



Larry Winger
Allendale L.C.



DISTRICT 105N

2021-22 Environment Bulletin 4

What we are doing to help reduce and reverse the impact we have on our environment.

Malcolm Hogg

District Environment Officer



Fellow Lions,

Firstly, I must apologise profusely for the lateness of this bulletin. Unfortunately, I caught Covid and although it did not seem to hit me that badly, it seemed to take forever and a day to get back to fitness. This has meant that much I would have liked to include in the bulletin, which should have been released in early spring, has now missed the boat.

A huge thank you to Morpeth and Ryedale for sending in items for Round the Clubs. I am sure that other Clubs are planning, or are undertaking environmental projects before the end of the Lions year and I wish you all well with them. Can I take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed to the bulletins this Lions year. Your willingness to share your contributions are not only appreciated by myself but by our readers. You may well have inspired others.

This is my favourite time of year. The lush greens of new growth, birds singing and the bright colours of spring flowers. Queen bumblebees are everywhere feeding with frantic haste as they start new colonies. Up here in the frozen North, we moan because of the shortness of our days in winter. In summer, however, it does not get properly dark for more than an hour or two. This means that the early bird may not just get a look at a worm but may see foxes, badgers, stoats and weasels or some of the shy birds which generally avoid humans. It is worth getting up early to see these things in the flesh!

District Convention

A good number of Lions attended the Convention and heard Ellie Jackson deliver an inspirational talk on ocean plastic and the importance of educating young children from as early a stage as possible in the importance of environmental concerns. Many Clubs have signed up to assist deliver this, in their local areas, through the primary schools. Ellie will have a stand at the MD Convention in Birmingham and will also be on the Environment component of the GST Roadshow.

This is also a good time of year for making bug hotels for gardens (as shown in the last bulletin). With local fairs, it is a good way to establish environmental credentials and give them away as freebies. The costs are so low as to be non-existent and dozens can be made very easily in a very short time. As long as you have access to branches, a Lion with a saw, and a few Lions with different drill bits can produce them by the dozen!

Around the Clubs

Morpeth Lions Club

Without a doubt, the crocus is one of the most popular flowers in the UK. Early colour after a grey and drab winter and its ability to withstand high winds rain and snow make it such a welcome arrival. The value of crocuses to the wellbeing of people cannot be overstated. How many people have their spirits lifted by a bed of crocuses?

Crocuses not only cheer up humans but also provide early pollen and nectar for early insects. What could be better than a flower which improves the mental well-being of people at a fairly miserable time of year AND helps nature?

Morpeth lions, working with Morpeth Rotary, have planted Morpeth's "Path of Hope" to recognise the work of the UK National Health and Emergency Services and the number of lives they have saved. This has included a mass of crocuses.



Morpeth have also undertaken a planting project at the railway station which will enhance the appearance and welcome to Morpeth for rail passengers



In addition, Morpeth Lions Club is continuing to enhance a woodland bank in the town's Carlisle Park Garden. The garden was inspired by William Turner – the father of English Botany. Turner was a theologian, physician, herbalist and ornithologist as well as a botanist! Morpeth Lions planted 40 trees and 12 fruit bushes on the bank in 2012 to commemorate its 40th anniversary.



The Club is looking to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by planting an oak tree or trees in Morpeth. The town holds oaks in special significance as Admiral Lord Collingwood (of Battle of Trafalgar fame) lived in the town and planted hundreds of acorns in the town and Northumberland for building the ships of the future. Times change but the oak trees are still there.

Before the Battle of Trafalgar, Collingwood said to his seamen and marines

“Now, gentlemen, let us do something today which the world may talk of hereafter.”

Although it was not what he meant, his tree planting is also achieving that

Not finished yet! Morpeth Lions also planted the Northumberland County Blind Association garden which had fallen into disuse. Plans are being made by the NCBA to make the garden more appropriate for the visually impaired and Morpeth Lions are intending to bring the plans into fruition.



And there's more! This is not the whole story of Morpeth Lions environmental efforts. The Club continues its ongoing litter picks and is in the process of linking with primary schools to establish bug hotels.

The Club environmental group can be very proud of their achievements. They are enhancing the local environment for the community as a whole as well as the disabled within the community. They are tree planting at a time when all parts of the country have suffered losses. Like Collingwood, they are planting a living legacy which could be still living in a thousand years. They are assisting biodiversity with their bug hotels and planting early flowers and are showing what can be done by working with other groups. My congratulations to team leader Chris Offord and his team for excellent projects.

Ryedale Lions Club

Congratulations also go to Ryedale Lions Club who have completed a further tree planting in Kirkbymoorside. Seven members of Ryedale Lions Club planted 150 trees complete with stakes and protectors in Manor Vale Woodland, Kirkbymoorside.

The Club had approached the Kirkbymoorside Environment Group to see if they could nominate an area of land for tree planting and were allotted The Glade in Manor Vale Woodland. The Club planted trees which were native to the area, which is ideal for encouraging biodiversity, as it provides both an appropriate habitat and also food for native animals. The trees planted were oak, alder, silver birch, cherry and blackthorn.

Ryedale Lions intend to re-visit the site to replace any failures and to trim around the base of trees to ensure the trees receive optimum water and nutrients. Again, this ensures that their efforts are not going to waste and that every effort is being made to give the young trees the best chance of survival.

They are also looking to form a partnership with Kirkbymoorside Environment Group to assist them with woodland management in the future which is excellent for the Club environment group and also to the benefit of Kirkbymoorside Environment Group.

Many congratulations Ryedale. One hundred and fifty trees is a lot to plant for a small group, especially when it is including stakes and protectors. In the (fairly) modern parlance – Respect!!



Bare walls

One Lion I spoke to at Convention told me that he had a very small garden enclosed by a breeze block wall so there was little he could do to encourage wildlife to visit. He was surprised when I told him that there was quite a bit he could do, even if his garden was small. He might not encourage herds of wildebeest to visit but he can make the garden more attractive to our smaller fauna. Getting rid of the bare walls is the simplest way to provide a suitable habitat and food source for invertebrates.

Trellises are usually available for a song at cheap outlets. Covering the walls with that and planting a range of climbing plants can be a huge boost to local invertebrates, if you pick the right plants.

Ivy is one of the more popular plants used to cover bare walls but is of very limited value as well as having the potential to destroy the wall. Nothing much feeds on it. Nectar and pollen feeders usually gain very little from it and the only thing it is providing is shelter and cover.

Planting flowering plants to climb the walls is better, using some of the varieties of Clematis, or even climbers like passionflower are a boost, if you are in a sheltered position. Planting a range of different climbers will encourage a range of different flying insects.

Another way to enhance a small garden space with bare walls is to use containers with shrubs which will stand being in a container against the wall. Cotoneaster is one which can do really well and is loved by bees, hover flies and all sorts of wee flying insects.

Personal commitment.

These are the commitments that appeared in Bulletin 3. Have you tried any of these yet? If not please consider giving them a serious effort. Our society is wasteful and we look for easy ways and our convenience. This costs us hard earned cash as well as playing its part in destroying the environment for our children and grandchildren.

- 1.Reduce the number of car journeys you undertake. Car sharing or using public transport is better. Making one planned journey rather than multiple ones saves money and pollution.
2. Have 1 or 2 meat free days per week.
3. Waste less food. Freezing things close to their use by date, meal planning and using a shopping list for food (another tip is not to buy food when you are hungry- you buy more). Check on line what you can freeze – you would be surprised!
4. Buy food you can guarantee is produced locally and is in season.
5. Plant insect friendly flowers (particularly bee friendly).
6. Don't buy items with huge amounts of plastic packaging.

7. Scatter 10 bug hotels in your garden.

8. Grow your own vegetables.

How many of these could YOU do?

What could your Club do?

1. Plant trees - helps reduce your carbon footprint and improves biodiversity.

2. Act as an outlet for upcycled resources.

3. Beach cleans, litter or plastic picks.

4. Run a campaign asking or encouraging the community to take individual actions.

5. Place Environment high in priority in your programme – nothing is more important.

6. Support or recognise individuals, companies or industries who are making genuine efforts to be environmentally friendly.

7. Support local schools' Environmental education. Purchase of books for younger kids – organising tree planting with older pupils.

Gleaning

A truly horrifying amount of food grown goes to waste and never sees a shop, let alone a table. Up to 30% of the food grown in the UK is not harvested. Mechanised harvesting leaves some vegetables which are too small or too deep to be financially worthwhile to harvest. Other vegetables which are harvested manually are left because the pickers are not prepared to take the time needed to harvest from the weedier, sides of the fields as. This would usually be ploughed back into the soil. Chris Hibbert reported recently that 3000kg of leeks were gleaned from one field which were donated to local food banks. Selection for supermarkets means that most of the misshapen vegetables are rejected as unfit, although this has started to change.

Given the emphasis on the high costs of food, there is an opportunity here for Lions Clubs to address one of our core service areas – hunger. The cost-of-living increase is driving many into food poverty. If a Lions Club can link up, with a farm, a gleaning afternoon or weekend could be arranged which will provide much needed food for food banks. Lions in England and Wales are linked with The Young Farmers Association so contacting a local Young

Farmers group might lead to links with Clubs being established. Gleaning leads to much more efficient land use and so is environmentally good news.

MD Environment Photographic Competition

Just a heads up that the rules for the competition are to change for next session. The new rules will be sent out at the beginning of the new Lions Year. Photographers and coordinators please note the procedural changes and the new categories.

The fun competition run in the bulletin this Lions Year showed what great talent we have in the District, with splendid wildlife photography. Let's get snapping over summer!

Safety first

With restrictions now being lifted everywhere and Clubs, perhaps, looking for environmental projects to undertake we need to remember that the virus is still out there and also that the Lions insurance policy does NOT cover Covid related issues. Nevertheless, working outdoors gives us an opportunity to meet in relative safety, as many activities lend themselves to maintaining social distancing. When planning any event, we must consider the safety of our members and the general public, especially if we involve them in participation. Worth highlighting in this are the potential hazards which might be met in collecting litter and how to minimise the risks.

Malcolm Hogg D.O. Environment

Needing help?

Drop me an email or give me a call.

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Wishing you a happy and environmentally friendly Summer,

Malcolm Hogg