

BS14 Green Space Audit

February 2022

Background

The 'postcode wildlife groups' aims to develop community-led wildlife groups across the city with the hope that all fourteen Bristol postal districts' will eventually have an active and functioning wildlife group.

Collectively these groups aim to inspire and empower the community to become green space custodians by:

- Improving habitats,
- Monitoring wildlife, and
- Spreading the word by raising aware of our wildlife at a neighbourhood level!

One of the objectives for each wildlife group is to create a green space audit of their area. These audits not only showcase some of our wonderful wildlife, green spaces and community groups, but also show the potential wildlife networks across the city. They also help identify areas of significant ecological value and highlight some important work being done by members of the community.



BS14 Summary

Situated on the outskirts Bristol to the South, BS14 is fortunate enough to have a number of large green spaces, including parks, nature reserves, allotments, meadows and wildlife corridors along rivers and cycle/ walking paths. Pretty much all of BS14 is situated on Buglife's B-Lines, which is a biodiversity network (think of it as an insect or wildlife transport network that spans across the country). This highlights the potential of BS14 being an important wildlife corridor, not only within the city, but also across the country.

The Whitchurch Wombles group sums up the BS14 community spirit and energy. The group are a very active litter-picking group that arranges community litter picks across the area and I'm sure have saved much wildlife from entanglement as well as ingesting plastics and all sorts of nasties. Their slogan is "Looking after our beautiful area by litter picking and being proud of where we live." The group share their litter pick events and stats on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/643570292685647

So far the BS14 Wildlife group has had an emphasis on engaging the community to share and record their wildlife sightings. Sightings and wildlife events are shared on our BS14 Wildlife facebook group, our iNaturalist page and we now have a webpage too.

Website: <https://bristolwildlifegroups.wordpress.com/bs14-wildlife/>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/bs14wildlife

iNaturalist: www.inaturalist.org/projects/bs14-wildlife-group

Future goals for the group:

- Bat walk training events so more people can lead bat walks in their local green spaces,
- Work together to promote and support wildlife gardening,
- Setting up a BS14 Hedgehog Project.

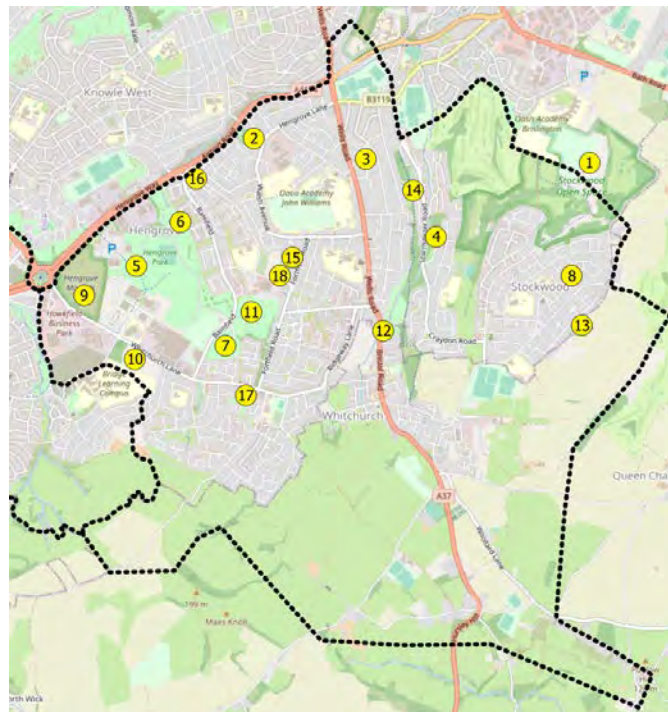
These goals can't be done alone - we need you to help make this happen! So if you'd like to help out with any of these projects, or have your own ideas, please email me on the address below.

Acknowledgements

Just like many amazing things in life, this report wouldn't have been possible without the contributions and assistance of some fantastic people in the BS14 community and further afield! The most rewarding part of preparing this report was meeting some inspiring people in the community that are doing some amazing things and discovering some new green spaces in the area. I thank you all for your contributions and for being fabulous custodians for our local wildlife! If you'd like to contribute to future BS14 green space audits, please get in touch with me at kellyjsheldrick@gmail.com or via the facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/bs14wildlife

BS14 Green Spaces Key

1. Stockwood Open Space
2. Hengrove Farm Open Space
3. Mowbray Road Open Space
4. Sturminster Wildlife Corridor
5. Hengrove Park
6. Bamfield Green Space
7. Briery Leaze Road Open Space
8. Cottle Road Park
9. Hengrove Mounds
10. Hawkfield Meadows
11. Whitchurch Green (ASDA fields) & Whitchurch and Hengrove Community Orchard
12. Saltwell Viaduct
13. Bifield Road Allotments
14. Sturminster Road Allotments
15. Fortfield Road Allotments
16. Great Hayles Road Allotments
17. St Augustine's Park
18. Ex-Severn Project Site



Map produced by Glenn Taylor

Stockwood Open Space [4]

Stockwood Open Space lies between Stockwood and Brislington. The farmland was bought by the council to provide post war housing, but was never developed. Instead, this mosaic of meadow, scrub, and wooded hillside still provides 140 acres of different habitats where wildlife and people can range free.



A cycle path crosses the Open Space linking Hungerford Gardens to the north with Stockwood Road, Stockwood, with stepped tarmac paths joining it from Holsom Road

and from The Coots. Other unsurfaced paths, including links from the (western) Whittock Road side, explore the whole area.

Illyngrove is the ancient woodland in the valley that drops down from the Stockwood Road entrance to the flatter meadows below. Its wooded banks and clearings are home to many woodland plants and flowers, including our 'flagship' Bath asparagus, and the wonderfully named corky-fruited water dropwort. There's a wide variety of bird life, while the larger mammals include roe and muntjac deer, fox and badger.



In the clearings, and in the meadows that spread towards Brislington a wide variety of flowers thrive in soils left untouched by modern agricultural methods. There are two farm ponds along the Brislington boundary; both of them home to a wide variety of water, amphibian and insect species. One, by the Brislington entrance, is the 'cart washing pond' – stone lined, with a ramp at one end, where farm carts could be cleaned up. The other, the 'dipping pond' has been reshaped by Avon Wildlife Trust to increase its attractiveness to diverse species.

A picnic table beside the cycle path marks our orchard. It has plenty of different apples plus a few pears. Nearby, the woods are a home for several plum and damson varieties. Nuts can be gathered from the hazels throughout the open space, and, in a good year, from walnut trees in the low scrub between the cycle path and the rugby pitches.

The area to the north east of the orchard, bordering Scotland Lane, was in the past a landfill site for household waste, until capped and landscaped many years ago. Its open meadows and scrub woodland include a reed bed planted to clean wastewater as it flows through, providing

yet another wildlife habitat in the diversity that is Stockwood Open Space.



- Peter Goodwin (photos & text), Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces

Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces

Website: <http://www.fosos.org.uk>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1796345557196284>

Hengrove Farm Open Space [2]

A public green space located at the site of the previous Hengrove Farm.

Mowbray Road Open Space [3]

Green space with a play park and field.

Sturminster Wildlife Corridor/ Whitchurch Railway path (North end) [4]

My Background

I have lived in Whitchurch 22 years and occasionally walked the Whitchurch railway path much of that time. In

the last two years I have made this a regular walk- almost daily. I started stepping off the main path about a year ago and explored the woods and rough pathways there. I have discovered a lot of fly tipping in places but also found many sections really beautiful. Not many people step off the path, so a lot of areas are rarely visited and untouched with some occasional littering.

I started picking litter in the woods about a year ago. There are several people who pick litter along the main path, which is largely kept clear. I have chosen to target the litter beyond the verges. I have also been in touch with Parks dept about clearing some of the fly tipping in the wood left from years ago when vans were able to access the path. Fly tipping continues to be a problem near entrances.

I have also been taking photos of plants and trees to identify. From my garden I already recognise common birds but am less familiar with non-garden birds.



General View

Much of the woodland consists of ash, sycamore, field maples, cobnut, elder, Hawthorne, dogwood, with some oaks, spindle, and holly. In the railway days the land was used for grazing and there are the remains of some of these fields, but most is now wooded.



Foxes and occasionally badgers regularly visit the local streets and gardens. Foxes and deer are regularly spotted

on the Railway paths and in places some people leave out food for the deer.

The Whitchurch Railway path starts downhill in the north at Manston Close where there are bungalows and gradually climbs uphill towards Whitchurch village. Many local people use the path regularly both walkers and cyclists. Many women feel safe enough to walk on their own. There is a problem that some motorbikes use the railway path as a short cut between Sturminster Rd and Wells Rd or West Town lane. I have heard several people complain of feeling intimidated by their speed and quickness. It can feel unsettling if the bikers are going at speed.

- Maria Siepe, local resident

Maria gave so much great information about this green space for the audit that I wasn't able to fit it all in. So we've turned it into a guide that we hope will inspire people to go out, explore the area and also to litter pick along the way. You can download it from here:
https://bristolwildlifegroups.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/sturminster_litter_pick_walk_guide.pdf

Hengrove Park [5]

A large and popular green open space and event site with a weekly car boot sale.

The green space is located on an old airfield with large green fields that are surrounded by hedges and woodlands, which provides an important wildlife corridor. Up until recently skylarks nested at Hengrove Park, however housing development has since replaced this nesting ground.

Hengrove Park and much of the surrounding area is earmarked for housing development.

Bamfield Green Space [6]

No information provided.

Briery Leaze Road Open Space [7]

No information provided.

Cottle Road Park [8]

Cottle Road Park is an enclosed green space with a children's play area within the residential area of Stockwood. No dogs are permitted.

A few years ago, the park was awarded a grant from the council and the Friends of Cottle Road was formed and had significant input in how the grant was spent. New play equipment was installed to improve the play area and make the park a nicer, safer and cleaner place to visit. There is a large green space ideal for football games, and a circling path for cycling and scooting. There are also several benches to enjoy a rest and enjoy the area.

At Cottle Road Park we have a regular weekly litter pick where members of the community volunteer to be on a rota and take it in turns to litter pick on the weekend.

We have had an additional bin installed to help with littering to keep the park clean and safe.

Cottle Road Park has bike stands to encourage people to cycle or scoot to the park.

We have planted daffodil bulbs as a community activity for the second year running. We had a wild flower area planted last year and harvested the seeds once they had flowered so that more can be planted this year to encourage insects and butterflies.

We would like to have bird and bat boxes installed in the trees and plan to engage the community in thinking about how we could encourage more wildlife.

The park is frequently visited by common birds however there is a well known, noisy green parrot that flies around the local area and you can often see herons and birds of prey. Residents local to the park report seeing foxes at night and if lucky, you may see a squirrel during the day.

The park has very recently been awarded further funding so the Friends of Cottle Road Park will again work with the council to improve the area for the community, and its wildlife, to enjoy!

- Friends of Cottle Road Park

Facebook:

Hengrove Mounds [9] & Hawkfield Meadows [10]

Hengrove Mounds is a Local Nature Reserve made up a third by woodland, a third by scrub and a third by species rich grassland, making it a diverse place for wildlife and supporting many nesting birds and invertebrates. Over the years the scrub has been encroaching on the grassland area, which is impacting on the biodiversity, so there are plans to bring in goats to help with this scrub management.



Hawkfield Meadows is an unimproved neutral grassland meadow, which supports a wide variety of wildflowers. Only 3% of this type of habitat remains in the UK, making it extremely special and we're really lucky to have it in our area, although currently it is a bit unloved and needs some help to thrive. Many species of birds have been recorded here, including, whitethroat, lesser whitethroat, song thrush, bullfinches, reed bunting, siskin and redpoll. It also provides habitat for the rare small blue butterfly and the nationally rare Carrot Mining Bee.

We have some exciting things happen on these green spaces, including involving Street Goat to manage the brambles (although not likely this year, there will be some goat related volunteer roles in the future)! We'll also be looking for someone to help set up a butterfly transect (we have a small blue colony next to the green space) and with organising some community slowworm surveys.

Avon Wildlife Trust have been helping with the site under their My Wild City project, and the local college also use these green spaces for outdoor learning and activities, which includes scrub management, as well as other activities. The friends of group is relatively new and hopes to focus on involving the community in wildlife monitoring and surveys and has a couple of bat walks planned this year, amongst other things.



- Kelly Sheldrick (text) & Arrianne Yzzabelle (photos)

Friends of Hengrove Mounds & Hawkfield Meadows

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofthemoundsandmeadows

Website: friendsofthemoundsandmeadows.wordpress.com

Twitter: [@moundandmeadow](https://twitter.com/moundandmeadow)

Email: moundsandmeadows@gmail.com

Whitchurch Green (ASDA fields) & Whitchurch and Hengrove Community Orchard [11]

As of 8th November 2011, it was registered as **Whitchurch Green** thanks to a small group of local people who secured this area for all the people in our area to continue to enjoy now and well into the future.

It really was a remarkable achievement by a small group of local residents to win 'Town Green' status and the protections that come with it. The council turned it down, for reasons of their own – but the campaigners took it to appeal and succeeded in proving their case to a government inspector. No easy task, that.

As for the orchard, it was funded by 'Section 106' money

paid as a planning condition by early developers of Hengrove Park. The money was ring fenced to be an 'artwork' – but no-one seemed to think that was the best use for it, and the idea of a 'cathedral-shaped' orchard planting was adopted because it could loosely be described as an artwork!

<http://aprb.co.uk/projects/all-projects/2014/future-perfect-the-orchard>

- Kim Hicks, Whitchurch & Hengrove Community Group

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1101148483646391>

Saltwell Viaduct [12]

The green space, which runs through Whitchurch and Stockwood, below Saltwell Viaduct, has been left for many years. It is a lovely space.

Friends of Saltwell Viaduct

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Saltwell-viaduct-113185550424481/>

Email: saltwell.friends@gmail.com

Bifield Road Allotments [13]

No information provided.

Sturminster Road Allotments [14]

No information provided.

Fortfield Road Allotments [15]

No information provided.

Great Hayles Road Allotments [16]

The plot comprises 46 allotments with the vast majority under regular cultivation. The site is bounded by a line of trees to the south and the northern edges. These mainly comprise sycamore and elder. The eastern side is bounded by a market garden area some of which is quite overgrown. The western side is bounded by a road with school opposite.

There are some clumps of brambles around the site. A small number of allotmenters garden with wildlife in mind. There are a number of ponds. An increasing number of plots are managed by the “no dig” method, which improves the soil biodiversity. Compost heaps attract slow worms. Some plots have bird feeders and nest boxes. There’s room for improvement with regard to encouraging wildlife.

Birds - regularly sighted

House Sparrow, Woodpigeon, Feral pigeon, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Jay, Magpie, Blackbird, Robin, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Long tailed Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Wren, Starling & Sparrowhawk.

Birds - occasionally sighted

Dunnock, Ring necked Parakeet, Buzzard (flyover), Raven (flyover), Kestrel (flyover), Swift (flyover), Great Spotted Woodpecker, Coal Tit & Swallow (flyover).

Mammals

Grey Squirrel, Fox, Brown rat, Wood Mouse, Badger (one sighting)

Reptiles & Amphibians

Slow Worm & Frog

Butterflies

Speckled Wood, Small White, Large White, Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell, Holly Blue (occasional), Peacock, Orange Tip, Painted lady (occasional), Red Admiral & Comma.

- Graham Sims, Plot holder, Wildlife Champion & Birder

St Augustine's Park [17]

No information provided.

Ex-severn Project Site [18]

Not an allotment as such, it's the space left between the allotments on Fortfield Road and Great Hayles Road. There is a whole load of huge, unused polytunnel hoops on site - opposite the Hengrove Asda. We haven't done anything specific for wildlife but there is lots of scrub and the wildlife is doing very happily without any intervention on my part. No plans to do anything specific either - all my

time is taken up trying to make a living from growing vegetables in a soil-friendly way.

There's lots of empty space on the bits that I'm not using - a wildlife haven of docks, nettles and brambles but lots more potential I'm sure. Oh yes and a MASSIVE pond that would love rehabilitation.

- Dan Nettelfield, Plot Holder

More Photos

I received lots of stunning photos, while putting this audit together. I wasn't able to include all of them, but thought I'd include a couple below.



Stockwood Open Space Pond. Photo: Ken Hadlow



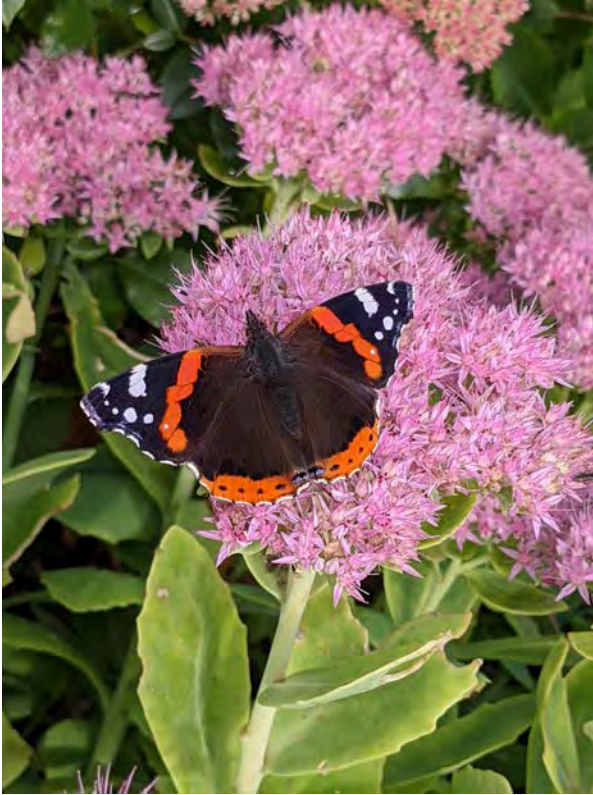
Photo: Mark Veale



Pond Life. Photo: Mark Veale



Stockwood Open Space. Photo: Ken Hadlow



Butterfly. Photo: Graham Styles



Sturminster Wildlife Corridor . Photo: Maria Siepe



Hengrove Mounds. Photo: Arrianne Yzzabelle