



**A big thank you to all our volunteers for their continuing support throughout the spring months. It's been a bit of a mixed bag on the weather front this year, but summer is on the way, and we've been really glad to see that the Cottage garden has been attracting good numbers of bumblebees!**

### **Cottage Decoration – New throws and table displays**

Thanks to our Heritage Guide, Maureen, and our 'knitting circle' volunteers, the settee and armchair in the Cottage had a spring makeover with new patchwork knitted throws really brightening up the Cottage interior.

Thanks also go out to our Heritage Guide Barbara, who alongside putting on her annual Easter table display for our visitors and Guides to enjoy, has also been expanding her repertoire by creating table 'cooking scenes' – setting the table for soup making and baking – all adding to the living history experience the Cottage provides.



## Visitor Numbers

Thanks to our dedicated Heritage Guides, we welcomed **2,781 visitors to the Cottage** and **1,031 to the Barge**, from April to 25 June.

Visitor numbers for the Barge for June were a little impacted by a few closures – for /maintenance works on the stairs, and for repairs to the door following an unfortunate episode of criminal damage over a weekend. Thankfully damage was minimal and repairs were able to be carried out promptly, following incident reporting to the PSNI.

## Holiday Closures

The Cottage and the Barge will be **closed on Thursday 11, Friday 12 and Monday 15 July**, and for the August Bank Holiday on **Monday 26 August**.

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## Update on Conservation Tasks

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

Two new volunteer recruits also joined the team this quarter - thank you Lesley and Sheila and welcome to LVRP.

### Giant's Ring – Grassland Management: Young scrub removal



The first three tasks of the quarter saw the Saturday Conservation Volunteers back at the Giant's Ring, removing young gorse, blackthorn and bramble from the species-rich grassland on the banks of the prehistoric henge. Weather was very variable over the duration on site, but even Storm Hannah (above right) wasn't a match for our hardy bunch - thanks for all the hard work guys come rain or shine!



Having spent many sessions last year clearing vegetation from the historic boundary wall on site, in preparation for its assessment and restoration by the **State Care Heritage Branch of HED** (Historic Environment Division), the volunteers attended a training session/traditional skills demo in May to learn about the skills and techniques being used by the stonemasons to sensitively restore the historic wall. Many thanks to Stef, Paul and Willis from HED for facilitating this informative and enjoyable session.

## Glenmore Activity Centre – River Clean for Clean Coasts Week



The following fortnight saw the Volunteers team up with LVRP's Ranger Service and **Lisburn City Paddlers**, in partnership with LCCC, to undertake a river clean at Glenmore, as part of **Coca Cola Clean Coasts Week** (managed in NI by **Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful**).

A river and land-based work party tackled an in-depth river clean of a stretch of the Lagan at Glenmore Activity Centre, removing fallen branches and lots of rubbish - including the obligatory shopping trolley! Fallen trees and branches were cut up by the volunteers and made into wildlife habitat piles. Many thanks to all involved for improving the river environment for wildlife and recreational users alike, and we look forward to working with Lisburn City Paddlers again in the future.

## BCC Beelicious Project – Training and Project Filming

June saw the volunteers back at Clement Wilson Park – **BCC Beelicious Project** site. The HLF-funded project, across 8 NI Councils, aims to raise community awareness on semi-natural habitat and pollinator species in decline - through restoring native flower-rich habitats, providing training and workshops, and producing publicity and promotional materials. Our volunteers have been helping to manage the meadow at Clement Wilson, by removing suckering tree saplings. Training and publicity were also in the mix with a fantastic Grassland Species ID training session, and our volunteers and the site being showcased in the wider Beelicious project video.



Many thanks to Orla from BCC and Karl from Ecomantella for facilitating the training.

## Derriaghy Glen – Invasive species removal and litter lift



The second task in June marked a return to Derriaghy Glen for the annual task of removing the non-native invasive species Himalayan Balsam from the site. This annual plant grows quickly, shading out our native flora, then dies back to leave bare ground, leading to soil and bank erosion and silting up of watercourses.

Much work has been achieved at Derriaghy over the last few seasons in reducing the numbers of plants on site, but the work continues! A litter lift was also carried out, with 3 large bags of rubbish removed on the day – the majority from a small hotspot linked to anti-social behaviour. Good work - a litter-pick salute to you all!

The **provisional schedule for Saturday Conservation tasks** for the upcoming quarter is outlined below. 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
6 Jul	Balsam bashing	Derriaghy Glen	Yew Tree Walk
20 Jul	Balsam bashing	TBC	TBC
3 Aug	Scything training	Minnowburn	Minnowburn car park
18 Aug	Meadow Management TBC	Mclloy Park	Drumbo Dog Racing
31 Aug	Volunteer Outing	Surprise!	Lockview Road Car Park
14 Sep	Young oak aftercare	Belvoir	Belvoir Drive Car Park
28 Sep	Young oak aftercare	Belvoir	Belvoir Drive Car Park

### Volunteer Rangers and Wildlife Surveyors

Three **new Volunteer Rangers** joined the team this quarter – Deirdre in April, Steph in May and Gary in June. Gary came on board as a Volunteer Ranger as he was very keen to assist with graffiti removal along the towpath – an area he visits every day. Steph originally came to LVRP to carry out her Masters Research project – a small mammal survey along the towpath, with a focus on hedgehogs, and once here was also keen to volunteer with some practical work, and has been assisting the Ranger Service with site maintenance and vegetation clearance at the Giant’s Ring, along the Towpath and on site at LVRP Visitor Centre. Our long-term Volunteer Ranger Alec continues to do a fantastic job with patrols and litter picks throughout the Regional Park. Many thanks to you all.



Alongside assisting the Ranger Service with practical tasks, Deirdre also signed up as a **Wildlife Surveyor** and has been carrying out a monthly **Bumblebee Monitoring** transect, adding to our tranche of surveys across the Park – 6 in total - contributing data to this nationwide monitoring scheme, as part of the **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan**.

Three **Butterfly Monitoring** transects continue to be carried out weekly by our dedicated volunteers and staff, in partnership with **Butterfly**

**Conservation NI**. Many thanks to all involved for your important contributions throughout the survey season.

Our annual **Daubenton's Bat Waterway Survey** will take place again this August in partnership with **Bat Conservation Ireland**, so we will be looking for volunteer Wildlife Surveyors to undertake one daytime and two night-time surveys in teams of 2-3 on the six transects we monitor along the Lagan, as part of this all-Ireland monitoring scheme. Further detail will be sent out in July. For scientific methodology purposes, it is best to keep to team/site structure from the previous year/s as much as possible, so we will initially gauge how many of you can repeat from last year, and fill any gaps from there.

## Events – Thank you!

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped out at this year's **BCC Spring Fair in April**.

Unfortunately Storm Hannah led to Saturday's event being a wash out with minimal visitors and early closure.

LVRP's marquee was also a Hannah casualty having been wrecked by the storm on the Friday night.

Sunday's weather proved better, though visitor numbers were still low in comparison with previous years.

Despite all this, our stall proved very popular with families who had trouble getting their children away our minibeast hunts!

*Thank you!*

## Dates for your diaries



This year's **Volunteer outings** – one of our ways of thanking you for all you do for the Regional Park throughout the year, whilst providing the chance for all our volunteers to meet up, give us feedback, and also learn about Heritage and Conservation from other organisations, through their staff and/or volunteers – will be at the end of August.

The **Heritage Guide outing will be on Friday 30 August**.

The **Conservation outing for Saturday Conservation Volunteers, Volunteer Rangers and Wildlife Surveyors will be on Saturday 31 August**.

Locations have been planned, but will be remaining a surprise until nearer the time! Details will be sent out in due course, but for the minute, please add the date/s to your diaries.

## Investing in Volunteers Reaccreditation

We are currently in the process of undertaking assessment with **Volunteer Now** for the renewal of the **Investing in Volunteers Standard**, which sets a benchmark across **9 indicators and 46 practices** which organisations involving volunteers must meet to be awarded this national quality standard.

The first stage (self-assessment) has been submitted, and will be followed in due course over the summer by **assessment visits/interviews** with a percentage of staff, Board members and volunteers – the latter ranging across all volunteer roles and length of volunteer service. This year this will amount to 2 staff, 1 Director and 7 volunteers, which will be chosen randomly and anonymously by the assessor.

Many of you have been with us through the last renewal and even the initial award, so will know what is involved for those invited to interview – **a short informal chat** about various aspects of your experience of volunteering at LVRP – so for you, and indeed our newer recruits, there is really nothing to worry about. More detail about schedules will be sent out once we hear back from Volunteer Now, and the final award decision will go to the **UK panel in October**.



## Upcoming events - Annual events programme

Details of this quarter's annual events programme are outlined below.

Further details can be obtained from our printed programme, available from the Visitor Centre and other outlets, on our website and Facebook page, or by telephoning the Office on 028 9049 1922. Please note that events **must be booked** as spaces are limited.

Events are **free for our volunteers**, though donations are always welcome.

So why not come along to one of our upcoming events, or promote them to your family and friends – there is something there to interest everyone!



*For more information and to book a place on an event, please contact the Park Office on 028 9049 1922*

### LVRP Summer Events: July – Sep 2019

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Thurs 18 July at 7pm	Secret Garden	Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park
Fri 26 July at 12noon	Bumblebee Safari	Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park
Sat 27 July at 2pm	Butterfly Ramble	Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park
Fri 2 Aug at 11am	Summer Discovery Morning	Lisburn Island Centre
Fri 23 Aug at 5.30pm	Edenderry Evening Trail	Minnowburn
Sat 31 Aug at 11am	A Walk Among the Trees	Malone House
Sat 7 Sep at 10am	Source of the Lagan	Slieve Croob (Bus from Drumbridge)

### Feedback

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

### 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 you are supplied with these items.