

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 12 APRIL 2018
title: LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST LOCAL NATURE RESERVES
CROSSHILL AND SALTHILL
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: DAVID HEWITT – COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 For Committee to consider a request from Wildlife Trust for Lancashire for the annual contribution towards the management of the two local nature reserves at Crosshills and Salthill, Clitheroe.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – To help make peoples lives safer and healthier.
 - Corporate Priorities – To protect and enhance existing environmental quality of our area.
 - Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Salthill and Crosshill local nature reserves are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and recognised internationally important not only for the geology alone but also for biodiversity. The geology of both sites draws academics and enthusiasts from the UK and further afield and they are also recognised as a key resource for people in Clitheroe as well as the Ribble Valley and beyond.
- 2.2 The reserves are heavily used for recreational, educational and volunteering health and wellbeing activities, as well as informal recreation on a daily basis. As a consequence to manage habitats and heavy public use of the site requires considerable time and effort as well as investment by the Trust.
- 2.3 The Trust has invested considerable resources and employs a Reserves Officer to undertake works to support volunteers and source further income. This employment of 2 days a week on the Clitheroe sites costs the Trust £12,000 per year.
- 2.4 Whilst the Council did not commit to an income stream at the inception of the lease in 1990, it has helped with the costs of some capital items and a contribution towards the revenue costs. Ribble Valley Borough Council has contributed £2,000 per annum since 2008 which coincides with the Trust employing a Reserves Officer.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources – An existing budget is available to fund the annual contribution.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal - protecting and enhancing the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – The Council's reputation for working in partnership with organisations in the voluntary sector will be upheld.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

4 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

4.1 Approve the annual contribution of £2000 for 2017/2018

DAVID HEWITT
COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Back ground papers – Annual report detailing the trusts work at Crosshill and Salthill Nature Reserves.

For further information please ask for David Hewitt, extension 4505.

REPORT FOR SEPT 2016 – DEC 2017

A summary of the work carried out to date in the above period.



Photo: 'Kingfisher' meadow at Cross Hill

MANAGEMENT WORK ON NATURE RESERVES

Cross Hill Quarry LNR, Salthill Quarry LNR/ SSSI and Moor Piece Nature Reserves are all managed by The Wildlife Trust with the emphasis on managing for biodiversity and education.

During the months from September 2016 to December 2017, 995 volunteer hours contributed to the practical management of the site. This does not include volunteer recording of birds, insects, moths, butterflies and bats which is carried out by individuals.

7 site assessments were carried out on the sites during the time period.

At Salthill Quarry the focus of volunteer work was on the management of the wildflower-rich meadows, keeping the important geological features clear of vegetation and access. Salthill Quarry is a SSSI because of its geology and attracts national and international interest. The cliff faces, geological exposures, fossil bank needs to be kept clear of vegetation. The flower-rich meadows need to be mown and the arisings removed to preserve the low fertility of the soil.

Arisings from the meadow at Salthill has been used twice over this period to spread on a newly restored grassland at Caplow Quarry: 16th Sept 2016, 21th Sept 2017.

St James High school visited the reserve on 19/05/17

At Cross Hill Quarry, the focus was managing the wildflower rich meadows, keeping the paths open for the schools and talking to dog walkers. The site is a Regionally Important Geological Site because of the exposed rock face in the former quarry. The meadows have been managed to preserve their wildflowers and are regularly visited by natural historians. Cross Hill was used as a venue for volunteer brushcutter training. The metal fencing along the internal top path was mended.

A local school uses Cross Hill for its Forest Schools activities, and they visited 8 times during the period. Brookside school visits Cross Hill Quarry once a year; in 2017 it was in June.

A Survey was carried out at Cross Hill on 21st July 2017 to assess the ash dieback

We now have a Forestry Commission management plan approved for both Cross Hill and Salthill Quarries.

At Moor Piece, the emphasis of management is on regeneration of woodland for birds and bats. There are regular monthly volunteer sessions from September through to March. The work has ranged from maintaining the paths to felling trees and creating dead hedges to aid regeneration. The bird boxes are monitored regularly by a team of volunteers during breeding bird season and are maintained during winter.

The site is accessible by public via a permit scheme which are issued in January each year and updated throughout the year.

Photo: Bracket fungi at Moor Piece



Wildlife Trust staff time

In addition to supervising the 45 practical volunteer sessions, WT staff made weekly visits to Cross Hill and Salthill quarry over the summer months to clear litter, camping equipment and the remains of bonfires on both sites. Path cutting, spraying invasive species, regular site checks are also made. Dog bags were given out to dog walkers on both sites to encourage clearing up. Moor Piece was visited monthly.

WORK WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

- Brookside visited Cross Hill quarry floor in June to look at the insects during their annual visit
- Ribblesdale Children's Centre delivers their Forest Schools Project in Cross Hill Quarry and visited 8 times during the period
- St James High School visited Salthill 19/06/17

OTHER ACTIVITIES

23/09/16 Bat walk CHQ

21/10/16 Volunteer training CHQ

THE WILDLIFE TRUST FOR LANCASHIRE, MANCHESTER & NORTH MERSEYSIDE
Report of work on Ribble Valley Nature Reserves, March 2018



Photo: Bee Orchid at Salthill Quarry



Photos left to right: path clearing, Cross Hill; cutting meadows, Salthill; tubing up oak trees, Moor Piece

STATISTICS FOR SEPT 2016 – DEC 2017 IN RIBBLE VALLEY:

Volunteer work parties at all sites	45
Total number of volunteer hours	995
Number of schools helped/worked with	3
Total number of pupils	106
Number of staff site visits	37

Kim Coverdale
East Lancashire Reserves Officer
March 2018