

The Longlander

MARCH 2023 ISSUE 10



Welcome

Welcome readers, to our spring newsletter. And what a spring it is!!

First off, it's not quite Long Lands Common, but in the last week our neighbours at the Knaresborough Forest Park project just down the hill from us have begun the process of bringing 60 more acres of Greenbelt land between Harrogate and Knaresborough into community ownership! There's plenty more developments to come on the "KFP" project in the future, but right now, the whole team at KFP have achieved a fantastic moment, and I reckon we should all be pleased about that!

Now, as for our own community park project, in the pages ahead, you'll find seven hundred new trees planted, plus all sorts of other developments!

I'd particularly like to draw your attention to our article on the Tree Nursery Design process (plot 3b on the Long Lands Common site development plan) – we're looking to gather members' suggestions for the Tree Nursery area. So please, skip straight to that article, think of your best ideas, and head on over to the Long Lands Common website and send them in! *(Note, we will not accept any suggestions along the theme of "build a bypass road through the nursery", or "how about a couple dozen new houses?")*.



*Ben raises a mug of tea in salute to the planting volunteers!
(while avoiding doing any work himself...?)*

With more projects to plant, build and maintain over the next year, we're also going to start having regular Working Party days on the Common. Please click here to check for upcoming dates: [Working Party Day's Page](#)

And last of all, I'd like to pay tribute to the hard work of our committee members over the last many months – putting together a publicly accessible wildlife reserve requires juggling dozens of plates all at the same time and I'm surrounded by very capable jugglers (not clowns, I hasten to add!).

And I'll sign off with thanks to our editor Artemis, for another excellent issue of The Longlander!

If you would like to contribute to The Longlander by writing an article, or want to send us your letters and photographs, then get in touch at: thelonglander@yahoo.com

Ben Skinner – Chair of Long Lands Common

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Kate Wilkinson



Chris Kitson



Miranda Dunstan



The Longlands Team

Knaresborough Forest Park

Urgent Appeal



Graphic: <https://knaresboroughforestpark.org/>

The Knaresborough Forest Park project is seeking to buy an area of land near to Long Lands Common that would effectively double the size of the area being protected for nature and the community.

The team have achieved an initial agreement to buy the land, to protect it from development, but they need as much support as possible to put their project on an even keel for the long term.

They have some generous support from donors but need the community to raise funds to match this. Go to www.knaresboroughforestpark.org to find out more and to make a pledge and/or donation to the project. Alternatively you can call 01423 549 376, or go to Knaresborough Library.

Volunteers also needed!

Diary Dates

Notice of working parties at Longlands Common



Photo Credit: Edward Lee

Here are some dates for diary if you would like to get involved in a working party day:

Sunday 2nd April

Saturday 7th May

Sunday 4th June

Saturday 1st July

Sunday 6th August

Saturday 2nd September

Sunday 1st October

Saturday 4th November

10-00am to 3-30pm

Alternate Saturdays / Sunday

You may book on a working party by following the [link on our website](#) or the link on the email invitation you will receive before the event. Alternatively you can call John on 07779 516 285.

Over the Spring and summer there will be a wide variety of work needing to be done, i.e., boarding out and insulating the shed (container), setting up a nursery area with a tunnel, hedge maintenance and lots of others jobs.

Food Forest Winter Gathering

Food Forest Update



Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson

By Kate Wilkinson

The Food Forest Winter Gathering started in a gently chaotic way... In my nervousness I arrived MUCH too early and sat in the entrance of the Friends' Meeting House for a while as they finished their morning meeting. I resisted the urge to get involved in the small decisions and trusted folk to organise themselves. As people arrived, chairs were put out, tables appeared, others got busy in the kitchen and all kinds of delicious food became a generous lunch for the whole gathering.

We made a circle around our (imaginary) campfire and shared stories, news and poems in turn. I was very much moved by some of the contributions and I would like to thank everyone for what they brought on that day. It was also delightful to be welcoming some newcomers and to be linking up with our hosts the Harrogate Quakers.

For my own contribution, I brought some thoughts about lichens... not very scientific thoughts but certainly rooted in observation and in learning more about them. I handed out twigs, damp, knobbly lichen-furred bits that had been blown out of the trees in the recent storms. We could smell the woods. The thing is, a lichen is not ONE being. It is a partnership - a fungus giving shelter to the more delicate photosynthesising partner in a necessary togetherness. When neither could survive alone, they intricately intermesh their cells and bring life to places where nothing else can grow.. like on a car bonnet, or inside a rock.

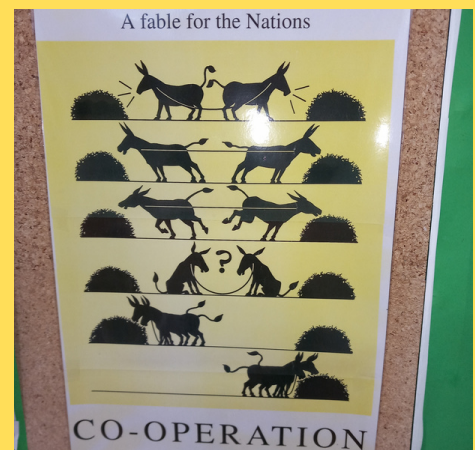


Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson

Food Forest Winter Gathering

We squinted at them through our hand lenses and used our phone cameras to get closer to their strangeness. They are resilient, sensitive, colourful, thrifty little splatters of life. The stone-borne lichen eats away at its substrate, traps dust and tiny fragments of windblown debris in its wrinkles. It holds just a little wetness, helps a moss take root, maybe starts the building of soil.

So who is the lichen? Who is in this partnership? It could be us and the land, all of us and each other, me and another part of myself, it could be how we survive and learn to thrive in difficult places... all of these things.



Photo Credit: Kate Wilkinson

We'll be organising a spring get-together for Earth Day on the 22nd of April and planning a trip to Old Sleningford farm to see what we can learn from their forest garden.

We will also be remembering our dear friend Nichola who gave so much to the early beginnings of the Food Forest. We will be thinking together with Roy about a tree in her memory.

See you in the woods!

Tree Nursery Planning

Wanted! Your Design Ideas

By Chris Kitson

Over the spring and summer months we will be starting to design and construct area 3b at Long Lands Common.

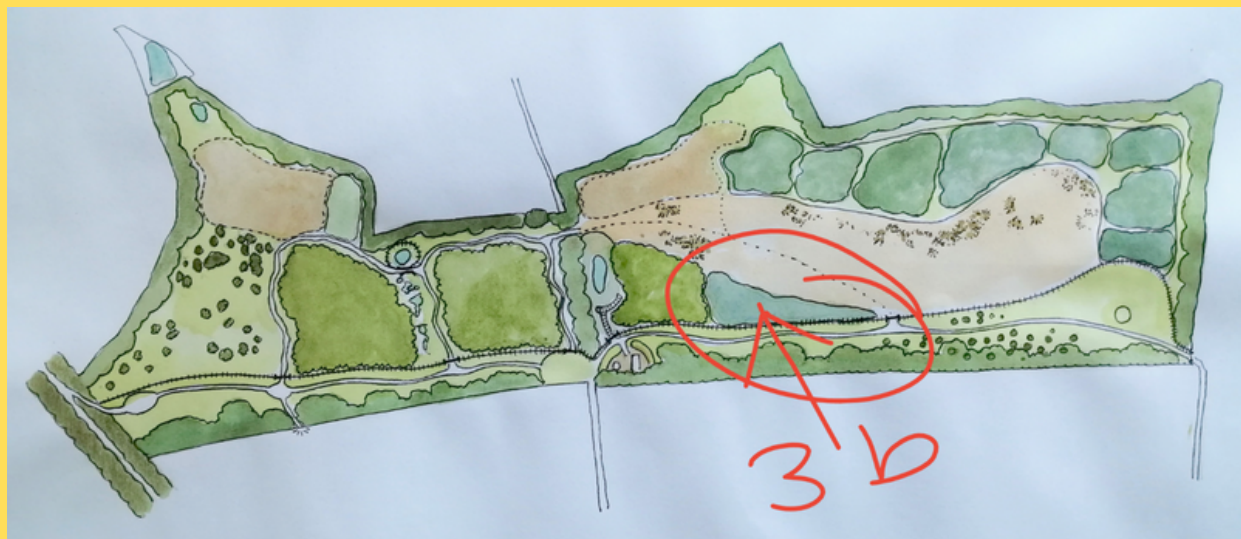


Illustration: James Mckay

Located on the southern side of the common, in the human zone, area 3b was initially drawn up as a tree nursery area to provide a single yield - young trees.

When Permaculture design principles were applied to the task it was quickly realised that this area offers us a fantastic opportunity to be more creative and design a human activity zone that provides many more yields for both humans and other flora and fauna.

So far, and with protection of the young trees in mind, we have a plan to create a deer-proof barrier around the perimeter of 3b by digging a ditch and bank pale (often called a ha-ha) - much the same as the Knaresborough foresters once did on our North-West boundary when creating Bilton Deer Park for the Kings and Queens in the thirteenth century.

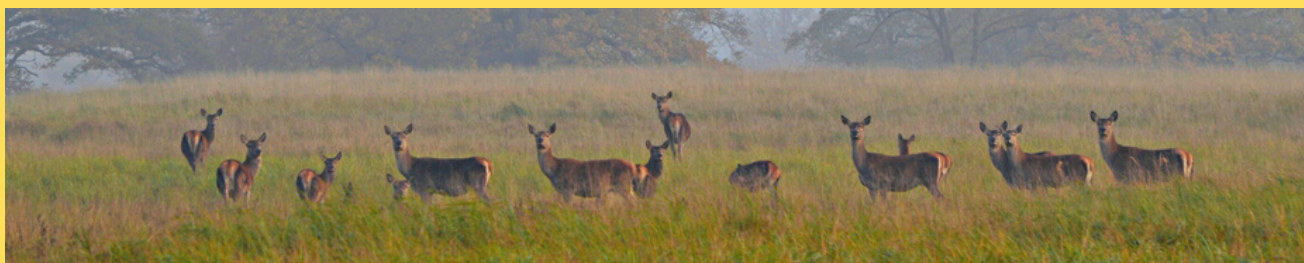


Photo Credit: Warren Farnell

Tree Nursery Planning



Illustration: James Cope

Topped by a paling fence and a planted hedge, the ha-ha will not just prevent deer from munching the young saplings inside, it will also provide other yields such as additional edge habitat for birds and small mammals, a source of food and useful materials for humans and wildlife, and an extra water source and additional wetland habitat due to the ditch.

Excitingly for us, the descendants of the Brigantes, like an iron-age hill fort, it will also provide a hidden sanctuary and communal area for creative human activities.



Illustration: John Wynne Heplans

As part of the design process, we are keen to hear imaginative ideas and suggestions from you, our members, about the activities, features and yields you would like to see this area provide for our community and wildlife.

To submit your ideas and suggestions please visit: <https://www.longlandscommon.org/design-ideas>

Site Rangers Corner

Meet Our New Rangers!



Photo Credit: Miranda Dunstan

By Miranda Dunstan

Our newest Site Rangers have now been trained! Eight new Rangers attended the latest induction session on Saturday 25th February. We spent the morning indoors covering our history, vision, plans for the site and relevant policies and procedures, before taking a stroll along the Nidderdale Greenway for a guided tour of a seasonally chilly Long Lands Common.

We took a peek in Carl's Shed, admired the views from The Mound, inspected the ponds and were pleased to see green shoots appearing on our newly planted 400 metre hedge.

We now have 30 fully-fledged Site Rangers making regular trips onsite to keep an eye on things, observe and record the wildlife and changing seasons and take lots of great pictures.



Photo Credit: Ian Burl

Our inaugural Site Ranger Social was also held in February, where we cosied up to the fire in the Gardeners Arms and chatted about all things Long Lands related over a pint or two. Chair Ben Skinner and Secretary Chris Kitson were on hand to answer any questions and take on board feedback from the group. A good time was had by all and we plan to make these a regular occurrence.

March also saw us trial a new online rota allowing our Rangers to book their preferred slots for the month.



Photo Credit: Ian Burl

A special mention goes to Tina Harper for her recent work collating all the observations made by our Site Ranger Team into a central spreadsheet. This will form a critical part of our records and allow us to monitor the changes which occur as we gradually realise the vision of transforming Long Lands Common into a woodland nature reserve for all to enjoy.



Photo Credit: Miranda Dunstan

If anyone would like to join our Site Ranger Team, we are still planning to hold future induction sessions provided there is enough interest, so do get in touch on: rangers@longlandscommon.org.

700 New Trees Planted

And also...

Ben reports on the biggest tree planting day yet.

On the 11th of March, more than 60 volunteers gathered on Long Lands Common to clear turf, plant saplings, apply tree protection guards, and spread mulch to stop grasses from competing with the young trees until they properly establish their roots.



The area chosen for planting on this day was Plot 3A on the Eastern field of the Common near the pond. This area will eventually mature into a plot with taller trees on the Southern side, and shorter trees on the Northern side (thereby preserving the view of the hills to the West, if standing on the Lookout point on the Eastern border of the site). Hey, I managed to include all four compass points in that sentence!



Species planted on the day included Pedunculate Oak, Sessile Oak, Small Leaved Lime, Hornbeam, Alder, Grey Willow, Downy Birch, Rowan, Wild Cherry, Field Maple, Crab Apple, and Aspen. Quite a variety!

Volunteers work together to plant and protect the saplings - and work hard to keep warm!



Photos in this article by Ben Skinner



The protection tubes will prevent our resident deer from eating a few hundred freshly planted saplings!

Once the trees are old enough to no longer need protection, the tubes can be re-used elsewhere for a new generation of young trees.



Every sapling, stake, tie and tube, was put by hand. After the work was finished, well, then we went on to do even more work!



Some of our volunteers worked to fit more protective tubes on the hedge whips on the West field.



One group dug in a collection of oak saplings in a temporary tree nursery, for use in a different planting session later in the year.

All in all, it was an incredibly productive day, and also saw more volunteers gathered at one time to work on the Common, than any other work day so far.

Spotlight: Wood Anemones



Photo Credit: Marc Andreu

By Artemis Swann

Whilst we eagerly await the arrival spring and the warmth of the sunshine, one little special flower blooms early to take advantage of the light available from the currently leafless trees above it. As you walk through the woodland you may come across patches or, if you are really lucky, a carpet of little white flowers. *The Wood Anemone* (*Anemone nemorosa*) blooming is a sure sign that the seasons are changing and green leaves will soon start to appear.

These little white star-shaped flowers spread using their root systems at a rate of six feet per hundred years so, if you come across them, it is highly likely that you are standing in an area of our irreplaceable ancient woodland. They also grow in old hedgerows and shady banks and can remain in lost wooded areas.

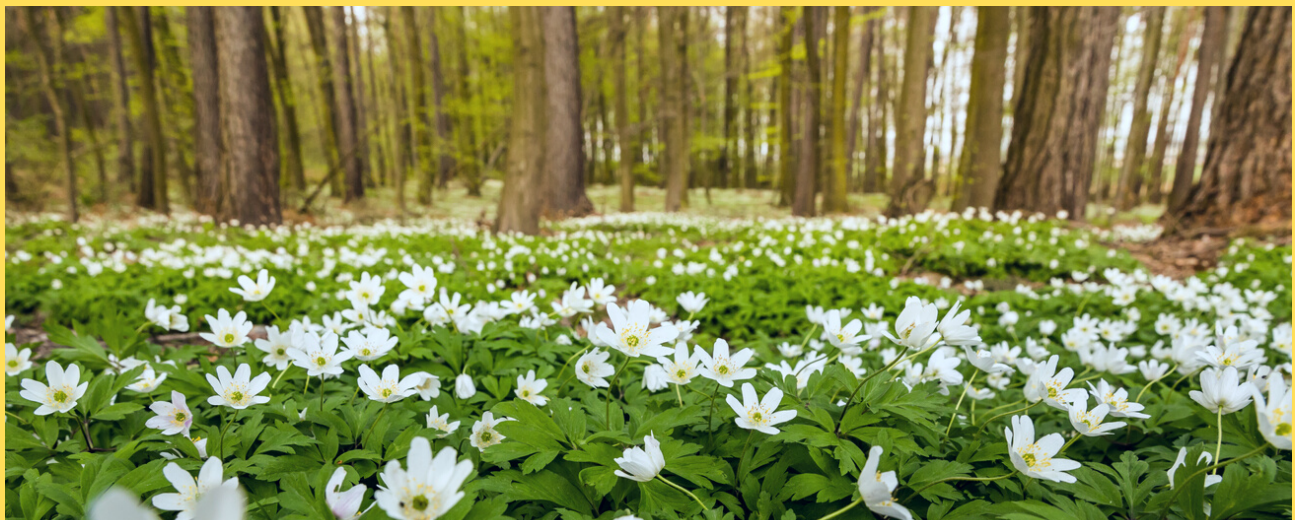


Photo Credit: Damian Kuzdak

Wood Anemones

Wood anemones are sometime referred to as 'The Windflower'.

In Greek mythology, Anemone (daughter of the wind) was a nymph beloved by Zephyros, who was one of the four Anemoi. They were the wind gods that represented the cardinal points of the compass and represented the wind of the West that blew gently, marking the end of the winter and the beginning of spring. When Chloris, the wife of Zephyros found out about the romantic encounter, she banished the nymph from her court, turning her into a flower bearing the name Anemone.



Illustration: Sandro Botticelli

In another story, anemones were born out of the tears shed onto the ground by Aphrodite while she was mourning the death of her lover, Adonis, who was killed by the gods due to their jealousy over his love affair with the beautiful goddess of love.



Photo Credit: Denis Doukhan

In other cultures, the wood anemone carries a mixture of positive and negative omens. The Ancient Egyptians believed that the anemone plant contaminated the air and associated it with illness, whilst in China the flower symbolises both healing and death. The ancient Romans considered wood anemones a lucky charm and would pick the first flowers to appear each year to ward off fever.

Other names for the wood anemone include names like 'smell foxes' due to its musky smell, 'grandmother's nightcap', and 'moggie nightgown'. The latter is used in parts of Derbyshire where 'moggie' can mean mouse, not cat.

You can see these wonderful little flowers between March and May in woodland near you over the next couple of months. Please don't pick them or dig them up and take extra care not to trample them!

Your Nature Finds

Despite the late cold snap, there is plenty of wildlife and nature activity going on on site!

Our ponds are attracting water birds like the Heron and Moorhen (Stuart Ibbotson). Stuart also spotted the Meadow Pipits in the trees! The Willow and other trees will soon be in leaf (Sandra Sweeney) and there is still a variety of fungi to spot (Angela Jex) all through the year.

The most exciting spot comes from Niall Littlejohn. It appears we have either a resident or frequenting Barn Owl!!



We would love it if you sent us your captures of what you've found and we'll do our best to feature them!

Email your photographs to: thelonglander@yahoo.com

or

Tag us in your pictures on Twitter [@LongLandsCommon](https://twitter.com/LongLandsCommon), on our Instagram [@longlandsccommon](https://www.instagram.com/longlandsccommon) or over on our [Facebook page](#)

