



# Friends of Dibbinsdale

Supporting Brotherton Park & Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve

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## Letter from Dibbinsdale Winter 2021



**Farewell Ranger Alan Smail**

**He leaves us after 11 years of  
service to Dibbinsdale.**

**Thank you for making a  
difference in the reserve**

Alan's contribution to the conservation and management of the SSSI reserve has been immeasurable. He has undertaken work maintaining the biodiversity of the park (its woodland, wetland and grassland), supervised work with a wide variety of volunteers, enabled community involvement throughout his time of office, liaised with organisations of environmental protection to the benefit of wildlife, undertaken educational use and development of the park, successfully achieved the Green Flag Award over many years and planned the development and interpretation of the reserve.

Thank you Alan

*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year*



Don't forget :

The Friends of Dibbinsdale Annual General Meeting on  
Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January at 4pm at the Volunteer Base,  
Ranger's Courtyard, Woodslee Cottages.

If there are changes to this because of Government advice we will notify you

### In this issue:

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Ranger*

*Welcome to Sti our new  
ranger*

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# Wirral Wildlife Tree Planting at Dibbinsdale



Picture left

A female black poplar was planted by the High Sheriff in Brotherton Park.

Thereafter members of Wirral Wildlife planted six varieties of Cheshire apple trees in the Walled Garden



Top right picture

**Bramley. Cooker.** (Donated by Friends of Dibbinsdale to mark Wirral Wildlife's 50th birthday). Supplied by Morrey's Nursery, Kelsall. *The Friends wish Wirral Wildlife a Happy Birthday and look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with you in future years.*

Planted by Alison McGovern MP, Stephen Ross (Chair of Wirral Wildlife), with help from Steve Yandell (chair, Wirral Countryside Volunteers) and Tim Gannicliffe (WW recorder).

Middle right picture **Bee Bench.** Dual purpose apple. Planted by young volunteers Mairead Corr and Maddy Green Other apples planted were "**Millicent Barnes**", "**Rival**" and "**Ashmead's Kernel**"(dessert apples)



Wirral Wildlife were delighted to celebrate their 50th Anniversary on a fine autumnal day on 20th November at Brotherton Park, part of Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve. The High Sheriff of Merseyside, Nigel Lanceley, and Alison McGovern MP kindly attended the celebration.



(Picture above) **Eccleston Pippin.** Dual purpose apple..Planted by representatives of the Wirral Wildlife recording team: Mike Inger, Sheila Ross, Elina Doss (who also works for Record local records centre).and Andrew Brockbank

**Dr Hilary Ash registered Wirral Wildlife's black poplar and apples as a contribution to the Queen's Green Canopy project (QGC). This is a tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".**



## Dibbinsdale's New Ranger- Stephen Smith



Hi there, I thought I'd introduce myself! My name is Ste and am the new Park Ranger here at Dibbinsdale and Brotherton Park. In 2012 I graduated from John Moore's University with a Bsc degree in Wildlife Conservation. Whilst completing my degree in Wildlife Conservation, I gained significant knowledge in management of habitat conservation. Since then I have had numerous jobs in the horticultural environment and even had my own gardening business, so this has given me comprehensive knowledge of botany and horticulture. I've lived here on the Wirral all my life, so to get a Ranger position here really has been a dream come true for me. I have a great passion for nature and wildlife conservation and am keen to get stuck in here at the park. So, if you see me out and about don't be afraid to stop me for a chat, I looking forward to meeting each and every one of you.

### Tips for helping wildlife.

Kimberley volunteered with the Friends of Dibbinsdale as a student. Now, working as an Environmental Scientist, she shares her tips on how we can do more to make our gardens greener and accommodate our feathered, furry and buzzy friends. All on our very own doorsteps.

#### Leaving a natural area in your garden

Please step away from the lawnmower and sheers. Allow for a small patch of your garden to be reclaimed by nature. This does not mean you need a jungle in your garden, but even a wild flowerpot will attract bees and butterflies this coming spring. Allowing wildflowers to grow provides a range of resources to support ecosystems. You could do this by simply allowing a patch of grass to grow long or planting wildflower seeds or bee bombs. Having a variety of pollinators friendly plants from March to September also provides nesting sites for bees.

Kimberley

*If you have wildlife visit your garden we would be delighted to here for you and share with us*

### Review of the Year



Path subsidence in January floods



**Collapse of first bridge in January flood**

**Review of the Year** At the heart of the pandemic in the flood of January three of the four main bridges were badly damaged. Access through the reserve was seriously impacted. A landslide in Patrick Wood brought down a huge amount of the escarpment near the tunnel. All volunteer activity ceased because of Covid. Due to subsidence, the river path slipped and became dangerous. References to global warming were very much on everyone's lips.

Because of the Covid restrictions, the public came to use the reserve more than ever before. By Easter the first of the bridges was repaired. The causeway to the Lady Bridge and the bridge itself was then repaired, along with the bridge to the meadow. Mike our Wirral Womble continues to pick up litter. Volunteer activity has returned to the park. The walled garden has 100's of young trees healed in by volunteers to over winter and be planted out on the Wirral this coming year.



## Bridges rebuilt...and holding



Pathway  
revetments  
repaired going to  
Spital Dam



New rebuilt bridges- To Brotherton(top left), Lady Bridge  
(above top) and to Bodens Hey Meadow(above)

## Then Storm Arwen hits in December



**Summary :** A difficult year would not be an over-exaggeration !

Sti Smith has taken over as Ranger and finds his feet the hard way. We wish him well and hope our continued support will make a difference. Say hello to him if you see him

The new year will see the sorting out of the trees that have fallen throughout the reserve. The losses are not as serious as those of other parts of the Wirral. The regeneration of the ancient woodland requires trees to blow over and be replaced naturally by young seedlings emerging from the forest floor. The wildlife will adapt to different conditions within the woodland. The trees will regrow and the reserve will flourish.