
Grimpsargh Wetlands Newsletter



Summer 2026

Welcome

Welcome to your summer newsletter. The last few months have been very busy on the Wetlands. In addition to our regular spring volunteer sessions, we have been delighted to welcome a number of groups from the local community who have spent time working with us. Both local businesses and community groups have enjoyed spending time helping with the maintenance and development of the Wetlands and you can read about their efforts here.

Perhaps the most significant event in recent weeks has been the completion of our new 'quiet corner' dedicated to the memory of our late friend and fellow trustee, Jayne Woollam. This space is now open to the public and we hope that you will enjoy making use of it when you visit the Wetlands.

Looking forward, the coming weeks will also be busy for everyone with Grimsargh Field Day being an important event on everyone's calendar. As always, we will be having a stall at the Field Day. This is a great opportunity to meet with trustees and volunteers and find out more about the work we are doing in support of the Wetlands. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Finally, now is an ideal time to visit the Wetlands. Plenty of birdlife is present, from the elegant Avocet to the many warblers, often heard but seldom easily seen, in the reeds and brambles along the public footpath. Enjoy your visit!

The Trustees.

New Quiet Space Opens to the Public

We are delighted that our new 'Wetlands Quiet Corner' is now open to the public. The new space is inspired by, and dedicated to, our late friend and fellow trustee, Jayne Woollam who passed away last year. Jayne was, of course, involved in many aspects of Grimsargh village life; however, the Wetlands always held a special place in her heart.



Jayne's family enjoying our new quiet corner.

As one of the founding trustees and Secretary to the Trust, Jayne played a central role in the development of the Wetlands and ensuring that, today, it remains such a precious community asset. Jayne's family and close friends recently joined with trustees and volunteers for the opening of the new quiet space. They expressed their heart-felt thanks and deep appreciation for all that had been done in memory of Jayne.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the creation of the quiet space was made possible by the award of a generous grant from the Lancashire Environmental Fund. This allowed the creation of a small fenced and gated area adjacent to the public footpath and directly opposite the public footpath viewing screen.

Summer 2026



Close friends and family viewing the sapling dedicated to the memory of Jayne.

The new space has, as its centrepiece, a tree (a Crab Apple sapling) dedicated to the memory of Jayne. There is also a bench where visitors can relax and spend a few moments in quiet contemplation while engaging with nature, be it the Wetlands birdlife or, on a clear day, a superb view of Longridge Fell. We hope visitors will enjoy and respect this new space.

New Pond

You will recall that, in the early months of the year, we had workers from the Environment Agency (EA) on our site undertaking some essential maintenance work on a culvert adjacent to the Wetlands. We asked if they could use their machinery to excavate a new wildlife pond close to our orchard and we were delighted that they were able to do this.

Although we were grateful for the EA team's efforts, it was clear to us that further work would need to be done before the new pond would hold sufficient water to become a significant new wildlife habitat. At this point, we were delighted to receive a really generous offer from a local civils business that, having heard about our needs, offered to send a team for a day's work on the new pond.

Multipave, Leyland (www.multipaveltd.co.uk) completed a day's work on the new pond early in May. Importantly, in addition to re-sculpting the contours of the pond, they were also able to ensure that the new pond had a substantial,

compacted clay base that should help ensure that the pond holds water and resists drying out during the dry summer months.



The Multipave team at work on the new pond.

We plan further work on the pond during the summer months and, once it fills with rain water and is colonised with pond life, it will become a great addition to our site. The new pond will greatly enhance the biodiversity and habitat value of the immediate area and will benefit a whole range of species.



The newly dug pond.

We are extremely grateful to the team from the EA for their help in getting this project started and we are especially grateful to Multipave for donating their people and equipment to ensure that the pond work was completed. Going forward, the development of the pond will be closely monitored by trustee Dominic Best who has a particular interest in aquatic and other invertebrates.

Summer 2026

You will, perhaps, recall that we also have a small number of ponds in the Fen area and these are certainly in need of restoration. To this end, Dominic is currently pursuing opportunities for the funding and long-term support of our efforts to restore and develop these important aquatic habitats.

Local Business Away Day on the Wetlands



Krempel workers busy constructing a new wildlife refuge.

Recently, we were delighted to welcome a group of workers from the Krempel UK Ltd. (krempel.com/en/company/locations/longridge) site in Longridge for an ‘Away Day’ on the Wetlands. For the visitors, it was a wonderful opportunity to become involved, hands-on, with a key local community asset. For us, the availability of so many extremely capable and enthusiastic volunteers presented an invaluable opportunity to improve the Wetlands habitat.

The ‘many hands’ certainly made light work of clearing invasive willow and, importantly, using the cut material to create new wildlife refuges along the embankments of the Island Lake in the area where the EA had recently been working (see above). In addition, willow was removed from the large reed-bed in the north-east corner of the Island Lake. This reed-bed is a key habitat that we want to preserve and encourage to expand.

We are tremendously grateful to the company for making engagement with the Wetlands a key part of their ‘Corporate Responsibility Commitments’ strategy and we look forward to

this becoming an annual event. We thank all involved for their hard work and enthusiasm, especially in light of the sometimes ‘challenging’ weather conditions on the day.



Willow cutting on the embankments.

If your company is looking for an opportunity to volunteer locally, why not consider coming to Grimsargh Wetlands for the day? We always welcome groups of volunteers from organisations and businesses who want to make a difference in the communities in which they work. There is always work to be done. If you would like to enquire about organising an ‘Away Day’, then do please contact us (grimsarghwetlandstrust@gmail.com) for further information.

Spring Guided Walk



Visitors gather at the main viewing screens before the walk.

We held our Spring Guided Walk early in April in some less than ideal weather conditions. Nonetheless, the displays of early blooming

Summer 2026

wild flowers did not disappoint. Trustee Dominic Best takes up the story:

“Despite the disappointing turnout due to the poor weather, we had a successful walk around our site. After an introductory talk from one of our founding trustees, David Hindle, we went to see our early purple orchids and native primroses in full bloom. Walking around to the northern side of the site, we were greeted with large patches of wood anemone, forget-me-nots, and hart's-tongue fern. As we made our way back to the compound along the public footpath, it was great to see duelling orange-tip butterflies and hear a sedge warbler calling at the back of the Fen”.



Early Purple Orchids on the embankments of the Mere.

The display of Early Purple Orchids was particularly impressive. It is worth re-iterating that this display owes a great deal to the work done by volunteers, removing scrub and rank vegetation from the embankments, during the winter months. It is only by clearing this material that the orchids get chance to thrive.

Those of you with long memories will recall when the orchids were effectively confined to a small corner of the south-facing embankment of the Mere. Now, because of the tireless work done over the winter months, the display of orchids has spread all along that embankment. As a consequence, is perfectly possible for visitors to view the orchids from the main viewing screens and even see orchids emerging in the compound area itself.

Visits by Scouts and Cubs

Over recent weeks we have hosted visits by local scout and cub groups. The scouts came for an evening of work in late April. They were tasked with starting the construction of two new wildlife refuges adjacent to the newly-dug wildlife pond in the orchard.



The Scouts learning about the building of wildlife refuges.

Using willow, previously cut and bundled by volunteers, the scouts soon had the refuges taking shape. The willow was carefully weaved around stakes and some larger logs were placed in to centre of the refuges. With so many enthusiastic helpers on site, it wasn't long before the refuges were well established.

The scouts then enjoyed a short, but productive, walk along the embankment of the Mere where they were able to view the orchids and other wild flowers, along with a variety of fungi. At the conclusion of the walk, bats were seen overhead on the warm, still evening.

The work started by the Scouts was followed up just a couple of weeks later when 1st Grimsargh Cubs spent an evening with us. They were able to complete work on the refuges, essentially 'filling in and topping off' with more cut willow. The highlight of their evening though was undoubtedly the impromptu 'bug hunt' led by trustee Dominic Best who was on hand with nets and sheets for the collection of a range of Wetlands bugs.

Summer 2026

The cubs were absolutely delighted to see the variety of insect life revealed by such a short 'hunt' and some of them were keen to immediately 're-house' the collected bugs in the newly finished refuges ('bug hotels')!



Cubs inspecting the results of an impromptu 'bug hunt'.

The groups really enjoyed their visits to the Wetlands and are keen to return later in the year to inspect the 'matured' refuges. We anticipate that the refuges will eventually be ideal for a range of the smaller species be they, insects, amphibians or smaller mammals hibernating over the winter months.

Finally, we also hosted a group from Goosnargh Cubs who enjoyed a brief evening walk around the site with the highlight being some excellent views of the Avocet on the Island Lake. Again, they were transfixed by the results of a quick 'bug hunt' led by Dominic.

We are always glad to host visits from local community groups. The key thing to remember is that groups under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an appropriate number of responsible adult supervisors. As always, if you are interested in your community group visiting the Wetlands, contact us at grimsarghwetlandstrust@gmail.com for further information about planning your visit.

The Spring and Early Summer Wetlands Birdlife

Early spring is associated with the appearance, sometimes only fleetingly, of birds undertaking

their spring migration. Only a few weeks after the departure of the local Curlew, for their summer nesting grounds in Bowland and beyond, the rather similar looking Whimbrel started to appear on the Wetlands. The Whimbrel that we see here are literally just 'dropping in' to feed and rest during their long spring passage from the West African coast to their far-north breeding grounds in, for example, Iceland and Greenland.

One of our regular volunteers, and expert 'birder', Mark Breaks regularly recorded numbers of roosting Whimbrel at dusk and counted over 113 birds present in the early days of May. Of course these numbers rapidly fell, but Avocet and Little Ringed Plover that also arrived on site during April remained; hopefully, with the intention of nesting. At the time of writing there have consistently been 5-6 Avocet seen on the Island Lake and we all have our fingers crossed for some nesting success.



Beach pebbles destined for our islands during a winter volunteer session.

It is worth remembering that, some ten years ago, Avocet were almost unheard of in Grimsargh. The fact that they are now regular summer visitors is testament to the work done, over the years, to improve the habitat. This has made the site much more attractive to these birds. For example, over the winter months, volunteers spent much time and effort removing scrub from the islands and ferrying boat-loads (over 1 tonne!) of 'beach pebbles' onto the islands in order to increase the attractiveness of these areas for these birds.

Summer 2026

Of course, many birds on 'spring migration' only fleetingly visit the Wetlands. For example, an Osprey was reported in late April, no doubt on it's way from West Africa to northern nesting sites, typically in Scotland. It's not just these 'headline-stealing' birds that arrive on site at this time of year, plenty of much smaller, often hard to see, warblers appear in numbers. Currently, we have a real variety of these diminutive birds in our reed-beds and brambles, with Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Garden Warbler, Cetti's Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler and Whitethroat all present along with, the seemingly ubiquitous, Chiffchaff.

Finally, there are plenty of Sand Martin, regularly seen around the Island Lake. Frustratingly, there is still no sign of them making use of our nest bank. We always envisaged to would take time for them to 'discover' and use this new nesting site and we remain confident that, given time, this will happen.

New Guidelines on Feeding Birds

The prevalence of avian influenza in recent years has increased everyone's awareness of the spread of infections through populations of wild birds. Some of our best loved garden birds have, in recent years, suffered significant declines in numbers. There is increasing evidence that these declines are the result of infections linked, in part, to our long-held tradition of feeding birds.

Greenfinch numbers have dramatically declined as a consequence of the disease trichomonosis. This highly contagious disease can spread rapidly when birds gather in large numbers such as at feeding stations. Affected birds are often lethargic or have fluffed-up plumage and have difficulty in swallowing or laboured breathing. Transmission is most likely through contaminated food or water. Birds having difficulty swallowing may regurgitate food that is then eaten by other individuals.

Other diseases are also increasingly problematic for our garden birds. For example, leg lesions (commonly known as 'scaly leg' or 'tassel foot') in finches, are one of the most frequently observed signs of ill health in garden birds. The condition is most often seen in Chaffinch but can also affect other species. These leg lesions can be caused by either a virus or mites and are transmitted by contact.



A Chaffinch afflicted with 'scaly leg'. The spreading of bird-food on flat surfaces such of as tree-stumps is now strongly discouraged.

Good hygiene measures, such as cleaning bird feeders, are essential and the RSPB has recently issued updated guidelines for feeding birds (www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/news/how-to-help-garden-birds). Perhaps the most significant of the new guidelines is that we should all desist from the use of the traditional flat 'garden bird table' i.e.

“Don't use bird feeders with flat surfaces, such as bird tables, window feeders and feeders with trays. Research has confirmed that there's a higher risk of disease spreading on flat surfaces, where contaminated food can collect”.

This is why you will see that, on the Wetlands and at other local nature reserves (e.g. Brockholes), bird food is no longer spread on bird tables – instead it is confined to bird feeders – all regularly cleaned and sterilised.

Another important aspect of the updated guidelines from the RSPB is the greater emphasis on **seasonal** feeding. This recognises the fact that during summer and autumn, there's

Summer 2026

a higher risk of disease spreading; however, it's also the time when there are more natural foods available to birds. The advice is therefore to stop providing seeds or peanuts during the summer months. Instead, provide **small quantities** of, for example, mealworms or suet-based pellets.

Fund-Raising Updates



Trustee Geoff Carefoot receives a generous donation from the Longridge Freemasons.

At one of our recent volunteer sessions, we were delighted to be presented with an extremely generous donation from members of the Longridge Freemasonry Lodge (longridgelodge.co.uk) as part of their on-going programme of support for charities in the local community. Local resident, and long-time supporter of the Wetlands, Lance Gorman presented the Trust with a cheque for £500. The funds will be used to support the maintenance work done by our volunteers and we are tremendously grateful to the members of the Lodge for their generosity.

Blue Moon Computers

Many of you will be aware that Blue Moon Computers, (www.bluemooncomputers.com) have been long-standing and generous supporters of the Wetlands. Over the years, they have always been keen to sponsor and sell our calendars in their Berry Lane, Longridge shop where they also advertise all our volunteer sessions and other events. We are pleased to announce that we have recently established a formal business sponsorship with them. Trust

Treasurer, Lesley Walker explains the new agreement:

“We are delighted to announce that Blue Moon Computers, Longridge have entered into a Business Sponsorship Agreement with Grimsargh Wetlands Trust from 1st May 2026. Sponsored Blue Moon plaques have been placed on our viewing screens at the vantage points around the reserve, where visitors can view the site and watch the local wildlife without any disturbance.



Treasurer Lesley Walker (right) with Helen and Steve at Blue Moon Computers.

A monthly financial contribution has been agreed, and the total annual sum of money will fund bird feeders and bird feed for the winter months and hand tools which are required throughout the year for our volunteer sessions and Corporate Community Volunteering Events.

Many thanks to Helen and Steve for their ongoing support of Grimsargh Wetlands and the future of these valuable wetland habitats for local wildlife and visiting species. Sponsorships, like this one, will help to ensure that Grimsargh Wetlands is maintained and preserved for future generations”.

Grimsargh Field Day

The Trust will have a stall (complete with fund-raising tombola) at Grimsargh Field Day on Saturday 27th June. As always, volunteers are more than welcome to come along and help out with our stall. The event represents a wonderful opportunity for anyone to find out more about

Summer 2026

the Wetlands and the work of Grimsargh Wetlands Trust. So, if you are going to the Field Day, do come along and say hello.

Volunteer Days

Our volunteer work schedule for June and July is as follows:

Sunday 7th June
Saturday 20th June
Sunday 5th July
Saturday 18th July

With many birds currently nesting, these summer work sessions will focus on keeping the public access areas (viewing screens and footpaths) clear. In addition, work on the new pond and the orchard area will be prioritised.

Work sessions start at 10 am, when we meet in the Compound. Generally, we work until about 2 pm in the afternoon; however, people are obviously free to leave as and when they wish. We ask everyone to book onto the volunteer days using our online booking system. If you register as a volunteer, you will be sent email reminders containing detailed information about both the work planned for the day and any tools you should, ideally, bring with you.

Legacy Planning, Gifts and Donations

Many people choose to leave a gift, to a charity of their choice, in their Will. A legacy to Grimsargh Wetlands Trust will provide a lasting gift, helping to safeguard the future of Grimsargh Wetlands and ensuring that generations to come will continue to enjoy our wonderful nature reserve. Please consider leaving something to Grimsargh Wetlands Trust when you write, or update, your Will.

Celebrating and commemorating the life of a loved one, with a gift in their memory, is also a fitting tribute that helps support our work for Grimsargh Wetlands. Remember, it is now possible to make a donation to Grimsargh

Wetlands Trust, via PayPal, by scanning the following QR code with your phone:



We're always grateful to receive donations large or small.

A Reminder – Visiting the Wetlands

If you intend to visit the Wetlands on your own, we have an access point ('what3words' location - newsstand.lunch.bucked), from Preston Road, just across from Oban Court, leading to the main viewing screens. We also have an access point to the public footpath, that bisects the Wetlands, via the ginnel from Preston Road, just opposite Elston Lane (what3words – organist.stirs.bonfires). Finally, there is an access point from Preston Road, just by the pedestrian crossing point opposite the Elston Park Development (what3words - dotted.budding.gravitate). This access point leads to the Fen viewing screen. We ask that visitors only use these designated public access points.

Membership information

Membership information is available on our website. If you have queries about membership then you should contact us by email at grimsarghwetlandstrust@gmail.com.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Lancashire Environmental Fund and the Harold and Alice Bridges Trust for their generous financial support. A full list of our local sponsors can be found on our website. Grimsargh Wetlands Trust is a registered charity N° 1174037.

LANCASHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

