



A big thank you to all our volunteers for their continuing support throughout the autumn months. Winter is now upon us, though so far no repeat of the snowy scene above, with mild conditions prevailing. What will 2019 have in store?

Season's greetings to all our volunteers!

Visitor Numbers and Christmas Cheer

Thanks to our dedicated Heritage Guides we welcomed **9,871** visitors to the Lock Keeper's Cottage this year from January to 17 December. The Industry Barge welcomed **5,427** visitors in the same period.

Thank you all for sharing our Lagan Navigation heritage and stories with all our visitors from near and far.

As ever, our **thanks go out to our Heritage Guide Barbara** for her seasonal decorating of the Cottage, adding Christmas cheer for our visitors and volunteers alike.



Holiday Closures

The Cottage and Barge **will be closed from Monday 24 December until Wednesday 2 January inclusive.** Both will re-open on Thursday 3 January.

The only other public holiday this coming quarter will be the **St Patrick's Day Bank Holiday Monday** on **18 March**. Weekend opening arrangements will be in place for any Monday volunteers wishing to come in as usual.

Update on Conservation Tasks

Our Saturday Conservation Volunteers have been busy this quarter with a variety of tasks across the Regional Park in October and November.

Belvoir Oak Wood



For the first task of October, the volunteers were back at Belvoir Oak Wood - the young oak and mixed woodland planted by LVRP Volunteers with the local community and local school children ten years ago – to continue with vegetation clearance around the young trees. Much has been achieved this season at this thriving woodland and more to come next quarter with some hazel coppicing planned to give the oaks and slower growing trees more light and space to grow this spring and summer.

Mcllroy Park



The second task in October and the first in November, saw our Saturday team back at LCCC's Mcllroy Park for a spot of meadow management, alongside the annual woodland management tasks – vegetation clearance and hazel coppicing. The wildflower meadow at the car park end of the site had been cut by LCCC and our volunteers did a sterling job of completing the task – raking and lifting the cut vegetation to lower fertility on site and allow the flower-rich meadow to bloom again next year. They also made short work of the mass of brambles and overgrown vegetation in one of the woodland patches, where some hazel coppicing has also been started. More coppicing to come in January.

Clement Wilson Park



The second task in November saw the volunteers back at BCC's Clement Wilson Park, at the Bee-licious meadow. The meadow had remained uncut throughout the autumn by the party due to carry out the work, so thankfully alternative arrangements were able to be made at the eleventh hour. With the help of BCC Parks staff, LVRP staff, a power scythe, and our amazing team of volunteers, a large swathe of the meadow was finally cut on the Thursday and lifted on the Saturday - on the last conservation task of 2018! The volunteers were delighted to see that the fruits of their earlier labours (lots and lots of tree sapling removal!) had not been in vain, and that this important conservation work to maintain the species-rich grassland has taken a step forward. Well done everyone for all your hard work!

The **provisional schedule for Saturday Conservation tasks** for the upcoming quarter is outlined below. March's tasks will be confirmed in the New Year.
Please note that these may be subject to change, though as usual confirmation will be emailed prior to task days.

Date	Task	Venue	Meeting place
05 Jan	Woodland Management	Mcllroy Park	Drumbo Dog Racing Car Park
19 Jan	Woodland Management	Mcllroy Park	Drumbo Dog Racing Car Park
02 Feb	Woodland Management	Belvoir Oak Wood	Belvoir Drive Car Park
16 Feb	Woodland Management	Belvoir Oak Wood	Belvoir Drive Car Park
02 Mar	TBC		
16 Mar	TBC		
30 Mar	TBC		

A Message from our Chair



As you may know, we are focussing a lot on our finances at the moment. The funding we historically received from our partners - the two City Councils and the Environment Agency - is no longer certain. Apart from engaging with these partners to defend that part of our funding, we are also embarking on a whole new area of fundraising.

Over the next 2-3 years we will build up a whole new strand of financial support, from individuals who use the park, and who are on its periphery, to organisations who may want to support us. This also holds the exciting prospect of taking our community engagement to a whole new level.

As part of this we will be starting a new strand of volunteering, focussing on various fundraising activities. We plan to find a new group of volunteers to help with this. The work you are currently doing is hugely valuable to LVRP, and we need to keep doing that - and more. But if any of our current volunteers want a change of scene, we would be very happy to hear from you!

All the best and Happy Christmas!
Robert

Annual Report

The **Annual Report for 2017-18** is now available to view on our website on the Publications page. Hard copies are also available in the Park Office.

Park Event Programme 2019

The Events Programme for 2019 is currently at the design and printing stage, and will be available early in the New Year.

The first two events of the year are:

LVRP Events 2019

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Sat 12 Jan	Winter Wander	LVRP Visitor Centre
Fri 8 Feb	Winter Discovery Morning	Knightsbridge entrance to Lagan Meadows

Thank you...



We can never say thank you enough to all of our wonderful volunteers. Each and every one of you bring so much to the Regional Park each year - your time, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, your dedication and sheer hard work, and your passion for the natural and built heritage of Lagan Valley. The Park could not do what it does - for our heritage, our environment, our visitors and community - without you.

The annual volunteer outings this quarter - one heritage-themed for our Heritage Guides and one conservation-themed for our Saturday Conservation Volunteers, our Wildlife Surveyors and our Volunteer Rangers - and the Pre-Christmas Volunteer Get-Together served as a token of our thanks for all you do. We hope that you all enjoyed them.



Left to right: Heritage Guide Outing to North Down Museum in October; Conservation Outing to RSPB Portmore Lough Reserve in late September; Pre-Christmas Get-Together on the Barge in December

All that remains is to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in 2019!

Feedback

Don't forget to provide us with feedback. We are always interested to know of any issues, questions or suggestions you may have.

Volunteer uniforms

If any of our volunteers don't yet have a body warmer or one of our T-shirts, please let the staff know and we will make sure