

The Treeresponsibility Newsletter



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Hello and welcome to Volume 2 Issue 20 of the treesponsibility newsletter, which is hanging its head in shame because it is SO LATE (it is the first one in 2015!!!). I hope you will all be mollified somewhat by the inclusion of our SOURCE learnings 2014-15 booklet, to make up for the spring/summer newsletters not happening. (It might also be the moment to think about whether 4 newsletters a year is a bit excessive. Would anyone mind if I dropped it to 2 or 3 from now on?). Ideally, I would like the next issue of the newsletter to be a bumper retrospective at the beginning of March to mark our 18th birthday and I would really appreciate it if people could send in stories/memories/comments/photos so we can make it a bit special - it could be a page or a paragraph, it's up to you. (P.S. don't forget to put the dates of the birthday week events in your new diaries as soon as you get them, because we intend to celebrate our "coming of age" in style – see diary dates on the back page).

Getting sites together has kept us busy all Summer, and I am delighted to be able to report that we have a solid work programme for the up-coming planting season (see opposite). I would like to thank the White Rose Forest, who sent out a "Trees for Yorkshire" leaflet to all our local landowners and passed on the contact details. Together with our stalls at Todmorden Show, Heptonstall Festival, and Blackshawhead Fete, this brought in 12 new sites, and we have been happily engaged doing visits and plans, in consultation with Stella Peterson from the Upper Calderdale Wildlife Group. There has been a lot of number crunching involved – the Woodland Trust are kindly providing all the trees, but they needed the tree order for the whole season by Mid August, with maps and other documentation too. Thank goodness Billy is a spreadsheet whizz!

All this means that we will be able to run Wednesday work-days from October-November, and Mid January till the end of March. Generally this will involve tree-planting, although there may be other jobs as well, such as fencing or coppicing willow. If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know beforehand by emailing treesponsibility@yahoo.co.uk or ringing Christina on 07709 690368. We'll arrange a pick-up and let you know the plans in more detail.

We are planning to experiment with our planting weekends this season, to try and get as many new people involved as possible. We thought that we might end up attracting more people (and therefore end up planting more trees) if we gave people the option of just doing one day's planting (on the Saturday) leaving Sunday free (if they wish) to go walking or sampling the delights of the valley towns. Christina is putting an advert in the Big Issue, and we are also encouraging our supporters to see if they can bring a group of friends along and help to publicise our events – particularly the gathering weekend 23rd – 25th October, and the weekend on the 13th-15th November (see details on back page).

Finally, I just thought I'd mention my visit to Heeley Hill with Billy and Keith last week. We originally planted the site in 2003 and it was quite a struggle to get it to establish, because of the exposed position, deer and sheep problems, and lean eroding soil. It felt really rewarding to return to the site and see a thriving young woodland and to learn that it is providing a base for children's summer residentials (in benders) as a teaching space for survival skills. A woodland ecosystem is developing, with fungi – brown roll rim, and birch boletus being widespread across the site. BlackBark will soon be installing fascines to tackle a patch of erosion (not in the planted area), and we also plan some "slow the flow" work with willow cuttings".

Hope to see you all soon
xx Dongria

Sites Portfolio 2015/16 Season (roughly in planting order!)

Over 10,000 trees plus hedgeplants

Valley Garden	We'll finishing this small site in Copley on a Wednesday workday
Croft House Farm	Another site to finish off, this time in the "Cornholme cluster". We hope to involve the local school.
Hollingroyd Farm	A site near Cross Stones, where we have planted a hedge and woodland in the past (both now thriving). We will be planting a firewood coppice.
Great Burlees Farm	A lovely site for Hebden Bridge schoolkids. We'll be planting a hedge.
Stake Farm	A small site near Mytholmroyd. Scout Road school will be involved.
Long Hey Top	Another site for Hebden Schoolkids, further up the track from Knott Wood
Hilltop Farm	A small Peckett Well site. Hopefully Old Town School will do this one
Less Colden Farm	A Colden catchment site for local schools.
Shore Fold	Another very picturesque site in the "Cornholme Cluster". We'll plant a "wildlife mix" of trees during the treesponsibility gathering.
Coppey Stone Barn	Another "Cornholme Cluster" site, (near Sagar Lane where we have planted previously). We'll be planting mixed willows and alder during the gathering weekend.
Raw Hey Farm	A nice big cloughside site in the "Cornholme Cluster" - this is the site earmarked for the November planting weekend and (possibly) a team from the Environment Agency.
Bluebell Lane Farm	A steep cloughside in the "Cornholme Cluster", for a Wednesday planting
Kheelham Farm	A small site for a Wednesday. (Bird issues limited planting area).
Acre Nook Clough	As well as tree-planting we will be doing "slowing the flow" work at this site in the "Midgelden brook Cluster".
North Midgelden Farm	Another "Midgelden brook Cluster", with a wildlife mix of trees and some slowing the flow features. We will also be doing some fencing.
Meadow Farm	A small site near Harvelin Park. We will be planting a wildlife mix with lot of hawthorn to provide berries for ring ousels. Also slowing the flow.
Swineshead Farm	The main planting on this site at Erringden will take place next season, but we will put in slowing the flow features and willow cuttings this year.
Higher Horsewood	We'll probably be planting this site at Lumbutts during the birthday weekend at the beginning of March. We have planted other trees at this site in the past.
Lower Birks Farm	A site where we plan to take kids from Todmorden schools.
Lower Springs Farm	A lovely hillside site near Triangle, a bit off our normal patch.
Higher House Farm	A steep scenic cloughside in the Cragg Vale catchment. We are aiming to plant this site at the beginning of April, at the GAPS weekend.
Heeley Hill	Not a tree-planting site (we have already planted there in the past), but a good site for Black-bark to do fascine work to treat eroding patches.

In Autumn 2016, we'll be planting a coppice at Swillington, two sites outside the SOURCE area (Calf Hey Farm/Ashday Hall Farm), a shelter belt at Hallstones Farm, trees at Withins Farm and Gorphey Dale farm and a hedge at Higher Mansfield House, Shackelton. More sites still needed.

Treesponsibility 14/15 Accounts and Projected 15/16 Income and Expenditure

Treesponsibility		
Income and Expenditure 01/04/14 – 31/03/15		Projected 01/04/15 – 31/03/16
Balance At Start	22022	28761
Income		
Grants	45346	25000
Donations	2612	2500
Subs	649	1200
Sales	138	200
Commercial (SUMA)	12512	11700
Commercial (Other)	1310	1000
Events	785	2500
Vehicle	293	500
In Kind Donations	10000	5000
Interest	69	68
Total	73713	49668
Expenditure		
Site Work	17470	16820
Materials	19985	10244
Fuel	2597	2590
Travel	1145	1140
Office	927	800
Development	5203	1750
Learning Events	6440	0
Sundry	1595	1250
Hostels/Food	3319	1770
Repair/Replace	469	450
Management	7825	4150
Total	66974	40964
Income Less Expenditure	6739	8704
Balance At End	28761	37465

Cash Grant Income 2014/15:

Environment Agency	15000
Cleaner Greener	15000
Woodland Trust	2530
Learning Events	4687
Big Tree Plant	2850
Forestry Commission	279
Hebden Royd	5000
Total	45346

Evaluation. (From a visioning meeting in June with updates where relevant).

On the **plus** side...

We are part of a network of other groups in the SOURCE partnership, the Environment Agency are likely to fund us for the next three years, and the Woodland Trust are giving us continued support (as well as our on-going income from SUMA). We have a reputation for delivery.

Treesponsibility provides 3 livelihoods as well as providing top-up income to a variety of people and other groups which is really useful in a time of austerity.

Billy is doing a superb job with information management and really enjoying doing the spreadsheets. This means that we have “requisite variety” - everybody has the up to date info they need. (A previous visioning meeting identified information exchange as a weakness so this is really good progress).

We have low overheads, and are small and flexible – this means we can fit into “small” spaces

We have committed and dedicated workers, and we are (generally!) patient when things go wrong.

We have a clear mission and strong core values. We have been able to retain our independence.

Our financial reserves are healthy. We have allocations for future site maintenance and vehicle replacement.

We engage with a lot of people, and have a lot of experience of running successful plantings and weekends. After 17 years, we can begin to see that our work can have an impact “at a landscape scale”, particularly when combined with the work of other SOURCE partners.

On the **minus** side, all this could disappear if we do not continue to bring in a stream of new sites. This vulnerability has been highlighted by two knock-backs over summer. If you read the SOURCE booklet you will see that we designed a Natural Flood Management scheme for Langfield Common, which later met with Natural England approval. However the scheme was rejected out of hand by the commoners. We also tried to push forward a bare peat restoration project with United Utilities for Lead Mine Clough in the Colden catchment, but the land has grazing rights so this was not possible. (Peat reprofiling will happen though, and there may be “slow the flow” options).

Another weakness is just that – weakness. None of us is getting any younger which means that we are not as physically able as we once were. If we are going to fulfil our goal of keeping the project going for 25 years without running out of steam, we will have to pace ourselves! We need to get more people involved. Perhaps weekends with just one day of tree-planting might be an answer.

We need to improve our on-the-spot decision making. It is a continual juggling act to keep the show on the road and things are (necessarily) constantly changing. We need to ensure that this happens as democratically as possible.

At the meeting, we discussed whether “inability to take on new ideas” was a weakness, but decided that it probably wasn't. Historically we have changed in response to developing contacts with outside agencies and new ideas which come in with new people. We don't want to get “stuck in a rut” though – we are not opposed to having a business-like element as long as it is in line with our core aims and principles. People are free to explore this and bring ideas to the group.

Ban the Burn News Updates

Regular readers of this newsletter will remember that in Spring 2014 Natural England brought out new draft guidance on moorland burning which caused uproar amongst the grouse-burning set. (We opposed it too, but in our case it was on the grounds that it was not tough enough!). Anyway, to cut a long story short the guidance was withdrawn. So what has happened since then...

1. Stakeholder Workshop - The National Uplands Outcomes Framework

... the months rolled by until in Spring this year I was invited to one of five “stakeholder workshops” hosted by the Heather Trust to discuss Natural England's “National Uplands Outcomes Framework.” Controlled burning is barely mentioned in the document, whereas much is made of the grouse moor industry's benefit to the rural economy. Its very obvious who NE is trying to please:

“Sustainable farming is vital to maintaining these valued landscapes. More locally, and more recently grouse moor management has added its unique blend of management which supports the large areas of heather dominated moorland seen from the Peak District north to the Scottish Borders”.

At the workshop Amanda Anderson of the Moorland Association said that she “got” the importance of sphagnum, but welcomed the fact that the issue of controlled burning had been “parked”. What we needed now was “Bottom Up Development” (!!)

The Heather Trust sent round a summary report after the workshops which gives a good indication of what this “bottom up development” really means:-

“For landowners and managers, the Outcomes Approach offers an opportunity to have a greater input into the development of a plan for the management of the land. Once the plan is agreed, they will be responsible for managing the land to achieve the agreed outcomes using their skills and experience, with less need to refer to regulations and external guidance”.

2. Mark Avery publishes his book on the grouse moor industry

If you are new to the whole issue of moorland burning, and the environmental impacts of the grouse moor industry, I can heartily recommend **“Inglorious:- Conflict in the Uplands”** which sets out the case for ending driven grouse shooting in the Uplands. As a birder, Mark is particularly concerned with the fate of the Hen Harrier – down to 4 breeding pairs in the whole of England - but the book gives a fascinating history of attempts to hold the industry to account for their land management practices. The Ban the Burn campaign gets a good mention. (I was also interested to see on p. 191 that Simon Thorp of the Heather Trust referred to us as “a rag tag collection of around 50 campaigners.” Hmmm!)

Mark rebuts the economic and other arguments put forward by the Moorland Association and concludes that “the problems caused by grouse shooting are absolutely, firmly identifiable and can be attributed to that activity and no other.” Driven grouse shooting should be banned.

Mark will be coming up to give a talk on Wednesday 14th October at Hebden Bridge Trades Club (7 p.m.). Tickets are £5 on the door, and the proceeds will go to the Ban the Burn campaign.

3. “Impact of Prescribed Burning on Blanket Peat Hydrology” Joseph Holden, Sheila Palmer, Kerrylyn Johnson, Catherine Wearing, Brian Irvine, Lee Brown. 2015

Back in 2014 the Ember Project reported on a five year study of 10 catchments (5 burnt and 5 unburnt) and reported that “river flow in catchments where burning has taken place appears to be slightly more prone to higher flow peaks during heavy rain” but this was “not a conclusive finding”.

Not any more. Over the past year further analysis has been undertaken and peer reviews have been conducted. This indicates that “for the largest 20% of storms, the hydrograph intensity of burnt catchments was significantly greater than that of unburnt catchments..... “Prescribed burning has important effects on blanket peatland hydrology at a range of spatial scales”.

i.e. In the worst storms, peak flows are higher from burnt catchments. Surprise, surprise.

4. Rory Stewart - New Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (with responsibility for flood management).

I happened to take a look at the Moorland Association website, and saw a news item about Rory Stewart's speech at the Game Fair. Here's what he had to say for himself:-

“We need to try and bring with us if we can the one million members of the RSPB but we also need to understand, grouse shooting is something which contributes a very significant and serious amount to the rural economy and rural areas.

“This is land which isn't in a conventional sense productive and it's important for our society and culture and getting that relationship right between the RSPB and moorland owners is going to be really important for the future, because these are the landowners who can provide so much in terms of habitat benefits.

“They have already proven across Britain that gamekeepers are really good at working with the environment. They have done fantastic things both in supporting species and driving out pests and if we can get that trust right, it's going to be essential, but I promise you it is something I am doing a lot of and it's not something I have easy answers.”

By coincidence, the lad had a constituency surgery the next day, so I decided to go and talk to him about the new Ember research – pointing out the millions of pounds of damage flooding had caused to our local economy.

His response? “Natural England lost the case at Walshaw. There's nothing I can do”.

6. Hebden Bridge Residents' petition.

The legal burning season starts again in October, so we have instigated a letter to landowners in the Hebden Bridge catchment which people can sign. We are informing the landowners of the new research and asking them to mow the heather rather than burn unless they can provide evidence that it is not increasing the flood risk in our town.

I WILL BE HANDING THIS PETITION OVER ON MONDAY 5th OCTOBER. IF YOU CAN HELP GET SIGNATURES BEFORE THEN, PLEASE RING 07847 815 926

Dates For Your Diary

Saturday 3rd October	Resistance is the Secret of Joy Hebden Bridge Trades Club 1- 5 pm:- Presentations on migrant and refugee solidarity, beyond austerity and more.
Wednesdays from 7th October	Volunteer Work Days. Please get in touch in advance if you want to come (see contact details below)
Wednesday 14th October	“Inglorious:- Conflict in the Uplands” Hebden Bridge Trades Club 7pm Mark Avery talks about his new book about the grouse moor industry (see page 6)
Weekend 23rd -25th October	Autumn Gathering 1/2 days tree planting, join us for the day or stay over £25 for 2 nights accommodation and great vegan food (see website/get in touch:-see contact details below)
Weekend 13th -15th November	Residential Weekend 1/2 days tree planting, join us for the day or stay over £25 for 2 nights accommodation and great vegan food (see website/get in touch:-see contact details below)
Weekend 5th - 6th February	Residential Weekend 1/2 days tree planting, join us for the day or stay over £25 for 2 nights accommodation and great vegan food (see website/get in touch:-see contact details below)
Weekend 26th - 28th February	Residential Weekend 1/2 days tree planting, join us for the day or stay over £25 for 2 nights accommodation and great vegan food (see website/get in touch:-see contact details below)
Weekend 4th - 6th March	18th Birthday Residential Weekend 1/2 days tree planting, join us for the day or stay over £25 for 2 nights accommodation and great vegan food (see website/get in touch:-see contact details below)
Wednesday 9th March	Treesponsibility Comes of Age 18th Birthday Party and Benefit Hebden Bridge Trades Club 7pm till late. The Story So Far, Open Mic, DJ Scott Hub's funky tunes, soul, drum & base. £5 on the door
Weekend 1st - 3rd April	Residential Weekend 2 days tree planting, join us for the day or stay over £25 for 2 nights accommodation and great vegan food (see website/get in touch:-see contact details below)
Weekend 8th - 10th April	Residential Weekend booked for a group but open to everyone for the day (see contact details below)

Note:- Apart from our Autumn Gathering and Birthday, all residential weekends are open for group bookings. It is a great way for your group to get together and celebrate something special or just the fact that you are a great group. Some weekends have already been offered to groups but are not confirmed so worth asking about. Weekend 8th - 10th April has already been booked by Manchester University Gardening and Permaculture Society. This has become their annual reunion now that most of them are no longer resident in Manchester.

Booking is necessary for all tree planting events including the volunteer work days

You can email us at treesponsibility@yahoo.co.uk

You can also ring or text Christina on mobile 07709 690 368