

Report on Activities April 2022 – May 2023

The Greener Greenhill network developed from September 2021 and we incorporated as a group in March 2022, in order to be able to access funding. We held our first formal meeting in March 2022 and appointed a small Steering Group which guides and supports some independent projects and promotes and supports work on climate change and nature recovery led by partner groups and organisations in the local community. This report will cover the GG organised events since March 2022 and those we have supported.

Greener Greenhill organised projects and events

Great Big Green Week: In September, we organised a whole week of events as part of the national Great Big Green Week. This started off with our 'Splash on the Grass' outside the library where there were stalls on a variety of topics including on waste and recycling, energy efficiency, nature & local green spaces, active travel including e-bike trials and the local Better Buses campaign. It was a busy, fun day – and the sun (just about) shone throughout.

During the week, there were three evening talks - on Sustainable Food, Climate Science and Engineering Solutions and Insulating Your Home, two guided walks – our own circular walk (see below) and another by partners Beauchief Environment Group around the areas they manage on behalf of Sheffield Council. We also organised a session with our three local councillors to discuss issues related to the climate and nature emergency and how these are being addressed in Sheffield and finally an evening showing of '2040' a climate solutions focussed documentary.

Alongside these events our partners Greenhill Community Apple Pickers and BEG had stalls at the Splash on the Grass, a clothes swap was organised by a local team and both Storytime in the library and the Fun Palace event at Lowedges had a green theme.

Together, these events, which were advertised widely with a leaflet drop through 5000 doors and also covered in the local press, raised the profile of Greener Greenhill both locally and across the city.

Walking & Cycling: Following on from a successful first session in October 2021, we have held two further Bike MOT events with the aim of making people feel more confident to get their bikes back in use for fun and travel. Staffed by expert volunteers, each of these events has brought 12-15 bikes back into use.

We developed an 8 mile circular walk, more or less around the Beauchief and Greenhill ward boundary and applied for funding to design and print 1000 copies of this which we are distributing for free. The walk is also available as a pdf and over 150 were requested by email. This walk, as well as encouraging healthy activity, showcases some of the many green spaces we have around us and links together existing paths in an unfamiliar way. It was sponsored by the South Yorkshire Community Foundation.

More recently, working with local churches in Greenhill and Lowedges, we have developed a much shorter walk which links Greenhill Methodist Church, St Peters, the Michael Church, and South Sheffield Evangelical Church. Each of these churches has installed or upgraded a bench for walkers to rest and enjoy a small bit of nature and have also identified when 'a loo and a brew' facilities are available during the week. The leaflet was sponsored by the People Keeping Well initiative.

Waste & Recycling: Following on from the successful TerraCycle collection of empty toothpaste tubes etc, people suggested we look at collecting blister pill packs. It was tricky to find somewhere which would take

them (as a non-pharmacy we weren't allowed to host our own) but supporters volunteered to take items across to Superdrug in Rotherham and a collection point was set up in the library.

This was hugely popular – demonstrating very clearly that people want to recycle more – but after a few months, the Superdrug policy changed and we had to stop the collection. This was very disappointing and the Waste & Recycling working group are looking at alternatives but also next steps in campaigning for better recycling in Sheffield.

We have held two more community litter picks, in December and March, and also supported 'picks' organised by the Greenhill School, Greenhill Methodist Church and local Beaver and Cub groups mostly by loaning equipment.

Nature and Green Spaces: Many of the projects relating to nature and green spaces have been done in partnership with others (see below) but we have very much led on the development of a grassy area we have called the Greenway Triangle. This is council land but is the responsibility of the Housing team rather than Parks and Countryside and it was a clear local area which would benefit from being improved for both nature and residents.

In consultation with the Housing team, advised by the Parks team and involving local residents, the community have come together to plant 30 Buckthorn saplings along a fence line against the main road which will support Brimstone butterflies in time, cleared a difficult-to-mow banking of grass and sown wildflowers and also planted bulbs which will form a spring meadow in the bottom section of the triangle. These growing patches have needed attention over the year to ensure good development in subsequent seasons. Additionally, the 300+ panels of railings which surround the area were in a very poor state of repair and the majority of these have now been painted by local volunteers and a community service project which 'adopted' our cause.

Separately from active planting and management work, we have also organised and led two very successful local Bird Song walks in early summer 2022 and again this year. These were both very popular and very well received. We also bid successfully for funding from the LAC Ward pot to develop wildflower meadows in Lowedges, Jordanthorpe and Batemoor although this funding came too late for the 2023 sowing season.

Supporting events: We have had a stall at a number of events during the year where we have been able to talk with many people about their concerns for the environment. We were represented at the Lowedges Festival, the Bradway Fun Day, the Greenhill Farmers and Makers' Market, the Friends of Greenhill School Christmas Fair and both the Greenhill Community Events Jubilee and Christmas events. We also linked with other climate and nature groups across the city to represent Greenhill area at the COP27 rally in Sheffield City Centre in November.

Working with Partners

We are pleased to have so many excellent groups and organisations locally who undertake activities which help address the climate and nature emergency. We have prompted a few of the activities but mostly offered support and promotion, with a view to engaging more people. We worked with the **Terminus Initiative** on developing the Lowedges community allotment and their drop in sessions on energy saving with National Energy Action and with a **Greenhill Community Library** volunteer developing a 'Green Spaces Story walk' in summer 2022.

Greenhill School have been very busy during the year working towards an Eco School application (recently achieved, with distinction) and we have offered both practical support on their 'Spring Clean' and activity days, input to the Eco School audit and planning process and providing links with other organisations (such as Schools' Climate Education South Yorkshire and ShefFood/Regather) We are supporting their whole-

school Environment day and through partners Greenhill **Community Apple Pickers** are liaising on an 'Apple Day' in the autumn.

Several sessions have been delivered with the **229th Greenhill Methodist Scout group** on both litter and nature and links have also been made with other scout and guide groups locally on some active 'planting' work and litter picking. We continue to have strong links with Sheffield **Council's Parks and Countryside** and **Community Forestry** teams and belong to the **Sheffield Green Spaces Forum** where we are beginning to link with the **Bradway Action Group and the** With the Community Forestry team, we were active in following up the planting sessions in late 2021/early 2022 and ensuring mulch was laid to promote growth of the saplings planted previously.

We have provided to two local groups coalescing around a specific area. In **Beauchief**, a tentative start was made with a Christmas Swap event and a more practically focussed **Chancet Woodlands group** have taken 'ownership' of their local green space. They have liaised with the **Ranger service** and with the network's support run three practical Woodland Management sessions – including installing a new bench.

In Spring 2023, we worked with the **Greenhill business community** to develop a bid to the council's Economic Recovery Fund. The bid is for £50k and covers both 'greening' the heart of Greenhill through planting schemes and art work to encourage people to linger for longer (and therefore spend more) and also marketing/promoting the range of businesses on offer and encouraging more people to visit the area, with an emphasis on walking. At the time of writing, the bid is being considered by the council's team and we know the fund will be heavily over-subscribed.

Working as a network is a powerful way of bringing communities together and it is the Steering Group's intention to develop this further.

Communication and building the network: We currently have a supporters list of 248. These are people who have shared their email address and want to hear about our activities past, present and future. These people count as our 'members' for the purposes of our official status. Additionally, we have an active Facebook page with 336 'Followers'. While some of these people will be on both, we believe we have at least 500 people keen to hear about the steps being taken locally to help tackle the climate and nature emergency.

We advertise projects and events, and share their outcomes, through Facebook and, less frequently, via an email to supporters but for the particular benefit of those who have neither access to Facebook or email we also create a printed newsletter which summarises recent activities. We distribute this newsletter through local libraries, churches and community 'centres'.

Finances: A separate financial report is available but in summary, apart from the two specific grants outlined above, the network has been operating on a shoe-string. Initially Steering Group members were subsidising most of the activities but at the end of 2022, we were delighted to receive £600 from Waitrose as part of their community fund aimed in that quarter at groups working with an environmental theme.

I hope this report has given you a flavour of the sorts of things Greener Greenhill has been up to in the past year or so – and I hope I haven't forgotten anything significant. The network model means we have a living, breathing 'group' that is hard to pin down at times but the ideas and activities we have generated or prompted have elicited a great deal of interest from other neighbourhoods keen to do something to help combat the climate and nature emergencies through local action – and this is gratifying!

Lindy Stone
Coordinator, Greener Greenhill
June 10th 2023