

BS4 Green Space Audit

July 2021

This is the second version of an audit originally published in March 2020. There have been two key developments since then. In September 2020, Bristol City Council, Avon Wildlife Trust and others declared an ecological emergency in the city pointing out that its wildlife was already depleted and that the situation was becoming worse. Several remedies were suggested including improving Bristol's green spaces and streams and making them more wildlife friendly. Secondly, in October 2020, the BS4 Wildlife Group was formed with a pledge to collaborate across the neighbourhood to raise public awareness and to improve local habitats. Other wildlife groups are appearing across Bristol and it is hoped that community action can make a significant contribution to reversing the decline of Bristol's wildlife. It is intended that by the end of 2021, all fourteen Bristol postal districts will have an active and functioning wildlife group with at least a preliminary audit of its green spaces.

Thanks are owed to everyone who has contributed to this audit. The information was collated by Ben Barker of the BS3 Wildlife Group (mywildbedminster@virginmedia.com) and Dougal Matthews of the *BS4 Wildlife Group* (email: bs4wildlife@gmail.com; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bs4wildlife>). Maps and layout were done by Glenn Taylor.

BS4 Green Spaces



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Arno's Vale Cemetery (45 acres)

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This space has been described as “one of the most important sites for people, history and wildlife” in Bristol. A restoration programme began in 2006 and there is a landscape management plan for 2018-2023 which aims to continue this process.

The cemetery has a range of habitats described in its management plan as woodland, unimproved grassland, semi-improved grassland and scrub - each with its own range of plants and animals.

Protected animals under the plan include bats, and of the seventeen UK species around half a dozen can be seen with several breeding on the site. Slow worms are described as “widespread across the site, in areas of grassland and scrub”. There is a wide range of birds and twenty-three species have been recorded as breeding within the cemetery, which also supports one social group of badgers.

Research at the site has yielded long lists of trees, grasses, ferns and flowers. Twenty-three species of butterfly have been claimed, with many breeding on the site. The space is managed by the *Arno's Vale Cemetery Trust*.

<https://arnosvale.org.uk/>

Arno's Court Park

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This is a Victorian park on a hillside with fine views and wide-open grassy spaces. It includes an area of woodland, recently found to contain ancient woodland indicator plants such as native bluebells and wood anemones. This adjoins the woodland in Arno's Vale Cemetery, which is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The *Friends of Arno's Court Park* have recently organised litter picks; campaigned for improvements to the pathways for safer access and carried out plant survey sessions in the woodland with groups of volunteers. This year they hope to continue the surveys; offer evening birdsong walks and work with the council to implement a wildlife plan which includes aspirations for more hedge and tree planting, low-mow areas and more bird, bat and owl boxes. The Friends group has a *Facebook* page at Friends of Arno's Court Park/Facebook and can be emailed using arnoscourtsparkfriends@gmail.com

Brislington Green Trail

This is an eight mile walk that takes in most of Brislington's green spaces in the shape of a figure 8 so it can be divided into two smaller circular walks. See the *GreenTrail* page for a route map and more information at <https://greaterbrislington.org/greentrail/>

Bristol South Skyline Walk

This seven mile trail links several green spaces in BS3 and BS4. In addition to wonderful views across the city, it offers excellent opportunities for observing the wildlife of this part of Bristol.

BS4 Hedgehog Project

See: <https://www.facebook.com/BS4Hedgehogs>

Eastwood Farm Nature Reserve

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Eastwood Farm is beside the River Avon next to Beese's Riverside Bar and Tea Gardens. *The Friends of Eastwood Farm* aim to improve this area (which was designated as an LNR in 2008) and regular working parties are held, usually on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of each month. They also have a *WhatsApp* volunteer group, a *Facebook* page and produce a regular newsletter using *Mailchimp*. Formerly farmland, part of the site was used as a landfill in the 1970s but now has fine woodland and open grassland enjoyed by people and wildlife and boasts one of the most diverse and rich habitats in Bristol. Contact via

friends@eastwoodfarm.org.uk but see also:

<http://www.eastwoodfarm.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofeastwoodfarm/>

Eastwynd Community Garden

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This is an attempt in Broomhill to recover a former garage area and make a green space.

See <https://www.facebook.com/eastwyndgarden/>

Filwood Broadway

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As part of Bristol's Green Streets project, the Forestry Commission is funding trees on Filwood Broadway. BCC and the Forest of Avon Trust are also involved. The Filwood Tree Champion is also working with schools on planting trees in their grounds and in raising local people's tree-care awareness.

Greater Brislington Together

This is a network of residents, businesses and community groups that have come together to collaborate on local matters. Most of the green space groups in Brislington are members of *Greater Brislington Together* and additional information can be found at:

<https://greaterbrislington.org/about-greater-brislington-together/>
or

<https://greaterbrislington.org/local-community-information/>

or

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/bs4-wildlife-group>

Inns Court Residents Group

This group undertakes clearing, litter picking and general support for the green spaces at Inns Court.

Knowle West Alliance

A network of community organisations in Knowle West.

Nightingale Valley/St Anne's Woods

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Some otter surveys along the brook have been done in recent years, but there may have been other surveys too. The following wildlife improvement activities have taken place within the last few years.

- Regular litter picks
- Refurbished and repaired St Anne's Well
- Cleared and extended a pond in Nightingale Valley
- An annual *bramble bash* to reclaim meadow
- Himalayan Balsam pulls in spring/early summer
- Control of sycamore
- Installation of nesting boxes for owls
- Clearing of fallen trees blocking footpaths
- Installed bypass steps around a fallen tree in St Anne's Wood

- Installed a "Rubbing Trail" consisting of metal plates with raised surfaces for people to take rubbings. This trail runs from the entrance to Nightingale Valley on Hill Lawn all the way to where Brislington Brook meets the Avon in St Anne's
- Organised bat walks and owl prowls

Proposals for the future include:

- Organising more bat walks and owl prowls
- Provide signposts throughout the valley using funding that has just been secured
- Provide more nesting boxes and wildlife habitats if we can secure funding

The support group is *Friends of Brislington Brook*, but see also:

<http://www.facebook.com/FriendsBrislingtonbrook/>
<http://friendsofbrislingtonbrook.wordpress.com>



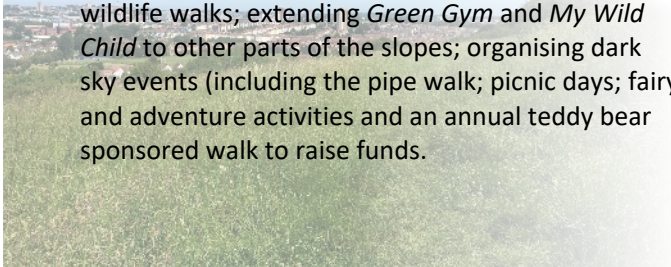
The Northern Slopes and Wedmore Vale allotments straddle the BS3/BS4 border and parts are designated as a Local Nature Reserve. People living nearby monitor wildlife, often as part of national surveys such as those coordinated by Butterfly Conservation and RSPB etc. As well as wildlife monitoring there are *Green Gym* volunteers and *Supernovers* and *Glynvale Heroes* who undertake litter picks, whilst Avon Wildlife Trust organises groups and courses for adults and My Wild Child sessions for toddlers.

A development plan up to 2030 has been agreed with the aim of enhancing the wildlife of the slopes. This includes wildlife elements such as:

- Exploring how to work with others to extend activities to cover social, health, learning and site-based activities. Examples include: visiting schools; arranging tours for schools and groups; arranging wildlife walks; extending *Green Gym* and *My Wild Child* to other parts of the slopes; organising dark sky events (including the pipe walk; picnic days; fairy and adventure activities and an annual teddy bear sponsored walk to raise funds.

- Lobbying politicians and other organisations to safeguard the existing footprint of the slopes and to expand them where possible (e.g. through the planning system) and achieving more protection such as dark sky status.
- Encouraging local residents to undertake wildlife surveys and monitoring through existing initiatives such as *BS3 Wildlife*, *Bioblitz*, *RSPB* and *Butterfly Conservation* surveys.
- Protecting and enhancing the wildlife interests of the site such as wildflowers for pollinators and hibernacula for reptiles together with ongoing management activities.
- Attending training to help us do more for wildlife.

Contact: enquiries@northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk



Redcatch Park (12 acres)

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A butterfly survey was carried out a few years ago but the details of this are not available. In the last three years a number of willows have been planted and are said to be a good habitat for moths. We have also introduced a bee-friendly planter which is consolidated by some wildflower planting that the city council has conducted over the past two years. Contact *The Friends of Redcatch Park*:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/111666062184506/>
<http://www.friendsofredcatchpark/>

St Anne's Park

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Friends of St Anne's Park is a new group formed in 2021 with the aim of improving the experience of using St Anne's Park for everyone. Its most successful initiative to date is the creation and planting of four community vegetable patches which are currently flourishing and should provide delicious vegetables for community members over the coming months. Wildlife projects in the pipeline include the expansion of low-mow areas to increase biodiversity; the growth of wild flowers and grasses and the installation of bug hotels.

friendsofstannespark@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofstannespark/>

Springfield Allotments

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Contact: allotments@knowlewesthealthassoc.org.uk

Totterdown Community Orchard

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This community orchard is off Bath Road at the bottom of Park Street and has one large apple tree of unknown variety and probably about 50 years old. Local residents and TRESA (*Totterdown Residents Environmental and Social Action*) started clearing and planting the rest of the area from about 2005 with various soft fruit bushes and apple, pear, quince, cherry and peach trees.

The steep area behind the orchard is covered in trees that have grown up since the house clearances of around fifty years ago. Most of this is registered to the houses in Upper Street with a small triangle of common land in the middle. Trees growing here include horse chestnut, ash, plum, whitebeam and elder. A sweet chestnut has been planted at the back of the orchard.

There are foxes living in the top area, tadpoles in the pond in spring and the orchard is visited by jays, various songbirds and occasional badgers. For further information see:

<https://www.tresa.org.uk/community-space/background-to-community-space/>

Victory Park

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Originally intended to be called the *Peace Park*, this was a gift to the people of Bristol in 1920 following the Great War. *The Friends of Victory Park* has recently been reformed and is developing plans for park improvement.

Contact: www.facebook.com/groups/victoryparkbrislington/

Woodcroft Community Orchard

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Established in 2012 and nestling between the Woodcroft Road allotments exists another hidden gem in the Nightingale Valley with over fifty trees, numerous soft fruits and hedgerows. The aim is to regain 'forest edge' habitats and biodiversity whilst creating a community and social space to explore, learn and grow food. The site can also be accessed via the signposted paths from both Nightingale Valley and Birchwood Road. People with an interest should feel free to be involved in any way they like and as local residents can help to decide its future: the site will be run and managed for the benefit of all, with people getting involved as much or as little as they please. The group usually meets on the first Saturday of the month. Children and dogs are welcome but there are no toilet facilities at present. Keep up with the group at

<https://www.facebook.com/WoodcroftCommunityOrchard/> or contact it via woodcroftcommunityorchard@gmail.com

Western Slopes

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The Western Slopes, also known as Novers Hill, is a large expanse of green meadows with Pigeonhouse Stream running along Hartcliffe Way between Headley Park and Knowle West. It is a much-loved area for local communities with its far-reaching views across the city to the suspension bridge; friendly horses grazing and an abundance of wildlife – most notably birds of prey such as buzzards, kestrels, sparrowhawks and owls. There are also badgers. For many years, it has been a site of natural conservation interest (SNCI) and has been identified as being of city-wide importance because of the rare wildlife that can be found.

The Friends of the Western Slopes group formed to raise awareness of the site, protect it from housing development plans and formalise its SNCI status. It believes that it should remain as a green space asset for the local area and invites you to join. The Pigeonhouse Stream is part of the Malago/Pigeonhouse wildlife corridor linking the edge of the city with its centre and the east/west corridor of the Avon and New Cut.

Contact: westernslopesbristol@outlook.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2560966744207814>