could be the whole of your green space or just small pockets so that everyone can enjoy the green whatever their interest.

Section One: The first section discusses some of the reasons why managing for wildlife could be a positive experience for your community and its green spaces.

About this guide

If you've only ever had a vague idea about what managing for wildlife is and what impact, good or bad, it might have, are contemplating taking first steps towards creating a more natural habitat or are being badgered by community members to 'do something' for the environment then this guide is for you!

Section Two: This section looks at what managing for wildlife means in practice – some of the effects, positive and not so positive, this may have.

Section Three: Section three is a step by step guide to getting started on increasing the wildlife value of your green space giving different options for different outcomes along the way.

Section Four: The final section is all the other things that you might need to know about: suppliers, equipment and tools, insurance, fund-raising and who else to go to for help including a contact list.



Bluebell Wood



Crane fly



Butterfly

Section One: Why bother?

First of all managing for wildlife doesn't mean changing the look of EVERY green space or even ALL of one green space. We'd recommend you start off slowly and work on a small scale until you get comfortable and confident with this new approach to management.

We also understand that our village greens etc are loved and used by people for recreation, sport, picnics etc and there has to be suitable space for this. Because of these, and for many other very practical reasons, this guide describes how to manage PARTS of your green spaces to encourage wildlife. You can also use this advice to manage whole areas if you wish.

We understand that some people may be under the misapprehension that managing for wildlife means

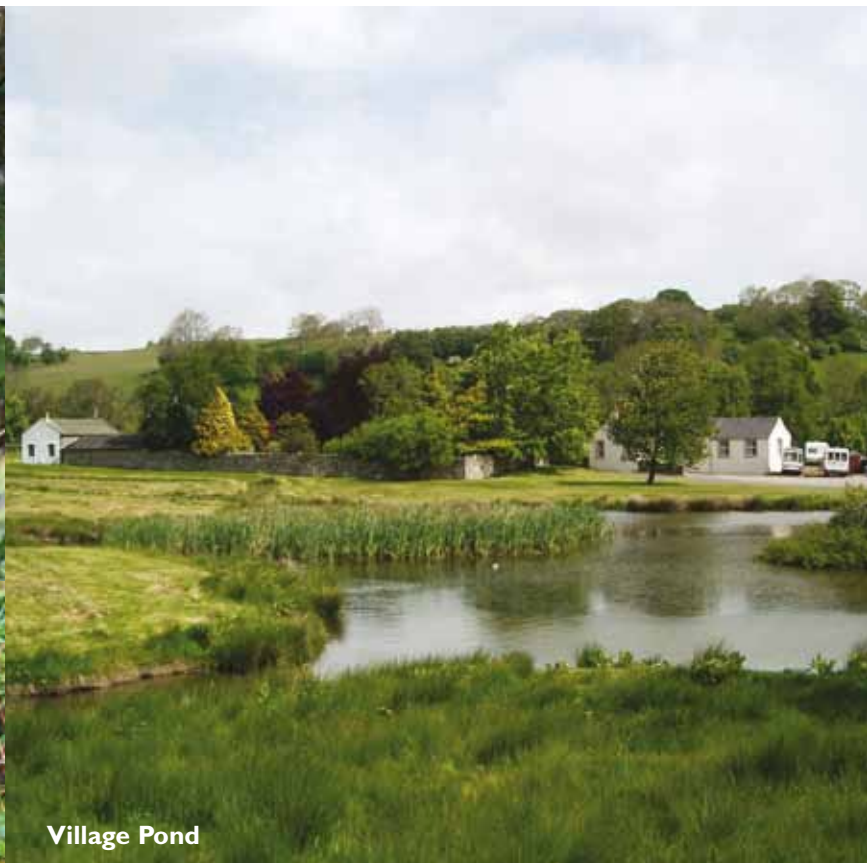
- a. not managing i.e. an excuse for the council to save money
- b. wildlife areas are scruffy and attract vermin
- c. the do-gooders get to feel morally superior
- d. local people's needs are trampled on
- e. loads of (our) money will be spent on consultants and experts who know nothing about anything practical.

In this section we'll defuse those arguments. In the next section we'll detail all the pros and the cons of managing for wildlife to give a realistic picture of what you can expect should you embark on this path.

So why might having part of your green space as a wildlife haven be a good thing?

Here are a few reasons:

- It can make your green more interesting and attractive: bursts of colour and scent from waving wildflower meadows; the different shapes and shadows of small stands of native, local trees; intriguing fungal forms; birdsong and bat calls. More for all the senses than a neatly edged, crew-cut green square?
- Surrounding ourselves with local plants, trees, animals and birds adds to our sense of being 'at home', our sense of place. It adds to the distinctiveness of our village – what makes our place unique.
- Living and working in an attractive place has a real economic benefit: overlooking a beautiful, well-loved green space generally has a positive effect on house prices, on B&B room occupancy, on pub sales and it can attract both visitors and staff.



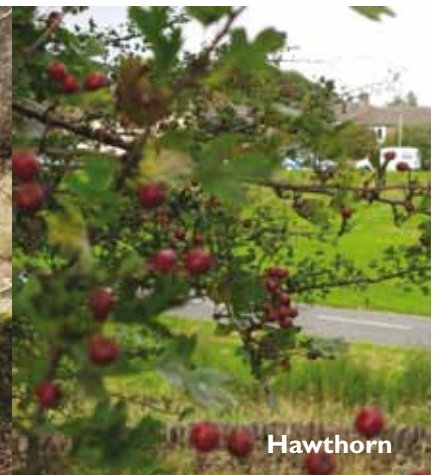


- Wild habitats and areas rich in diversity have a more positive impact on the environment in the global sense of the word, making our lives more sustainable and helping to ameliorate climate change. If green spaces are the green lungs of our villages, then we breathe better with more diversity!
- Getting hands-on, learning new skills, discovering the wealth of wildlife on our doorsteps can be a great way of meeting and getting to know other people where you live. And maybe, by offering more on your green, you'll appeal to a wider range of people and more people will want to get involved.
- There are direct benefits to health if people are encouraged to get out and about watching wildlife or, even better, getting involved in the creation and management of the wilder areas.
- Finding out about wildlife, traditional management skills, why certain plants live where (and not somewhere else) and how they have been used in the past can all present good opportunities for learning, whatever age you are.
- Managing for wildlife also protects other natural resources such as soil and water or archaeological remains.
- It's a great place for local schools to get out and learn on their doorstep, or for after school clubs to use, e.g. guides and scouts.
- Generally it's also a lot cheaper than some other management regimes?
- And finally, the most obvious reason, it's fantastic for wildlife! You're encouraging and promoting local native species, you may have nationally important habitats or species or you may be helping fill in the gaps in a green corridor that allows birds, insects and animals to move from one area to another.

In a nutshell: it IS practical and beneficial to provide good quality wildlife management AND a good quality social recreational space and anyone can do it!



Work Party



Hawthorn



Water Plantain



Section Two: What can I expect?

Expect things to change – constantly! Change is the key to developing and managing wildlife habitats. Things will change and you'll need to be ready and able to respond to change.

A. In the beginning

Some green spaces might need you to take things out before you start putting things in. Preparing the site might mean removing some scrub, non-native plants, thinning trees or taking out 'weeds' such as rye grass that might choke out more interesting plants. You may want to prepare the soil, landscape small areas, clear waterways, sort out any underlying drainage issues or create some beds. You may decide to harrow the whole of your chosen area or just to scarify patches to allow seeds or plug-plants that you introduce to get a good start.

When we talk about weeds we mean really competitive, strong, fast-growing plants that will shoot up and take light and space away from the more interesting plants that will add colour and variety.

Whatever you choose there will probably be a time when the site looks muddy, churned up or like there is less vegetation, all of which can be a cause for concern locally.

If you haven't done a good job of letting everyone know what's happening and why, then you should probably expect a few grumbles and complaints. So get your community on board and getting hands on right from the word go!

B. The good, the bad and the ugly

Don't expect glorious swathes of colourful, aromatic grasses and flowers all year round. There will be times of the year, as plants die back, birds migrate and animals hibernate, that your wildlife area may appear to be not very wild and not very lively. Usually this is in late autumn and winter although there may be other odd times in spring / summer when everything looks a bit samey or there's not much to hear.



Maulds Meaburn throughout the year



Sometimes this means looking at and learning to appreciate things in a different way. For example, whilst the ash, oak and hazel are losing leaves and looking a bit twiggy there may be dozens of architecturally intriguing fungal forms popping up through fallen leaves, out of dead wood and on tree trunks. Why not watch out for mushrooms and puffballs oozing musty odours, textures (and tastes!).

C. Wildlife and people

A concern for some people is that managing for wildlife means ignoring people's needs. This isn't so!

Everyone will still have access to all of your green space, although you might ask them not to walk on new seeds and plants during the first growing season. If you're putting in cattle or sheep to graze back meadows in the autumn then you'll have to ask dog walkers in particular to take more care when they're using the green. You may also consider temporarily fencing off a small area NOT to stop people using the green, but to stop livestock wandering into the road etc. Again, keeping everyone informed and involved will help to prevent misunderstandings.

Mowing pathways can help access to larger wildflower meadows allowing people to get right in amongst it and enjoy the sensation of drifting through waist high flowers. You could change where these pathways go and the perspective on the area by mowing different routes each year.

If people prefer to just roam freely across the meadow they may find the bottoms of their trousers get wet when walking after rain or first thing in the morning with a heavy dew. Some people might find this irritating at first.

Most dogs seem to really enjoy running about through longer grasses and flowers found in a wildflower meadow and trees losing small branches are a good source of sticks for dogs to chase.

D. Costs

There may be a cost initially in preparing the ground, removing weeds, thinning trees etc although the price of seeds is actually very low. Your biggest cost may be the initial assessment or survey by an ecologist though there are several organisations who offer these services at a low cost or for free.

You might want to build in some training costs for local people keen to learn how to do any future surveys themselves.

As with all maintenance work, there will be some ongoing costs. However you should find that these are comparable if not less than the costs incurred with other management regimes such as mowing.

Your insurance costs should stay the same, although it's worth checking with your insurer whether volunteers doing groundwork are covered under your existing policy.

E. Management practice

Contrary to what you may have heard, wildlife areas still need managing! Litter picks, weeding, cutting all still need doing, but you may do them differently, less frequently and at different times of the year.

Local people might want to learn some new skills such as coppicing or haymaking and take on the maintenance for free (though you'll probably have to then buy and store tools for this).

Compared to managing a uniform lawn-type green, managing for wildlife means you're less likely to be able to specify the exact date maintenance work should happen. Managing for wildlife is driven by the changes on the ground e.g. late season, high winds and being able to respond to these. You'll need to make sure your contractors understand and can work like this.





Some specific management advice

Cutting grasslands and meadows

Most meadows or grassland areas will need fewer cuts / year (you can expect to miss out at least one of your regular cuts). Different types of cuts may be needed (you may need to use a different machine / tools). This may mean negotiating a new schedule of work with your contractors based on achieving set outcomes rather than doing things at set times in set ways or alternatively asking someone with traditional countryside management skills to take this on.

There'll be more bulk to take away after cutting. If the cuttings are of a high quality, a specialist nursery could take them away to harvest native seeds from. If the cuttings are not so rich, a local farmer may take them for animal feed, possibly as payment for doing the cut. All of these contracts will need setting up and will take a short time to settle in to place.

As noted above the essence of managing for wildlife is change: expecting change and being able to respond to it. For example some years a warm, wet spring will bring plants on early so you'll probably need to cut earlier. This is a fundamentally different approach than with more formal management regimes where mowing dates, grass-length to cut to, weeding and thinning dates are all generally set in place and may stay the same for years on end. Managing for wildlife involves a bit more flexibility with how you and your contractors get things done.

Grazing

Some grasslands and meadows will thrive if cattle or sheep are put on to graze them for part of the year (usually the autumn). Their hooves churn up and turn over the turf creating gaps for new seeds to take hold, their dung restores some nutrients and provides habitat for many insects and the selective munching keeps a balance between the different types of plants. There are pros and cons to grazing over cutting and to which animals you choose to graze – how people (and dogs) react to them, whether they make paths or not, how rich their dung is etc. Get some good advice on this and again keep everyone involved and informed.

And some sites just aren't suitable for grazing!

Wood and wetland management

Expect to have to go into woodlands and thin trees, pull out any plants that are taking over (brambles, ground elder) or not local (rhododendron); litter pick and, especially in areas that are well-used, lop any branches that look likely to come down. As with any other trees in your parish, you'll need to keep an eye on any that get damaged in storms or through old age!

Any hedgerows will need to be trimmed every 2-3 years and laid every 10-30 years.

Wetter areas will need to be kept clear of scrub and any plants that start to take over to stop them filling in.

Top tip: if your wildflower meadow covers the whole of your green space, mow a strip around the edges, next to paths and roads etc. This will give a 'neat' feel to the meadow for passers-by.



Hedging



Hedge in summer



Hedge Planting



Section Three: Where do I start?

There are some basic principles to stick to:

- Use what you've already got
- Get everyone informed and involved!
- Get your facts straight
- Keep it local and appropriate – the right species for your area; the right size and type of wildlife area for your community
- The more different types of species, the more different habitats the greater the overall benefit: the sum is greater than the parts
- More layers, different plants at different heights increase opportunities for many creatures – as do dead things
- Look at the bigger picture, consider how your green connects to other wild areas

Step One: Choose the area – make sure you're clear about its purpose

Have you decided exactly where the space to be managed for wildlife is? Have you ruled out other possible sites? Has everyone agreed this in the community?

You need to be sure everyone is talking about the same area and there's no ambiguity as to where the boundaries are and what the purpose of the area is.

It's very important you get consensus on what you're doing and where. To make sure everyone is clear and has had their say it could be useful to put up some simple but accurate maps of your village on notice boards or at meetings and ask everyone to mark on where they think the best area is. You could organise a walk around the village to pace out possible sites and note any obvious boundaries or features to be included. Once everyone has decided you should produce a final map showing the area to be managed.



Fungi

Step Two: What have we got?

You can't do anything until you know some basic facts about your green space. Before anything at all starts to happen find out whether the space has any significant wildlife value already and if it is protected or designated in some way.

Is it designated? Check on www.magic.gov.uk to see if the site is part of a SSSI, AONB, has archaeological or some other significance. If the answer is yes then you'll need to consider this and find out more about it when developing your ideas. It may mean there are some restrictions on what you can do.

Does the site have any protection? Check your Local Authority's Local Plan or Development Framework maps to see if it's protected by planning policy. Check with the Commons Registration Authority (CCC) to see if the land is registered as Common Land or Town or Village Green. You can look at the County Council's online interactive map to check for Village Greens – www.gisl.cumbria.gov.uk/eggp



Harebells



Who owns the site? If you don't own it, then you'll need permission from the landowner and a formal management agreement before you start to do any work on the land. Whilst you're checking ownership it's also a good idea to see if there are any covenants or other trusts that you should consider.

What wildlife value has it already got? If you've already got some amazing wildlife hidden away on your space it would be madness to strip it all away and throw in new things! Stand back, let nature do its work and manage what happens!

On the other hand if the space has been really heavily managed and manipulated by man in the past there probably won't be much natural, interesting wildlife left. In this case you'll want to make some big changes and re-introduce what would have been there naturally.

Find out what you've got. What would happen if you didn't cut your grass for a year? What would you see? Have you poked about on the woodland floor or pulled the scrub back from your bog?

Take a good look!

Does it look varied - has it got a range of different types of plants, insects, birds and animals already?

→ Get some advice! If you find there are interesting or significant species or there are lots of them (good diversity), it's a good idea to get some advice from a specialist. Go to step three.

Does it look all the same - is it very uniform?

→ You're good to go! If the green space is fairly uniform and doesn't have anything of interest from our checklist, you probably don't need a specialist (ecologist) to advise you so miss out step three unless you want help on what to do.

Step Three: Asking for advice.

If you've got some wildlife or habitat interest (or you think you might) then it's a good idea to ask a specialist to come and have a look at the site for you.

An ecologist will be able to tell you fairly quickly what you've got and what to watch out for. They may take a soil sample to test how fertile the land is. They'll also be able to give you some advice on how to manage and get the best out of your space.

For a list of people who could help in Cumbria, look at Section Four.

Record everything! Remember to record the process you use to assess the green space (who did what, when etc) and what you found so that other people will be able to understand what you've done now or in the future (it will help notice changes over time and as a result of your plan). Use recording sheets, take photos and videos, involve other people to get other perspectives – build up a thorough picture of what's there and use this to start generating local interest.

The key to success: work with what you've got!

Nettles encourage butterflies such as the peacock and birds like chaffinches and warblers

Stoats and weasels like long grasses because they hide voles and shrews!

Bullfinches like forget-me-nots



Fly Agaric



Pignut



Violets



Step Four: What does our community want?

Talk to your community to ask what they want to see on the green space, what they'd like to be able to do there and how they'd like to be involved in helping create wildlife areas and maintain them.

First of all think about who is in your community: people of all ages, from a variety of backgrounds. How can you explain your ideas to them? How can you find out what all these different people are interested in? How can you involve them?

- Public or open meetings, maybe with a pie and peas supper or some other tempting goodies, can be a good starting point. Make it a fun event that people will want to come to – perhaps add it on to an existing do?
- Organising a walk and talk or treasure hunt can be a good way to get people out on to the space and thinking and talking. Collect their ideas over a brew afterwards.

- Posters and pictures (especially old photos and maps) pinned around the village can be motivating.
- Going into the local school and running a session with teachers or a class can be great to get young people (and their parent's) ideas.
- Put a feedback box in the local pub or meeting place (but be prepared for some 'imaginative' answers!)
- Spread the workload by asking leaders of local groups like the WI, sports clubs or parent and toddler group to ask their members what they think.

When you've got everyone's ideas and opinions in, review and develop them into a design (what you're aiming for). From here you can develop an action plan to turn designs into reality. You might need to go back to your ecologist or landscape architect at this stage and you'll probably need to start getting in quotes and estimates from contractors for any bigger work.

Have a look at the OGS 'management planning' guide for a useful framework. Don't forget to record all this with taped interviews, notes, pictures and plans....



Surveying Plants



Bog Asphodel



Planning

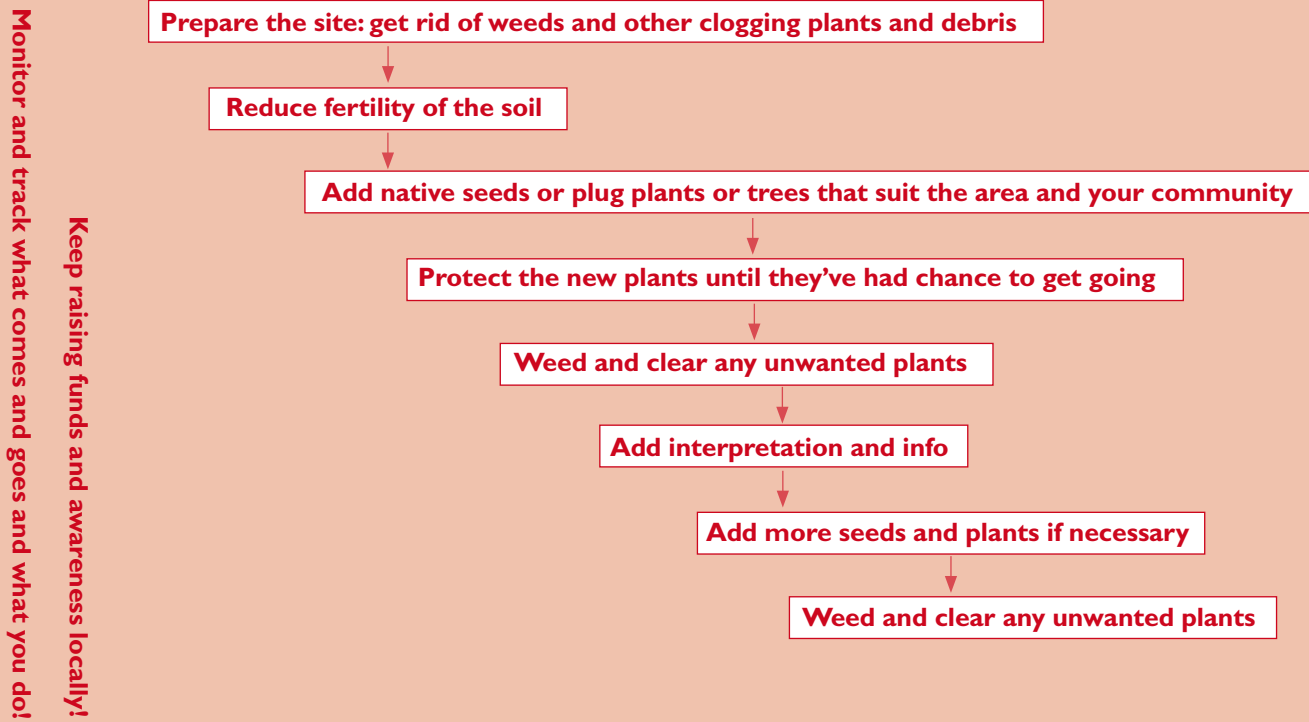


Lichens



Step Five: Getting started

In general the way to get started on your site runs like this:



Soil with a lot of potassium (K), nitrogen (N) and phosphorous (P) will be very fertile: it will support fast, strong plant growth. Unfortunately this isn't very good for diversity. A few plants have the capacity to grow extremely well on fertile soils, so well that they out-shade and out-compete anything else meaning slower-growing, more sensitive plants can't survive. Reducing soil fertility means weeds don't dominate, many different types of plant grow and diversity increases!



Fungi



Bee on Thistle



Yarrow



Now that you know what you've got, what you want and worked out how to get from one to the other it's time to get started and turn plans into action.

There is a general process or chain of events that could be applied to most sites as you start to manage for wildlife. You might start the process from the beginning or come in somewhere in the middle depending on your site, what you want and how quickly you'd like this to happen.

Record what you see: what, how big, how many, where, what colour..why.

So there is a general theory of practice. However now we're at the work stage it's time to get more specific in descriptions and advice. Rather than talking about green space in general we'll now look at three different possible types of habitat you might want to work towards.

The three types of habitat discussed are:

- Diverse grasslands or haymeadows
- Open woodland
- Ponds and wetland areas

Remember we've focused on pockets of wildlife habitat rather than whole fields or large sites. If you've large tracts of land there are other techniques open to you too although we'd recommend getting some help and some specific advice for your site at this point.

Record what you do: when, by whom, what it costs, how long it takes, where, how often. Do this right from the very beginning!

Option A: Grasslands or haymeadows

Year 1

Summer: Stop cutting the area. Watch what comes through. See how many different colours, shapes and sizes of plants appear. Check and see if any are on the 'interesting' list at the back.

Autumn: if possible arrange to have some cattle or sheep on the area to graze the meadow.

If the land has been improved i.e. fertiliser of some sort added to make grasses grow stronger, then you may have a large percentage of vigorous grasses that don't allow much else to flourish (grasses such as perennial rye grass). To reduce the persistence of these grasses, add species such as yellow rattle (also known as hay rattle) that parasitise the grasses.

Many plants send out seeds in late summer and autumn – copy them by sowing at this time too.

To help the hay rattle get established you'll need to harrow (turn over and rake up the soil) patches to clear some space for your seed. Red clover can also help prepare the ground for other species.

You might want to plant some plug plants and other wild seeds to give the meadow a boost in the first few years. Sow seeds or add plants in the autumn to give them a fighting chance against whatever is already growing.

It would be a good idea to ask people not to walk or play on these areas whilst the seeds and plants take hold.

Have a look at the list on the next page with some suggestions on what to plant.



Hay Rattle and Buttercups



Ox-eye Daisy

Wood Sorrel



Yellow or hay rattle • Red Clover • Bird's foot tre-foil
Ox-eye daisy • Eyebright • Self heal • Tufted vetch • Yarrow

Meadow buttercup • Great burnet • Red fescue
Crested dog's-tail • Small timothy • Common bent
Yellow oat-grass • Sweet vernal-grass

If it's wet: Meadowsweet • Ragged robin • Cuckoo flower

The full list of plants with their Latin names is at the back of the book.

Year 2

Decide whether to cut (and clear the cuttings) in July (or when the flowers are seeding) or whether to wait till autumn and put stock on the land to graze. Wait and watch what comes through! Be patient.

Mow a pathway through larger areas so people can get right in amongst the wildlife!

Year 3 and 4

Continue to measure the ratio of pastureland grasses to other species and see if the balance starts tipping towards a more diverse meadow. If it doesn't or it does but it's happening very slowly, it may be time to add more yellow rattle and clover and to sow more seeds and plug plants of the species you want to see.

Don't forget to keep monitoring and recording what's there and how things change.

What you see, smell and hear may change year on year even if your management regime remains the same.

Shrews and voles like long, dense grasses through which they make runways (and eat some grasses)

Bumblebees like dead nettles and thyme and old vole nests

Changes in a Hay Meadow



July Year One



June Year Two



September Year One



July Year Two



Option B: Open woodland

Year 1

Autumn / winter: remove any non-native trees and any trees necessary to increase the openness and access to the woods; cut back any dangerous branches or trees that need managing; clear any scrub such as brambles or rhododendrons that may be choking the wood floor; clear out any litter or other debris.

You might like to plant native bulbs or plants such as bluebell, wood sorrel, wood anemone and wild garlic.

Be very careful if adding wild daffodils and snowdrops - check they really are wild.

Spring / summer: weed around the trees to remove any aggressive plants and keep an eye on how the saplings are doing.

Plant any native saplings needed and remember to protect the bottom metre with tubing or old tin cans to prevent animals such as deer and rabbits grazing the bark.

Think about how people will move through the wood and remember to leave glades and pathways for them.

Year 2

Continue to monitor the saplings as they grow and be prepared to add more or replace ones that don't make it. You may also decide to plant more bulbs or add seeds or plug plants for later colour.

Don't forget to leave any fallen branches and dead wood on the ground for beetles and other mini beasts to make a home in, not to mention the weird and wonderful fungi they'll attract.

Some trees to consider planting:

Hawthorns • Crab apples • Whitebeams
Oaks • Alders • Rowan • Ash • Holly

Some shrub and forest floor plants

Blackberry • Raspberry
Saxifrage • Foxgloves • Campanulas

Some birds prefer dense cover provided by hawthorn, blackthorn, thick ivy or gorse to nest in.

Count the birds that come into the woodland and get to know their songs. Record which birds like which trees, what time of year they come and whether they nest there or not.

Bats and birds need places to roost – often hollow or damaged trees

Jays, nuthatches and woodpeckers like oaks

Buckthorns for brimstone butterfly caterpillars

Alders like wetter areas and mayflies like alders

Mistlethrush like mistletoe, holly and rowan

*Ivy is loved by blackcaps, blackbirds,
and wood pigeons*

Coal tits and goldcrests like Scots pine

Starlings like rowan, cherry and blackberry



Hedge Trees April



Hedge Trees May



Hedge Trees October



Option C: Ponds and wetland areas

If you've an area that's already fairly permanently wet underfoot or an existing pond, you might consider managing this to increase the wildlife value. Wetter areas, by their very nature, do tend to exclude people unless you create access points and pathways so they need to be carefully thought through. Design in your boardwalk or viewing platforms from the start.

Having said that they can be valuable and interesting habitats attracting a wide variety of birds, insects, amphibians and animals.

Whether creating a pond or a wetland / bog it might be necessary to do a little excavation of any debris, weed bulk, silt or unwanted earth and rock. Make sure you have any necessary permission to do this work and also think carefully about where you put any excavated material!

As with the other habitats, weeds in this context are plants that grow quickly and strongly covering the space so not giving anything else chance or room to grow. Examples of wetland weeds are Himalayan Balsam, Canadian pondweed and floating pennywort.

If you are thinking of a pond or wet area, you also need to consider any health and safety issues that may arise, e.g. small children near water.

Ponds

If you don't already have a wet area but wish to create a new pond, have a careful think about where it could be situated. To be of most benefit to bugs and beasties it should ideally be partially shaded, but not entirely under

trees and maybe have some stone or log piles nearby. Being sheltered from the wind is a good thing too!

Ponds don't need to be deep but they do need shallow sides. An underwater shelf area with gently sloping sides and a small beach area is ideal. This will encourage insects, birds, bats and animals to come and drink, bathe (and catch insects). The nearby shelter of long grasses and log piles will encourage shy types!

In the first year you'll probably want to put some plug plants of native water loving species around the sides of the pond. You could also add some submerged plants such as milfoil and hornwort; floating leaf plants such as sweet-grass and emergent plants like reeds.

Do any weeding or clearing out of excess plants in the autumn when frogs and newts have left the pond.

Bogs and wet areas

First of all remove weed species and unclog any drainage or inflow channels so that the water level is at its optimum and there is space for other plants to start to grow. You may want to dig out an area to a depth of about 30cm to help create a wetter space that water will drain into. The aim is to have a permanently damp area filled with dense, vibrant plant cover supporting a rich variety of insects and possibly frogs, toads and newts.

Your choice is to leave the area to develop slowly over time and assist it by carefully removing weeds and monitoring water levels (and purity) or to help things along the way by adding plug plants of suitable local native species. Some plants that you might like to add include:

- Bugle • Marsh-marigold • Ragged robin
- Yellow or purple loosestrife • Royal fern



Marsh Cinquefoil

Hope Park Keswick



Ragged Robin



Step six: getting and keeping people interested

Getting people interested

Hopefully you'll have involved lots of people at the planning and design stages and maybe already have a solid work party group to call upon. Some information to help other people understand what you're doing and what you've got (interpretation) is also really useful. This might be in the form of a blog on the village website or parish newsletter, small noticeboards on the site showing pictures and info on plants and animals and how the site is changing or a display in the school or village hall. Choose something appropriate to the people where you live.

Keeping people interested

Whilst lots of people locally might be keen to get involved in the exciting stages of clearing, planting and changing the shape of the land, you might find their interest dwindles over the years so fewer people turn out on work party days, it becomes less fun, so even fewer people come etc

To avoid getting into this vicious circle its good to have a plan for maintenance, monitoring, action and events right from the start and to keep everyone involved in re-adjusting the plan and making decisions as things change.

Make sure you plan the following activities into your wildlife year:

a. Work parties

Have a year planner on the parish notice board with dates of work parties marked on. It's a nice idea to follow each

work party by a pint and pie, barbeque or some other short social event as a thank you (include some cash for this in your fund raising). Work parties might be for weed removal, brash clearance, dry stone walling, hedge laying or putting in new interpretation, benches or access.

b. Monitoring and tracking

Dates for surveys of plants, birds and animals should be earmarked and then get-togethers where you review all the information and take a look at any changes that have happened over the previous quarter or half year.

c. Fund-raising events

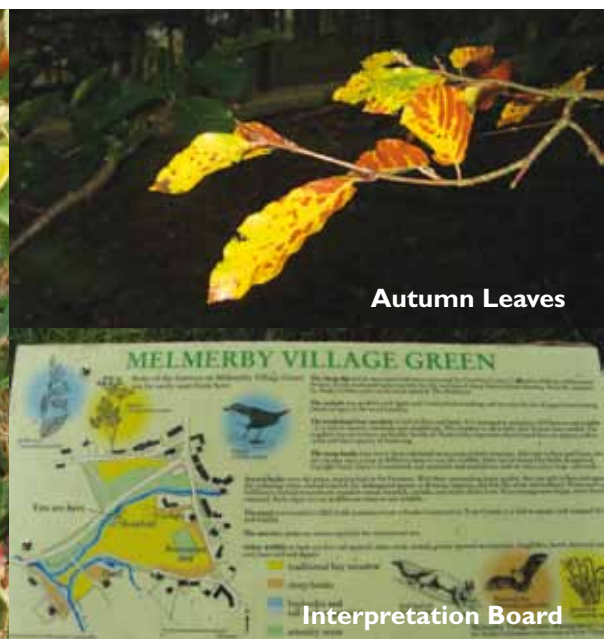
It can be difficult to attract grants for ongoing maintenance although if you need money for a specific event, training day or piece of kit you may be able to access funding. Otherwise it's a good idea to have regular fundraising events: perhaps a competition for the best picture or story of wildlife with entrants paying a small fee; an event on the green space or coffee-mornings, parties and raffles. These events will also help keep a level of interest up locally and may bring in people who are keen to help but don't necessarily want to get muddy!

d. Learning and training days

Besides getting your local school, youth or community group involved in learning about wildlife, don't forget to add in some training and learning opportunities for the volunteers. Many organisations offer free courses or you might be able to work alongside an expert for a day to learn a new skill.



Rosehip



Autumn Leaves

Interpretation Board



Section Four: Additional information

Insurance

You'll need to consider the insurance issues around both the space itself and any volunteers doing work on the land. The owner or Parish Council's public liability insurance should cover people using the site regardless of whether it's managed for wildlife or recreation. A standard parish council insurance should cover liability to volunteers and liability arising from the actions of volunteers, but if in doubt tell the insurers. A voluntary group will need to tell its insurers what activities are undertaken and check that volunteers are covered.

Equipment

You'll need some tools or equipment for the initial work and also tools for ongoing maintenance and management. These might be the same things or they might be different so it's worth considering how regularly a tool or piece of equipment is likely to be used before you start to invest. It's also useful to consider where you'll store any tools (securely) and who will maintain and look after them.

Borrowing tools locally might be an option, perhaps with an offer to repair or replace any that get damaged on the job. Other options for bigger jobs are to work with BTCV, the National Park Authority or other organised groups who have their own tools to bring. There may be a charge for this in some cases.

Fund raising

For information on how to develop a fund-raising strategy, funding newsletters, guides and fact sheets, have a look at the Cumbria Council for Voluntary Services website : www.cumbriacvs.org.uk

Seed suppliers

Ideally ask a contractor to harvest seed from a nearby meadow – this means you're likely to have locally suited, native species in keeping with your surroundings. Check to see if any permissions are needed to harvest the seed.

All suppliers of grasses and leguminous plant seed mixes sold or given away for preservation purposes are required to add themselves to a register held by Defra and gain authorisation to supply these mixes. A directory of native seed suppliers can be found on Flora Locale's web site. Natural England may also be able to help.

Be a little wary of buying native seeds from regular garden centres: if the centre doesn't have the exact species you asked for they are perfectly within their rights to put in a close replacement, even if it's not native, and they don't have to tell you

Other sources of help, advice and support

Organisations

AONBs – have support officers and rangers as well as ecologists and grant schemes www.northpennines.org.uk
www.solwaycoastaonb.org.uk
www.arnsidesilverdaleaonb.org.uk

BTCV – ground work expertise, volunteer teams, insurance, tools www.btcv.org.uk

Cumbria County Council – countryside rangers and ecologist www.cumbriacc.gov.uk

Cumbria Woodlands – provides grants and advice to woodland owners and managers
www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk

Cumbria Council for Voluntary Services – advice
www.cumbriacvs.org.uk

Cumbria Wildlife Trust – Voles, Bats, Haymeadows, ecologists, practical advice, volunteers, ground work skills, Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership
www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/cumbria/

East Cumbria Countryside Project – team of estate workers, specialists in CROW www.eccp.org.uk

Eden Rivers Trust – advice, expert assessments, support www.edenriverstrust.org.uk

Flora Locale – knowledge banks on all things to do with native species including seed and plant suppliers
www.floralocale.org

Friends of the Lake District – advice on landscape, trees, hay meadows, recreation, commons and village greens www.fld.org.uk

The Grasslands Trust – ecologist, small grants, practical advice, long term involvement www.grasslands-trust.org

LDNPA – ecologist, ranger teams, grant schemes, volunteer teams and tools www.lake-district.gov.uk

Natural England – range of publications on web site, ecologists and advisers www.naturalengland.org.uk

The National Trust – wardens, own tools and volunteer forces, local knowledge www.nationaltrust.co.uk

South Cumbria Rivers Trust – rivers, lakes and wetlands advice. www.scrt.co.uk

YDNPA – ecologist, ranger teams, grant schemes, volunteer teams and tools www.yorkshiredales.org.uk

Web and print resources

OGS: Legal Guide to Open Spaces; guide to common management issues and other information and publications.

Have a look at Natural England's and DEFRA's websites for other useful publications.



The Our Green Space project and its communities

The Our Green Space project aims to protect, enhance and celebrate the open green spaces of Cumbria's towns and villages and their heritage, culture and environmental assets. The innovative project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Friends of the Lake District (FLD) hopes to empower local communities and facilitate the conservation of other greens and common land throughout Cumbria. At a strategic level the project is working to develop a greater understanding of the importance, value and potential of green spaces within statutory and other key stakeholder organisations.

The project is managed in partnership by FLD and Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) and supported by local, regional and national organisations including Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park Authority, The National Trust, Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) and the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS).

The project is working with five Cumbrian communities which will act as a learning resource and good practice model for others. Each community scheme highlights different issues facing communities trying to manage green spaces. Learning from the communities, photo galleries, key documents and further information on all aspects of the project can be found at: www.ourgreenspace.org.uk or email info@fld.org.uk

Barrow

The Marsh Street Arches and Garden Project has transformed an old rail yard into a green oasis in the middle of an otherwise urban landscape. The new green space improves the image and appearance of the area and provides accessible green space that will improve the physical and mental well being of the local community. Named by local school children as 'The Green Heart Den', it brings together many different sectors of the community - the police, schools, community groups and students who can learn about their local environment, wildlife and history of the area, celebrate the social and industrial past and enjoy activities and events. For more information visit: www.greenheartden.blogspot.com or the OGS website pages on Barrow or email: greenheartden@aol.com

Burgh by Sands

The community at Burgh worked together to buy a substantial piece of land in the village to create a new

community green space. This ambitious community groundwork project is developing a recreation and cricket pitch alongside a picnic area and a wetland with pond, meadows and ditches. The heritage and tourism aspect of the project included mapping walks around the village and onto the Marshes, on site interpretation and oral history workshops. For more information email: tim.bradbury@cumbriacc.gov.uk or see the OGS website pages on Burgh

Great Asby and Little Asby

Great Asby has six registered village greens running through the village beside a beck, between church and houses. The community of both villages have a mainly historical documentary based project working closely with the village school, local crafts people and volunteers. They are focusing on felt making, well dressing, oral history and historical research, investigation of footpaths and bridleways, surveys of the greens and historical walks. For more information visit www.asbyhistorygroup.co.uk; the OGS website pages for Asby or email Graham. parkin@ktd.internet.com

Newbiggin

This project contains ground works, historical documentary and education aspects focused on the restoration of two covered springs in the village, their usage, history and cultural value. The project has also provided a focus for research into and revival of local customs and traditions associated with village greens and village springs in Cumbria. For more information email newbiggin@onetel.com or see the OGS website pages for Newbiggin.

Nether Wasdale and Wasdale Head

The Registered Village Greens at Wasdale Head and Nether Wasdale are focal points for this community project. The aim is to enhance the visual, recreation and amenity value of the spaces through drainage, boundary and restoration work, interpretation of the areas and community events to celebrate their culture, heritage and value. The maypole on the green at Nether Wasdale has been renovated and celebrated with a May Festival. For more information email killick.wasdale@btinternet.com or see the OGS website pages for Wasdale.



This guide has been produced by the Our Green Space project – a partnership between Friends of the Lake District and Action with Communities in Cumbria, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is based on a guide originally developed by Jo Chaffer of the Rural Greens project, in partnership with Bernadette Lobo, formerly of Flora Locale, David Harpley of Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Ian Craft of the Grasslands Trust

This is one of a series of three Open Green Space guides for managers. The others cover the legal status and protection of green spaces and a guide to management issues.

For copies or information please look at www.ourgreenspace.org.uk or email info@fld.org.uk

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