



BEACON NEWSLETTER

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BEACON
Bollin Environmental
Action & Conservation

This year the pandemic has presented its own unique challenges and opportunities. The same can be said for the effect it has had on our environment, with reduction in vehicle use improving air quality, an increase in visitors to our local green spaces and changes to the way we work. Despite a brief break, BEACON has still been busy protecting and enhancing the Bollin catchment.

INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL WORK

This year saw us working against the clock to control invasive species when the spring season was missed due to lockdown and staff furlough. We hit the ground running in June and started balsam bashing in the areas we have worked on before at Bowdon and Wilmslow. We also managed two days controlling Giant Hogweed in Hale. Unfortunately, we were unable to do any work on the Giant Hogweed infestations in Lymm that we have focussed on previously. From September to November, Japanese Knotweed control took place, and due to the massive efforts of previous years, there was significantly less knotweed to control and even with a reduction in volunteer numbers allowed to help, we completed work on all our Knotweed areas.



RIVERFLY MONITORING INITIATIVE

The [Riverfly Monitoring Initiative](#) is a national programme established by the Riverfly Partnership that trains volunteers to identify riverflies. Different species of riverfly can tolerate different levels of pollution, and the species and numbers of riverflies found in a sample can help determine the pollution levels in the river being sampled.

The [Bollin and Birkin Fly Fishing Association's](#) members have been very active in taking up this initiative and have provided robust, frequent and detailed kick sample results that are really helping us to understand the pressures our local waterbodies face. The picture is a mixed one, but we hope to improve water quality through the work we're doing with farmers, landowners, communities and the water industry.

BE PLANT WISE

Lockdown has seen many of us spending more time working on our gardens, which are often home to exotic, ornamental plants and shrubs that have not come from Britain. The Be Plant Wise campaign, re-launched in September, will help you to make sure your garden doesn't become the source of invasive non-native plant species escaping into the wild. There are three simple rules to follow: Know what you grow, Stop the Spread and Compost with Care. For more information on this campaign visit the Be Plant Wise website [here](#).



VOLUNTEERING

We are busy finalising the dates for our working parties and volunteer training opportunities for 2021. Please contact us on the details overleaf to find out more. You don't need to have any previous experience to get involved. Make your new year's resolution to get outside, meet new people, learn new skills and save our rivers!



FUNDING

As well as all the work on the ground we do, it is important to ensure that BEACON has the finance it needs to continue to operate and grow. So, this autumn we have been put together bids for funding from the Environment Agency, Heritage Lottery, Manchester Airport and others. If successful, this funding will allow us to make improvements to polluted rivers, work with farmers and landowners to change land management practises, and get more detailed information on the issues facing our local rivers today.

VOLUNTEERING

This year our capacity to host volunteer events was seriously reduced due to lockdown, and then Covid restrictions. However, many of our volunteers decided to continue with their work as part of their daily exercise, and even without staff support, a whopping 250 hours were spent on controlling Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam by volunteers in Bowdon, Hale and Wilmslow from May to July this year. We are very grateful to all the volunteers who carried on with this work, and we are able to continue to see a reduction in invasive non-native species in these areas.



GB NON NATIVE SPECIES SECRETARIAT

The latest issue of the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat newsletter is now available to view [here](#). The Non-native Species Secretariat has responsibility for helping to coordinate the approach to invasive non-native species in Great Britain, and provides support to local action groups like BEACON.

NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Mersey Rivers Trust, the charity that BEACON is a part of, has been able to secure funding to carry out three Natural Flood Management projects this winter, one of which will take place at Pott Shrigley; right at the top of the Bollin catchment. Natural flood management is where natural processes are used to reduce the risk of flooding, such as restoring bends in rivers or changing the way land is managed so soil can absorb more water. In the case of Pott Shrigley, a series of leaky dams will be constructed using natural materials such as timber and willow already on site, to hold back rain water that would otherwise run at speed down the hill valleys. These dams, and the planting of a large number of trees will slow the flow of surface water across the land to prevent flooding of the school and homes in Pott Shrigley Village.



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Mersey Rivers Trust
Riverview, A17 Embankment Business Park
Heaton Mersey, Stockport SK4 3GN
Tel: 0161 442 8938
Email: info@merseyrivers.org.uk

www.merseyrivers.org.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/merseybasin/

