

April 2016 to March 2019

Review

Herefordshire

**New
Leaf**

Sustainable Development



Herefordshire
Wildlife Trust



Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum

The Arboretum

Management of the Arboretum is led by Paul Ratcliffe who has worked at the site since 2007 and is supported by a team of dedicated volunteers.

The Arboretum is maturing with little room for new tree planting so much of the current management revolves around caring for existing trees, ensuring trees are safe, regular resurfacing of paths, seasonal mowing of woodland glades and grass paths and managing our Tree Adoption scheme. This scheme continues to be popular with hundreds of trees now dedicated in memory or celebration.



Trevor Hulme

Wildlife

We undertake regular monitoring of a number of species at Queenswood to assess how effective our management tasks are. We carry out monthly bird surveys, summer butterfly transects and run seasonal dormouse monitoring through the National Dormouse Monitoring Programme.



Trevor Hulme



Rachel Hibberd

The Queenswood Coronation Fund



The planting of the Arboretum at Queenswood began in 1953 to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It was funded by a public appeal 'The Queenswood Coronation Fund' launched by Sir Richard Cotterell who was then the Chairman of the Queenswood Management Committee and the Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire. The numerous donations from the people of Herefordshire allowed Sir Richard to realise part of his vision for the site and purchase many of the rare and beautiful trees that can still be enjoyed today.

The site's managing partners work closely with the Coronation Fund committee and it continues to be an important support to the Arboretum today. Donations to the fund, including those made for tree adoption, provide invaluable income which ensures that the Arboretum continues to be further developed and improved.

The Coronation Fund have contributed £12,000 of funding in 18/19 to include the commissioning of a new **treefinder database**, which helps drive public support for the site, understanding of the tree collection and adoption of trees. The Coronation Fund have also provided match funding for the Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project.



Rachel Hibberd

The Woodlands

Forestry

We have created a 10-year Forestry Commission approved management plan which we began to put into place in 2017. We also have signed up to a 5-year Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier grant, which will fund proactive improvement and restoration of the woodland. The work we undertake will improve the condition of the area designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), increase the diversity of wildlife and will help promote the importance of active conservation forestry within the county. This has involved building relationships with with local businesses including *Say it With Wood*, *Whitney Sawmills* and *Pryor & Rickett Silviculture*.

Firewood

Firewood sales from Queenswood continue to grow with all income invested in the ongoing running of the site. Each year, areas of the woodland are thinned or coppiced as part of our management to create improved wildlife habitats so processing some of the wood as firewood is a brilliantly sustainable way of raising funds.

We have a new storage model, using firewood crates, which will allow for quicker drying, easier handling and a better use of space. We plan to be able to offer home deliveries from 2019. English, air-dried, firewood is a renewable and sustainable fuel.

Woodland Management

It is important that the native woodland is managed by thinning, ride widening and glade creation. This allows for more light to reach some areas of the woodland floor which is important for many species of woodland flora and fauna. It also means that, in time, the woodland will have a more diverse structure with trees of different ages within the wood - again, essential for biodiversity.



Showcase of Sustainable Living

Greener facilities and infrastructure

A number of steps have been taken to reduce energy use on site over the past three years. Most recently we have installed solar panels on the roofs of the buildings in the Woodland Yard and a small solar thermal hot water system on the back of the Old Tannery building. There is also now an electric vehicle charging point in the staff car par for volunteers and staff to use. Thank you to Caplor Energy for their support of these projects.



Wendy Cotton

In 2018 we hosted a Carbon Trust workshop for businesses wanting to reduce their energy use and we have worked with the Carbon Trust, undertaking their energy audit and inspiring us to implement energy saving initiatives on site wherever possible.

In our Visitor Centre, we have installed a water bottle filler to encourage a move away from single use plastic water bottles and there ongoing action on site to support reduction in single-use plastics. In the toilets we have replaced the faulty hand driers with Dyson air-blade driers which have a low energy use and have installed



percussion taps, which will help reduce water use on site. New public recycling bins are now in use and Queenswood has also become a drop-off station for the Walkers' crisp packet recycling scheme. Inside the gift shop is a new range of eco-friendly products made from recycled materials and encouraging sustainable living.

Pizza Oven

Created on site with help from the young people from Strong Young Minds, the traditionally built cob oven is now available for site events, public hire and children's pizza making workshops.



Living Well Project

Through the Living Well project we ran a series of workshops through 2017 and 2018 which included sharing skills in foraging, composting, and woodland management as well as hosting a repair cafe. We successfully achieved the project's goal: enabling people across Herefordshire to come together and develop skills to live well through healthy living and eating and through developing a sustainable lifestyle.

h.Energy

Queenswood has been one of the main venues of the annual Herefordshire festival of sustainability: 'h.energy' since 2016 hosting talks, workshops and stalls.

As part of h.Energy, New Leaf Sustainable Development has also organised an annual Fun Run jointly supporting the site and Hope Spring (a charity helping developing communities in Africa to access safe drinking water).



Billie Charity

Visitor Centre & Gift Shop

The shop, which had been closed for some time, was given a full refurbishment and reopened as the Queenswood Visitor Centre and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust Gift Shop in the summer of 2016. Staffed mostly by our fantastic team of dedicated volunteers, the Visitor Centre now serves as the hub of the site and provides a warm and knowledgeable welcome to visitors.



Michael Mackinnon

Workshops & Events

Over the last few years we have run a wide variety of events and workshops with regular fixtures including celebrating UK Fungus Day in collaboration with the Herefordshire Fungus Survey Group, a Christmas Grotto and Festive Family Crafts.



Berwyn Powell

Art in the Park – sustainability inspired events

This range of activities has included a range of events. In 2018 we held a day of public participation to create a biophillic wishing tree as part of a New Leaf international biophillic art project. We hosted an exhibition on site as part of the Treeline project which saw artists make new works at Queenswood and beyond in response to global environmental change.

Treasure Trees was a Heritage Lottery Herefordshire funded New Leaf project which was based on the links between the WW1 Womens Land Army and the Women's suffrage movement which created a series of wooden totems using wood from the woodland that was clear felled and replanted during WW1 by Herefordshire lumberjills.

We also now host annual sustainability inspired exhibitions in the woodland by Herefordshire College of Art undergraduate students.

Wassail

In January 2019, we held our first Wassail in the orchard at Queenswood, coordinated by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust's Orchard Origins team. A traditional ceremony swathed in folklore, a wassail drives bad spirits from the orchard through the singing of wassailing songs, the drinking of cider and hanging toast in the orchard trees. An enthusiastic crowd joined us for the evening and we hope to run this event annually.





Our new yurt has provided an extra indoor space and has accomodated our Christmas Grottos, Yoga workshops and story telling sessions.



Queenswood now regularly hosts the annual UK Fungus Day (left) , in partnership with the Herefordshire Fungus Survey Group, and the h.Energy Festival run by the Herefordshire Green Netwrk and New Leaf Sustainable Development (above).

Woodland Playground

Taking note of visitor feedback, we have made improvements and upgrades to the playground, including the lovely *Nature Tots* area for under 5s which is built with natural play themes in mind.



We will continue to maintain and improve the playground each year as it is incredibly popular with our younger visitors!

Birthday Parties

Our woodland birthday parties were launched in October 2017, and we have so far delivered 12 parties for very excited groups of children! We have a range of themes including pirates, dinosaurs, fairies, minibeasts, and survival skills for parents to choose from and we make use of our Jubilee Building for party food after the woodland adventures. This year our birthday parties have generated £1000 of income and we hope the popularity of these parties will build, so far parents have given really positive feedback.

“Huge thank you to Kate & Caroline for hosting a fantastic fairy party for my daughters 6th birthday. So much for them to do, all kept entertained as well. Couldn't fault it and having the jubilee building as a base is brilliant too. Would really recommend your forest parties. Thanks again”



Paul Cooper

Family Trails & Activities

The Gruffalo Trail

The Gruffalo Trail was installed in Autumn 2016 with a launch event that attracted over 2000 people for a fantastically fun family day out at Queenswood. This family friendly trail has been hugely popular, helping engage families with the woodland. We have put on several large Gruffalo themed events; along with the launch we have had the Gruffalo Spring Picnic, The Gruffalo's Child Christmas Celebration and The Gruffalo Summer Festival, with a combined attendance of over 5000 people.



Natalie Jolley



Natalie Jolley

Nature Trails

Alongside the Gruffalo Trail we have run a series of seasonal trails aimed at older children during the school holidays. We have had trails linked to pollinators, autumn wildlife, food webs and more. Our Easter trails have proved our most popular. This year 680 children took part in our Easter Trail!

Adventure Club

Adventure Club is our forest school holiday club for children aged seven to fourteen. Each action-packed day in the woods is child-led and includes fire lighting, camp fire cooking, using tools, den making, wildlife and seasonal crafts and also lots of team games.

“My daughter, Erica, had the most amazing time yesterday - cooking damper bread, making fire with flint, and loads of other brilliant activities.” Ruth Cole



Paul Cooper

Get Crafty and Lake Play

Get Crafty and Lake Play are drop in nature-based crafts and play sessions, which run weekly throughout the school holidays and cost just £2 per child. We have lots of families that come regularly to every session and take home some beautiful nature-inspired crafts and ideas. We ensure that our resources for these sessions are natural and bio-degradable and we promote recycling and reusing materials for crafts.

Since 2016...



 Around **250** adults have come along to a workshop or guided walk

Almost **600** children have been to an outdoor play session



 We have hosted **9** Woodland Birthday Parties

We have run **22** Adventure Clubs



Nearly **200** children have taken part in a wildlife activity event 



We've hosted **21** Wildlife Trust Wildlife Watch Club meetings



Paul Cooper

Education

We have had a great time hosting school visits at both Queenswood and Bodenham Lake, providing an opportunity for children to have a hands on, outdoor experience linked to what they have been learning about in the classroom. Some schools also come to Queenswood for Forest School sessions in our beautiful secluded woodland site. Children and young people that have benefited from school visits have been

nursery groups, primary school children, secondary school children, children with additional needs and young people with behaviour support needs. Our plan for this coming year is to develop a 'menu' of school workshops linked to the curriculum to encourage even more schools to get out of the classroom, into nature and learning about living sustainably.



Paul Cooper

Community Groups

As well as schools, we have hosted a number of community group workshops at both Queenswood and Bodenham. We have had Beaver and Navigator groups pond dipping and bird watching at Bodenham Lake and we have worked in partnership with Marches Family Network, a local charity supporting children and young people with additional needs to provide forest school sessions at Queenswood.

Communicating with our Visitors

In 2016 we launched a website for the sites: www.queenswoodandbodenhamlake.org, where information about both sites can be found along with up to date news stories and listings of our upcoming events. There is a popular Facebook page for Queenswood: @QueenswoodCountryPark and one just for Bodenham Lake: @BodenhamLakeNatureReserve. Queenswood also has Twitter and Instagram accounts and all social media channels are busy!

We manage a supporter database for Queenswood and send regular email updates to our followers, letting them know about everything happening on site from our winter woodland management to our programme of events. We have installed new signs and notice boards on site and these are regularly updated.

Our fantastic Visitor Centre staff and volunteers also welcome visitors to the site and provide insights and information to make each visit special.

Infrastructure & Facilities

In 2016 a new pedestrian crossing was installed to make for safer crossing of the A49 for bus passengers and walkers following the footpaths from Queenswood down to Bodenham Lake. We also slightly altered the layout of the car park to make it easier to navigate for both drivers and pedestrians.

New oak signage has been installed including a new welcome sign at the entrance, car park signs and a sign for the Jubilee Building which is used for meetings, workshops and birthday parties. Signage and interpretation across the site will continued to be updated through the Queenswood Heritage Gateway project.

Car Parking

Though the introduction of car parking charges was not universally popular, this is the partnership's main source of income for the day to day running of the site and is vital for the site's survival. In autumn 2018, the system was upgraded to 'Automated Number Plate Recognition' to ensure consistency for visitors and remove any potential on-site conflict.

New HQ of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

In June 2018, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, one of the managing partners at Queenswood, relocated their offices to the site, making Queenswood a hub for wildlife conservation in the county. To allow for this, the Trust have made several improvements to the Old Tannery Building while a new Woodland Office has been created with LED lighting fitted and as well as excellent insulation to ensure the rooms are as energy and cost efficient as possible. The IT infrastructure across the site has been upgraded, and the fibre lease line onsite has been upgraded to

100/100 which is a huge increase in capacity and is facilitating swifter and more efficient working. This investment is great for the long-term sustainability of the site.

New Leaf Sustainable Development Offices

New Leaf also have a base at the site and can be visited and contacted at Queenswood.

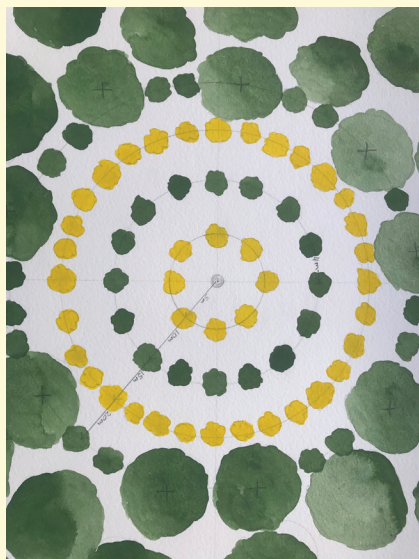
Projects

The Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project

Running from 2017 until October 2019, this project aims to explore and showcase the heritage of the site with new opportunities for visitors to learn more about the arboretum and history of Queenswood. The Queenswood Heritage Gateway Project is receiving grants amounting to just under £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. There are a number of strands to this ambitious project:

Lyrics, Leaves & Lives: A new audio-visual trail, 'Lyrics, Leaves & Lives' will run through the Arboretum where visitors can listen to excerpts of oral history connected with the site, poems and bird song. The trail will also link to the specimen trees within the Arboretum and the natural history of the woodland.





Artist Des Hughes was selected to design the art piece which will form the centrepiece of the First World War Commemorative Woodland, to be opened on 29th June 2019. It will be formed of concentric circles of newly planted trees.

First World War Commemorative Woodland: Within an area of oak trees in the Arboretum, a memorial to the First World War will be created. Queenswood was clear-felled during the Great War, all the trees cut down to provide timber to support the war effort, and the woodland we see today has regenerated over the last century. The First World War Commemorative Woodland will provide a contemplative space which explores the role played by Herefordshire's landscapes and rural communities during the war and the legacy it left. A local artist, Des Hughes, has been picked to create the memorial woodland art piece.

Education: Five local primary schools will be regularly visiting during the project when Queenswood staff will lead activities exploring the natural heritage of Herefordshire and the importance of woodland and nature to our lives. The project will also train young people and volunteers in oral history skills and ecological surveying skills, so that they can assist with monitoring the flora and fauna of Queenswood for years to come. A series of events to celebrate the role of wood and woodland management in Herefordshire will also take place throughout the project to engage with people of all ages.

Signage & Interpretation: The funding will also go towards improving the signage, making the site more welcoming and accessible and the team will be consulting with the Royal National College for the Blind (RNC), and the Alzheimer's society on new signs and paths.

Publications: The project's legacy will be the publication of a book explaining the timeline of Queenswood and Dinmore Hill and collating the social, cultural and natural history of the site. The project team are looking for volunteers to assist with researching the site with support from local heritage organisations.

Buzz about Queenswood

Running in 2018 and 2019, this project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, looks to improve habitats for native pollinators and educate and inspire people of all ages to get involved through events, activities and specialist training. The project is also partnering with Herefordshire Mind and will be engaging adults facing mental health issues to build and create some of the pollinator habitats.



Bee expert Steven Falk giving advice on creating pollinator habitats within the woodland, summer 2018.

Wellbeing Garden

Work began to create a wellbeing garden within the orchard at Queenswood in October 2018. It will showcase sustainable food production, wildlife friendly gardening and therapeutic horticulture practices through workshops and educational activities for schools, community groups and individuals.

The project has been kindly funded by the Finnis Scott Foundation; Edward Cadbury Foundation; the Southall Trust and the Herefordshire Foundation.

Herefordshire Mind will work alongside staff at Queenswood to support adults experiencing mental health issues to engage with and care for the garden. There will be a sensory area to allow people to experience the garden through touch and smell and raised and standing beds for those who find working at ground level challenging. The team took advice from Applewood Permaculture on designing the garden and how to incorporate sustainable horticulture techniques.



DEN: Digitally Engaged Nature

DEN is a digital engaged nature Augmented Reality project based at Queenswood, managed by New Leaf for the Queenswood and Bodenham Lake partnership through Rural Media Company's Herefordshire's a Great Place Hidden Gems project.



DEN brings artists, heritage experts and communities together to co-create content which will be accessible to visitors in the form of smart technology tablets and as an AR app download. The idea is to enable young people who spend much of their time looking at screens to play in nature, and so connect new audiences to the natural world.

Bodenham Lake

The regular management of Bodenham Lake Nature Reserve includes a diverse range of tasks. Seasonal management includes mowing and strimming, scrub and hedgerow management, orchard tree pruning, remedial tree work and pollarding. There's also regular litter picking and bin emptying, checks to monitor for damage, wear and tear and items of health and safety concern and fence repairs.

In 2018, we spread green hay from the flower rich meadows at Birches Farm Nature Reserve onto prepared ground in the orchards at Bodenham to improve the botanical diversity. We have trained a team of volunteers in botanical surveying and they will continue to monitor the grassland areas on the reserve.

We have created an education pond with a custom-built pond-dipping platform to accomodate school groups. Having dug and filled the pond, we are waiting for vegetation to establish and wildlife to move in over the coming seasons.

Our Go Toads project has now run for four years. The local community, supported by staff and volunteers, head out at dusk on early spring evenings to safely escort hundreds of toads across the road as they head to the lake to breed. We have seen an increase in toad numbers year on year which is a fantastic result!

The Lugg Wetland Gem Project: Delivering the Nutrient Management Plan

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust secured a total of over £345,000 grant funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Regional Development Fund to carry out 10,695m² of reprofiling to create diverse reedbed habitat at Bodenham Lake. The project has also allowed us to start updating the signs and interpretation at the reserve, install an osprey platform and a new bird hide.

Over 90 fantastic volunteers have been helping with the project, carrying out wildlife monitoring including reptile, crayfish and toad surveys, intotal, contricuting 3,300 hours in 2018-19. We have also run eight free





LakePlay sessions with wildlife activities for children aged 2 to 12 and 10 school events. In 2018 the project featured on BBC Countryfile.

The creation of a Reedbed

As the lake was originally dug as a gravel pit, the banks are very steep, stopping wetland plants growing. This project will focus on key aspects of restoration to create a true wildlife haven at this reserve in the heart of the Lugg Valley.

In 2018 we moved 30,000 tonnes of soil to re-profile 3 steep sided areas of the lake, creating 1 hectare of shallower banks. In 2019 we will plant reed plants (Phragmites) to allow reedbed to develop.

Reedbed is a priority habitat under the UK biodiversity action plan, as it is one of the most threatened and in need of conservation action. Reed bed habitat is essential for many iconic wetland species including bearded tits, bitterns and reed warblers but is becoming increasingly scarce across the UK.





Ray Evans





We spend
approximately **£400**
each day running the site.

We spend around **120** hours each year
maintaining our surfaced paths and since 2016 have spent
around **£10,000** on path maintenance.



In the last 3 years we have spent nearly
1,000 hours emptying bins!

We have installed new recycling
facilities and have helped you to recycle over **5,000**
crisp packets!



We spend **4** days each year mowing
the grassy areas of the Arboretum



Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum and Bodenham Lake Nature Reserve are managed by New Leaf Sustainable Development and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust in partnership. In addition, the Queenswood Coronation Fund supports Queenswood Arboretum.

New Leaf Sustainable Development

New Leaf is a not for profit co-operative, whose aim is to promote sustainable living in Herefordshire and beyond.

Initiated in 2010, we are best known for our annual h.Energy event and for our work to reduce Herefordshire's carbon footprint. As a small charitable co-op, New Leaf works collaboratively with many communities, public sector organisations and businesses across the county. We seek to support and encourage people, locally and internationally, to demonstrate that the pursuit of a flourishing ecology, human wellbeing and a prosperous local economy are worthwhile and inter-related objectives with multiple benefits.

New Leaf Sustainable Development Ltd is an exempt charity and is a not-for-profit co-operative (BenCom), no. 31282R

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is the largest membership-based wildlife organisation in the county, dedicated to inspiring people about wildlife, acting as a wildlife champions and creating wildlife havens. *Our vision is for a Herefordshire richer and more diverse in wildlife that is valued, and cared for, by its people to the benefit of all.*

The Trust covers the county of Herefordshire and works closely with neighbouring Wildlife Trusts in England and Wales. The Trust is supported by around 5,000 members, 300 volunteers and manages 55 nature reserves. We are a member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, a federation of 47 Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the British Isles.

The Herefordshire Wildlife Trust Limited is a company registered in England and Wales no. 00743899 & registered charity no 220173

The Queenswood Coronation Fund

The planting of the Arboretum began in 1953 to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It was funded by a public appeal 'The Queenswood Coronation Fund' launched by Sir Richard Cotterell who was then the Chairman of the Queenswood Management Committee and the Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire. The numerous donations from the people of Herefordshire allowed Sir Richard to realise part of his vision for the site and purchase many of the rare and beautiful trees that can still be enjoyed today.

The work of the Queenswood Coronation Fund received international recognition in 1981 when the arboretum received the prestigious Dendrology Award from the International Dendrology Society. Today it continues to raise funds for the Arboretum and oversees the management of the collection.

**www.queenswoodandbodenhamlake.org
info@queenswoodandbodenhamlake.org / 01432 530088**

Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum, Dinmore Hill, Nr Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0PY
Bodenham Lake Nature Resrve, Bodenham, herefordshire, HR1 3JT