



ROCHDALE FIELD NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

Aug 2023 Newsletter

August Dates

Sat 12th Aug : Coach trip : Whisby Nature Park, Lincoln ***Booking needed***

Thurs 24th Aug : Local Walk : "Byways of Inner Rochdale" : 10.00am

Advanced warning : Sat 16th Sept : Coach trip to Conwy & the Great Orme

More details in next month's newsletter.

Keep an eye on your email, our website, WhatsApp group and Facebook page for any updates to these proposed events.

www.rochdalefieldnaturalists.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/965410946937744/

Coach Trip : Sat 12th Aug 9.00am : Whisby Nature Park, Lincoln: Roger & Pam Crofts

Whisby Nature Park near Lincoln is a beautiful landscape with many walks and trails.

Once barren and lifeless it now abounds with wildlife. The park was created by quarrying for sand and gravel but nature has reclaimed the pits and bare sand, creating habitats for many species.

The lakes are surrounded by grassland, marsh, scrub and willow carr. Elements of the original quarry landscape remain, with fragments of heathland, old hedgerows and small oak woodlands. In summer flocks of tits and finches are joined by swallows and martins feeding over the lakes. Chiffchaffs, Garden and Reed Warblers can be heard.

The Nature Park has been designated a Dragonfly Hotspot by The British Dragonfly Society. When we did the recce in July, we certainly saw large numbers of both dragonflies and damselflies.

The Whisby Natural World Centre and cafe is open until 4.30pm. Information about wildlife and a latest sightings board is available in The Wildlife Barn and Education Centre. There are six way marked trails ranging from 1.2 to 3 miles. There are no stiles. Paths are level and, in many places, have a hard surface of compacted limestone.

The trip is open to members as well as friends and family. The coach will leave Manchester Road cul-de-sac, Rochdale OL11 4HY at 9-00 a.m. prompt and will set off on its return journey at 5 p.m. The cost is still £20. Contact rfnspublicity@gmail.com with any queries. Please pay your £20 beforehand by bank transfer: Sort code 05-07-67 Account number 60931963 and use your name as reference. **Then email rfnspublicity@gmail.com to book your place on the coach by 4th Aug.** **Please note that your place is not reserved until you receive a reply to that email.** Cheques should be made payable to "Rochdale Field Naturalists' Society".



Local Walk : Thursday 24th Aug 10.00am : "Byways of Inner Rochdale" : Rick & Karen Cowley

You are invited to join us either for a leisurely morning or stay all day (walking a maximum of 4 miles) discovering the wildlife of open green spaces very close to the centre of Rochdale.

Meet – outside Mandale Park on Manchester Road – **Note the Start time of 10.00am**

Parking is available at the top end of Old Manchester Road in front of Beech House School which won't be in session. (OL11 4JQ; Grid reference SD 891 125)

For 1 ½ to 2 hours in the morning we will check on the condition of the grassland, wild flowers and insects in Mandale Park which was a former Landfill Site until it was transformed into an urban green space about 40 years ago. Members of RFNS have recorded there at different stages of its development. We can compare our findings in 2023 with earlier species lists which might be helpful in talks with GMEU and the local authority about Local Nature Recovery generally and specifically along the Roch Valley.

Those staying with us for the day will then head for Springfield Park, walking along some of the hidden byways of Inner Rochdale shown on our late member, Donald Taylor's, map.

There we'll have our picnic lunch where there are plenty of benches, toilets and perhaps even an ice cream van! If the day is fine there's a chance to check out pollinators on the long herbaceous border which our members Pamela J, Celia M and Ruth H have been restoring along with other Green Volunteers.

After Lunch a short leg stretch on good paths will take us through different habitats: playing fields, golf course and deciduous woodland until we reach the sturdy steps which lead down to the footbridge over the mighty River Roch. Again, following one of Donald Taylor's routes we will walk along easy wooded footpaths upstream to the former Pony Club site which is owned by United Utilities. Pete K led us there in December 2021 and we thought it could possibly be developed into an urban nature reserve. A summer afternoon spent examining this large area of grass and scrubland next to the river will provide us with more information about its potential, particularly in meeting targets for Local Nature Recovery.

From there it is an easy walk back to Mandale Park.

Note that after heavy rain some parts of the route can be muddy. We will do another recce the week before and you can ring us on 01706 853791 to get an update.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy. (LNRS) : Karen Cowley

Those of you who attended the Zoom meeting with Theresa Hughes from the Ecology unit in March 2022 will remember that GM was one of 5 local authorities which piloted LNRS for DEFRA – and since 2022 the new Environment Bill makes them mandatory throughout the UK. They aim to map where **local habitat improvement and restoration** could address national environmental objectives like **Biodiversity and resilience to climate change**.

Paul Barrington & Stuart Fraser in the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) are putting together a “**State of Nature**” section for the Greater Manchester LNRS which will report on the data and people's views about what has happened with nature in recent years, cons and pros. They will create some distribution maps to compare changes in species range since the 1990s as well as gather information from GM Ecologists and Natural England etc.

Paul has asked for our opinions of what should be presented in the report, given our combined knowledge of Nature in Rochdale.

I'll forward any information and ideas you wish to share with GMEU.

Karen Cowley k.cowley@whitworth46.myzen.co.uk

Reminder : Indoor Meetings

The autumn programme of Indoor Meetings starts on Thursday 14th September with a talk about Preventing Raptor Persecution by a member of the RSPB staff. These continue on the second Thursday of the month through until April 2024.

September Newsletter

If you have something you would like included in the September newsletter, please send it to rfsnewsletter@gmail.com by Thursday 24th August.

Newsletter Title Colour Coding :

Green = Society Information

Red = Member Contribution