

Worsbrough Wet Woodland Rescue & Rediscovery

Project Evaluation



Project Summary

£99.4K



National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant



Project Delivery Dates



Restored priority habitats to support UK BAP Priority Species



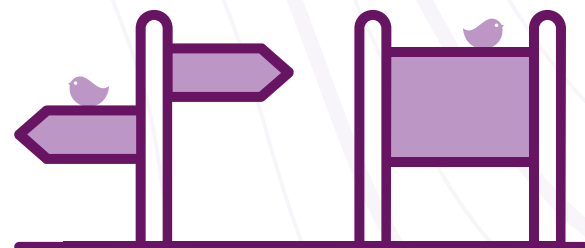
Commissioned specialist contractors to carry out work and support volunteers



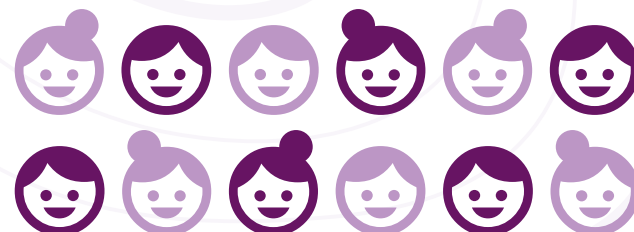
Restored Green Flag status to the site



Worked with natural history specialist groups, as well as groups supporting a wide range of people with diverse needs, to provide volunteering and skills development opportunities



Created three new and accessible walking routes and installed six new interpretation boards and signposted walking routes



Established a volunteer group that will maintain the site beyond this project, managed by Barnsley Museums Service Volunteer Manager

Approved Purpose:

Restoring priority habitats

The project has delivered significant enhancements to important grassland and meadows, the wet woodlands and reedbeds, hedgerows and the dry woodlands.

Highlights included specialist de-silting works to help restore the flow of water through the wet woodlands where it had become blocked due to a build-up of silt and debris.

Working with specialist contractors Ebsford Environmental, the work involved a small amphibious excavator to clear the debris and the construction of a new embankment structure.

New fencing and gates have now been installed, which will protect the orchard area from cattle grazing in the adjacent field and also ensures that site staff and volunteers can undertake work to maintain the orchard safely.

“A total of 15 summer breeding nests were found in Phalaris [Reed canary grass]. It was pleasing to see that management work on the willow carr has opened up the canopy to allow the Phalaris to grow thicker and stronger, making it more suitable for Harvest Mice.”

— Sorby Society Journal



Left: Before the works were completed.
Right: After the works were completed.
Bottom: Woven bank structure installed.

Approved Purpose: Restoring priority habitats

In April this year, Natural England announced the notification of the Dearne Valley Wetlands as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

This is because the corridor of sites is nationally important to breeding and wintering birds that use the wet grasslands, wetlands, open water and scrub habitats in the area. For Worsbrough Country Park, the main species of bird that this benefit is the Willow Tit which lives on the site and across the Dearne Valley.

The Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI links different pockets of valuable habitat at a landscape scale down the valley, and is a rare example of a number of linked sites in an area gaining the designation as opposed to one specific site.

Having this designation ensures the national importance of the site is taken into account in future decisions regarding its use and management.

Find out more here:

bmht.org/news/worsborough-wet-woodland-rescue-and-rediscovery

“The fantastic news that the Dearne Valley Wetlands is being designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest is testament to the incredible work of a huge number of people and organisations over many years. This designation demonstrates that through much hard work and commitment, it’s possible to see tremendous recovery of habitats and animals in areas where more than a century of industry has weighed heavily on the landscape.”

– Cllr Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture



Above: A new community orchard was created using specially selected local and historic varieties of fruit trees.

Approved Purpose: Commissioning specialist contractors to carry out work and support volunteers

Highlights included

- A fully revised Biodiversity Management Plan
- Training for staff and volunteers on:
 - The practicalities of delivering the Biodiversity Management Plan
 - Hedgelaying
 - Willow weaving
 - Traditional scything methods
 - Managing areas of dry woodland using selective and halo thinning techniques
 - Support for tidy days from specialist environmental team
 - Monitoring of bird species and populations on site, through bird ringing activities and undertaking a breeding bird survey.



Volunteers dead hedging.



Volunteer hedgelaying day.

Approved Purpose:

Restore Green Flag status to the site

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and the world.

Worsbrough Mill & Country Park has previously been awarded Green Flag status; however, this has not been achieved since 2014. Through the work facilitated by this project, it is hoped that this prestigious status can be restored to the site.

Following an on-site judging visit in September 2021, Worsbrough Mill & Country Park are delighted to be able to confirm that it has been awarded Green Flag status.

To celebrate this fantastic achievement, made possible through this lottery funded project and the hard work of volunteers and staff, a thank-you event was held on site in October 2021.

Thanks to the work that has now been established through the delivery of this project, it is hoped that the site will be able to continue to maintain this fantastic award in future years.

Find out more here:
greenflagaward.org/about-us



Celebrating our Green Flag Award.

Approved Purpose:

Work with natural history specialist groups, as well as groups supporting a wide range of people with diverse needs, to provide volunteering and skills development opportunities

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic brought serious disruption and challenges for this element of the project. Fortunately, expertise within the project and site team has enabled some of the specialist work to continue e.g. biological recording and conducting a harvest mouse survey.

Despite the considerable disruption for young people in education throughout 2020, this project was able to continue to support learning opportunities via a student placement from our neighbours at Wigfield Farm (Barnsley College).



“I chose to volunteer at Worsbrough Mill because as a part of my college course I am required to find a work placement where I can develop skills that will help me in future careers. My work experience co-ordinator and I decided that a placement at Worsbrough Mill would be a good match for me, as I am very interested in conservation...

I have found the volunteering experience very beneficial. During lockdown volunteering has helped to pass the time while still allowing me to gain valuable experience.”

— Freddie (student)

Approved Purpose:

Create three new and accessible walking routes and install six new interpretation boards and signposted walking routes

New signage and walking route maps have been created, and significant improvements to paths including resurfacing and widening to improve accessibility for everyone.

Barnsley Museums were fortunate to secure additional funding during 2020 to invest into the Mill and Country Park. As part of this work, site master planning activities have been undertaken, as well as extensive renovation of the mill buildings to create an extended café, a new shop and visitor centre thanks to the Culture Recovery Fund.

This package of works has also seen the development of a new overall signage strategy for the site, into which the creation of interpretation boards and walking routes has been incorporated.



Worsbrough Mill Museum.

Approved Purpose:

Establish a volunteer group that will maintain the site beyond this project, managed by BMBC Museum Service Volunteer Manager

Volunteering has certainly been challenging in the face of the ongoing Covid pandemic and the long cycles of associated lockdowns and restrictions. However, despite these challenges this project has adapted and revised delivery.

Rather than resulting in forming a singular volunteer group, several lasting volunteer initiatives have been created:

New regular Tue and Wed volunteer group

One of our team commented *‘Come rain or shine, this established group of regular volunteers are making sure the country remains in the good condition this project has enabled.’*

Weekly Youth Action Volunteering

Developed in partnership with Qdos Creates and Opening Doors, this group of young people have continued to be advocates for Worsbrough Mill, creating [videos](#) and working in remote collaboration during lockdowns and now successfully returned to site.

The Sheddars

The work to provide a studio base for the group on site at Worsbrough Mill & County Park will create a lasting legacy which will both support the group itself with opportunities for new uses, whilst also cementing a link with volunteers to contribute towards maintaining the site overall.

The partnership work between the Sheddars and the Worsbrough Youth Action Volunteers to create the Worsbrough Christmas Trail has also successfully demonstrated the opportunities for linking together different groups of volunteers with a common interest, even during a pandemic. This can now be used as an example for developing future volunteering activities with a range of volunteers all centred around Worsbrough Mill & Country Park.

“I attended Worsbrough Mill with Daniel yesterday morning. Catherine and the team were great introducing Daniel to the volunteering role. He said that he really enjoyed it, got something out of it and intends to attend again next week without me now he has confidence.”

— Social Prescribing Link Worker

“It saved my life.”

— Worsbrough Mill Volunteer in conversation with Volunteer Coordinator

**“Who does this belong to?”
“Us.”**

— Green Flag Judge question and Volunteer response

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer you can find out more here:

worsbrough-mill.com



WORSBROUGH MILL
WORKING MILL & COUNTRY PARK



BARNSELEY MUSEUMS