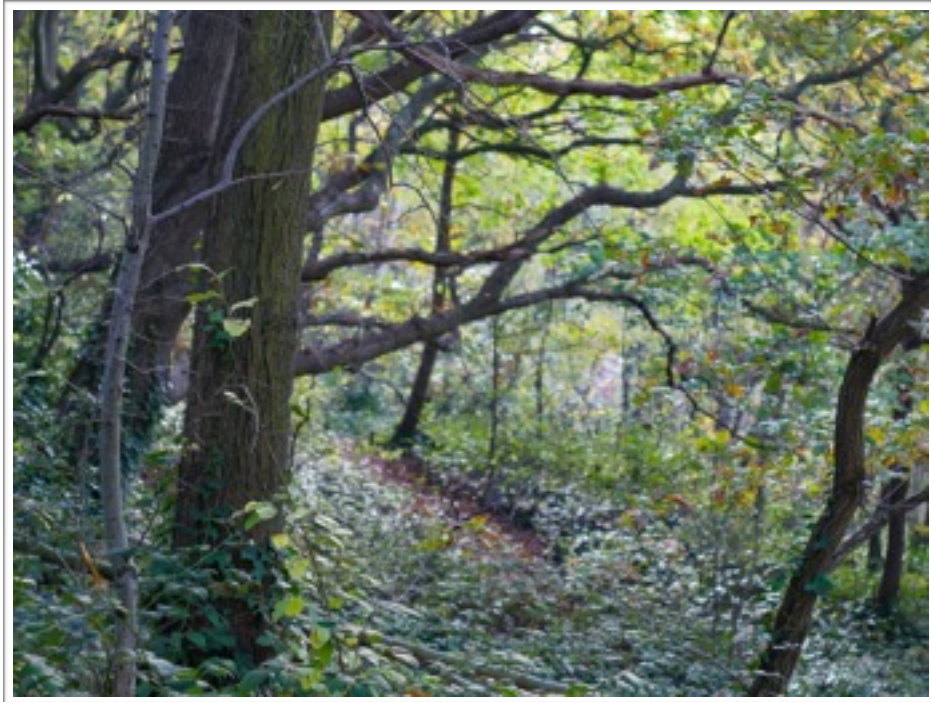


Fourth Reserve Foundation



Annual Report 2022 - 2023

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Fourth Reserve is a charity that was established by local residents in December 2017 to preserve and protect the New Cross to Forest Hill Railway Cutting and in particular the section that runs behind Buckthorne Road and between Courtrai Road in SE23 and Dalrymple Road. The charity manage 2 hectares as a nature reserve via license from Network Rail.

The Forest Hill to New Cross Railway Cutting is a Metropolitan Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. There are only three Metropolitan SINCs in Lewisham Borough including this railway cutting and yet despite this, areas are threatened by property development ownership, land encroachment and/or an absence of woodland management allowing the build up of fly tipping, rubbish dumping and invasive bramble inhibiting wildlife development. In addition the Buckthorne Cutting is now a Locally Important Geological Site (LIGS) and a section of woodland at Courtrai Road SE23 has been designated as Ancient Woodland.

In 2022 the Fourth Reserve worked towards five key objectives:

1. To embark on key biodiversity projects including commencement of a plum tree orchard restoration, meadow project and hedge laying along reed bed and railway line
2. To work with Local Authority to begin acquisition of Gorne Wood
3. To formalise new lease with Network Rail to support more biodiversity projects.
4. To secure projects such as Olive Leaf Circle, Heritage Walk.
5. To organise event and activities to mark the centenary of the Dandy Fifth Park opening in 1922



Green Jam Open Day 2022



This evaluation, conducted between January 2022 and January 2023, considers the Fourth Reserve's objectives and looks at outcomes achieved in order to generate a picture of the charity's effectiveness in meeting these objectives.

Project 1: To embark on key biodiversity projects including commencement of a plum tree restoration, meadow project and hedge laying along reed bed and railway line

The objective was to enhance current habitats on the nature reserve as well as creating new habitats in order to protect existing wildlife and attract a wider variety of wildlife.

Outcomes:

- With Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy funding from the Local Authority a we began restoring a neglected plum tree orchard. Training was provided by the Orchard Project to a team of volunteers and work began in line with a management plan.
- A hedgerow was created to enclose the orchard that involved a combination of live and dead hedge work and the planting of 50 hedgerow trees. This work was also funded by the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy funding from the Local Authority.
- Hedgerow was created along main pathways where groups of volunteers supported the project including university students and corporate volunteering from Criteo.
- In addition to bird surveys in 2022 bug and bat surveys were also carried out. The Buckthorne Cutting has a list of 27 bird species including owls and nesting sparrow hawks. The bug surveys commissioned by Network Rail listed 137 different bugs including 11 unusual species that should be encouraged through project planning and the bat survey detected bats on site.
- In 2022 the site was chosen as an ideal safe release site for hedgehogs and 13 hedgehogs in total were released with rail side residents supporting the project by building hedgehog homes, photographing any sightings of the hedgehogs and leaving out food/water. Throughout the heatwave of 2022 hedgehog water bowls were filled nightly all along the cutting to ensure hedgehogs were supported. In addition, in October 2022 a rescued owl was released on site after suffering from bruising and shock from being caught in scaffolding netting and approximately 60 rescued birds used the soft aviary on site to aid their release back in to the wild. Birds included robins, sparrows and gold finches. The rescue work has been through partnership with the Greenwich Wildlife Network.



Hedgehog release and new hedge row project 2022

Project 2: To work with Local Authority to begin acquisition of Gorne Wood

In March 2022 the Mayor and Cabinet confirmed that they would support the acquisition of Gorne Wood (also known as Dandy Park/Scout Hut Site) if the community was able to raise the funds required. We therefore embraced on an ambitious fundraising campaign.

Outcomes:

- From April 2022 several fundraising events took place to raise a target of £100,000 by the end of January 2023. Events included:
 - Two Open Days consisting of theatre, music, children's entertainment and refreshments.
 - A community remote control car race with merchandise, refreshments and raffle prizes.
 - A film screening of Fantastic Mr.Fox with talk/Q&A about foxes.
 - Sponsored London to Brighton Cycle ride
 - Sponsored Lewes to London cycle and walk.
 - Sponsored walk around the Capital Ring.
 - Sponsored Serpentine Trail run.
 - 4 school cake sales/assemblies and reserve visits
 - After school art and craft club fundraiser
 - Wear Green for Gorne School fundraiser
 - Centenary street party event - 100 years of Dandy Park
- The campaign attracted media attention that led to on-line donations and drew attention from outside the local area. Media footage included:
 - Media event with Ecosia
 - 8 News articles - local and national
 - BBC London Radio interview
 - ITV London News interview
 - BBC London News interview
 - Student news coverage
- Pro-bono support was given from DLA Piper Solicitors, Kennedy Woods Architects, several artists and designers, fundraisers and other groups such as Climate action Lewisham and Extinction Rebellion Lewisham.

The campaign was successful and the funds were raised ready to begin the acquisition process in 2023. The charity was voted Community Heroes by Lewisham residents and we were asked to share success and advice to several other groups such as St.John's Society, Climate Action Lewisham, East London Lines, Campaign to Protect Rural England, campaign group protecting woodland in Tunbridge Wells and Trees for Democracy campaign group.



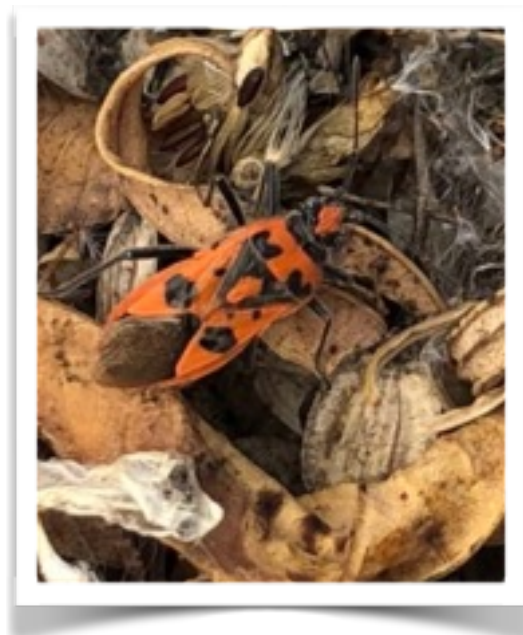
Peppermint 500 fundraising event 2023

Project 3: Formalise new lease with Network Rail to support more biodiversity projects.

The objective was to negotiate a new partnership with Network Rail to give greater security and more opportunities for biodiversity. The previous arrangement consisted of a 5 year license that did not have the same legal protections as a lease and with such a short license period it made it difficult to plan long term and apply for larger funding opportunities.

Outcomes:

- We worked through conditions of a new lease to ensure that current activities are supported and restrictions are revised to enable us to carry out important work.
- We negotiated a long term lease of 25 years. This will give any funders confidence in the charity and it's partnership with land owners.
- The lease as opposed to a license will mean that the charity are added to the land registry and we will be able to object to any adverse possession claims that could threaten nature reserve habitat.
- The negotiations also enabled us to form a partnership with the Network Rail environmental team who commissioned a series of bug surveys in order to support the creation of meadow areas along the embankment and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) that will give us additional ponds important for wildlife.



Leaf pattern by the Cherry Leaf Minor bug and the brightly coloured Corpus Hyoscyami bug 2022

Project 4: Secure projects such as Olive Leaf Circle, Heritage Walk

The objective was to secure funding and partnerships to progress key projects in the future.

Outcomes:

- Following a successful heritage walk in collaboration with St.Hilda's Church the church community lead obtained funding to deliver the project in 2023. Unfortunately the project lead has had to leave due to long term sickness and the project has been put on hold while they review their funding and staffing.
- We received funding to create a tea garden space for the Olive Leaf Circle Project and a meeting has been set up with the Refugee Council to embark on the Olive Leaf Circle in Summer 2023 following the success of the female refugee project in 2021.
- Other pilot projects are in early stages including link volunteering project with University of Arts London and a school link project. These will be reviewed in 2023.



Prendergast Primary School Wear Green for Gorne Day and John Stainer School Eco Council visit 2022

Project 5: Organise event and activities to mark the centenary of the Dandy Fifth Park opening in 1922

The objective was to have a community celebration outside the Gorne Wood/Dandy Park site to mark 100 years since the site was opened as a park by the Mayors of Lewisham and Deptford.

Outcomes:

- We worked closely with the local residents group and the local scout group to plan a community celebration where two roads were closed to facilitate a street party.
- The following groups participated in the event:
 - 3rd Crofton Park Scouts had a stall and activities for children
 - The residents group had art and craft stalls for children
 - Nunhead Community Choir sang several songs
 - A folk band played music
 - A theatre group provided a street performance as part of the Lewisham Borough of Culture project
 - Various children's games and activities were provided including face painting, giant dominoes, skipping
 - A history stall shared the story of the scouts and the local area
- The celebration raised funds for the save Gorne Wood Campaign and was well attended with over 1000 visitors over the day
- Awareness was raised about the Save Gorne Wood Campaign in the local community.



Nunhead Community Choir and community enjoying the 100 Year celebration 2022

Additional outcomes:

Aside from the four key objectives there were also a number of additional outcomes that are worthy of note. During 2022 most of our time was dedicated to the fundraising campaign to buy Gorne Wood but there were plenty of unexpected outcomes.

Outcomes:

- A documentary called London Grows was completed and screened. The Fourth Reserve were one of the London green spaces chosen for the documentary and we enjoyed attending the screening and answering questions from the audience. The project documented 9 green spaces that have flourished in the city despite development and included a Women's Garden, allotments, graveyards and railway cuttings like ours.
- 4 Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers were able to complete their bronze awards through volunteering at the nature reserve. The volunteers were from Sydenham School and Kingsdale School.
- As a partner of the London Wildlife Trust's Great North Wood project we took part in several activities at the nature reserve including school visits and volunteering sessions with London Wildlife Trust volunteers.
- Our membership doubled thanks to the media attention of the Save Gorne Wood campaign and now includes members outside of Lewisham, across London and even in other parts of the world such as New Zealand.



ITV News coverage, London Grows screening and Great North Wood project 2022

6) Income and Expenditure: In 2022 the Fourth Reserve received funding from the Local Authority with neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Funding, from community donations and from Lewisham Lottery and Amazon Smile.

To be added - awaiting auditing of accounts.

7)

Conclusion

The Fourth Reserve achieved its key objectives in 2022 however some projects are on-going and works will continue. In 2023 we aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Continue biodiversity projects i.e. hedgerow creation along the rail track and additional ponds with grant funding.
- Review the charity governance and formulate a robust management structure and a 5 year Plan in order to ensure the charity can maintain projects in to the future, meet the needs of the local community and prepare for growth as a result of the Gorne Wood acquisition.
- Secure core funding to pay for essential posts needed for the next 5 years.
- Review pilot projects undertaken and formalise partnerships most with successful projects
- Create a clear vision for Gorne Wood and share with community and membership.
- Complete new website and external signage for fence lines on Eddystone Road and Dalrymple Road.



Red cracking bolete mushroom 2022



Juvenile slow worm 2022

Anna-Maria Cahalane-MacGuinness
Chairperson

Fourth Reserve Foundation
<https://www.fourthreserve.org.uk>
fourth.reserve@yahoo.com

March 2023