

Volunteer Update September 2018



A big thank you to all our volunteers for their continuing support throughout the summer months. We certainly had no complaints on the weather front this year, with the Regional Park and its visitors basking in the prolonged summer sunshine. Autumn is now upon us, with its rich palette of colours and bounty of berries.

Visitor Numbers

Thanks to our dedicated Heritage Guides we welcomed **2,517** visitors to the Lock Keeper's Cottage in this quarter up to 26th September. This included our usual weekend openings and the European Heritage Open Days in September, which saw **255** visitors cross the Cottage threshold. The Industry Barge welcomed **1,524** visitors in the same period, with **297** climbing aboard on the EHOD weekend. Thank you all for sharing our Lagan Navigation heritage and stories with all our visitors from near and far.



Holiday Closures

There are no holiday closures this coming quarter until the Christmas break, when it is **anticipated that the Cottage and Barge will be closed from Monday 24 December until Wednesday 2 January inclusive.** This will be confirmed nearer the time.

Please note that the Cottage and Barge will be **closed on Friday 5 October** to facilitate the Heritage Guides' annual outing.

Update on Conservation Tasks

Our Saturday Conservation Volunteers have been busy this quarter with a variety of tasks across the Regional Park.

Derriaghy Glen



For the first task of July, the volunteers were back at Derriaghy Glen to continue with removing the non-native invasive Himalayan balsam from the site – some of which was rather tall, towering over our volunteer Sally, as you can see in the picture above!

The volunteers also carried out a litter lift from an area of the site which had been cleared of another non-native invasive, Cherry Laurel, by contractors brought in by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, who own the site. Once cleared of shrubbery a lot of litter was visible along the front boundary of the site. Stephen Toal, LCCC's Countryside Officer, thanked the volunteers for their fantastic work with the balsam bashing and removal of 9 bags of litter. Well done folks!

Minnowburn



The second task in July and the first in August saw the volunteers join NT Belfast Ranger, Colin Barrett, at their Minnowburn site, to remove Himalayan balsam from a stretch of land between the Edenderry Road and the River Lagan on one task, and Ragwort (which is poisonous to livestock) from adjacent grazed land. The volunteers did a great job on both tasks, and thanks were extended Colin and the wider Minnowburn team.

Clement Wilson Park



The first task of September had the volunteers back at Clement Wilson Park's meadow – a BCC Bee-licious project site – removing more suckering tree saplings from the meadow to allow machinery to be brought in to cut and lift the vegetation (i.e. managing as a hay meadow) to reduce fertility and enhance the site's floristic diversity, providing food for bees and other pollinators and interest for our visitors. Orla Maguire, BCC Biodiversity Officer, joined us again for the task and was really impressed with the amount of work the volunteers put in on this task (many putting in extra time to get the task completed at the end!), and also on the previous two tasks last quarter. The cut and lift will be carried out in October.

Belvoir Oak Wood



Belvoir Oak Wood was the venue for the second tasks of both August and September. It is now 10 years (how time flies!) since this young woodland was planted by LVRP Volunteers, the local community and local school children, and the trees - which were grown from acorns from the neighbouring ancient Belvoir oaks - are flourishing. Every few years our volunteers carry out aftercare on site, removing overgrown vegetation from around the young trees to improve conditions for them to thrive. A vast swathe of the young woodland was tackled over the two tasks, and the site also welcomed a corporate volunteer party from Ulster Bank on Love Your Landscape Day on 28th September, organised in conjunction with Business in the Community.

The **provisional schedule for Saturday Conservation tasks** for the upcoming quarter is outlined below. Please note that these may be subject to change, though as usual confirmation will be emailed prior to task days.

Date	Task	Venue	Meeting place
10 Oct	Woodland Management	Belvoir Oak Wood	Belvoir Drive Car Park
27 Oct	Woodland Management	Mcllroy Park	Drumbo Dog Racing Car Park
10 Nov	Woodland Management	Mcllroy Park	Drumbo Dog Racing Car Park
24 Nov	TBC	TBC	TBC
8 Dec	Volunteer Christmas Event	LVRP Visitor Centre/Barge	TBC

Other volunteer news

Welcome back...



David Littlejohn, who volunteered with us a few years back, has made a return to the Regional Park, to volunteer in both the Volunteer Ranger and Saturday Conservation Volunteer roles. David has been assisting the Park's Ranger Service with patrols and site maintenance tasks, and he made a return to the Saturday Conservation Volunteer team on the last Belvoir Oak Wood task. Good to have you back David!

Bat Surveys



In August, Lagan Valley Regional Park volunteers contributed to the All-Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterway Survey for the ninth year running. Thanks to our 16 surveyors, 6 transects were covered along the Lagan this year, with results sent to Tina at Bat Conservation Ireland. The survey is the primary monitoring tool for the species across the island of Ireland. Tina sends a heartfelt thanks to you all for your continued support on the survey.

Memorial Tree Planting



It has been suggested that we combine our planned tree plantings on site in memory of our wonderful volunteers, Eleanor and Sue, who so sadly passed away this year, with our end of year Volunteer Event in December - raising a glass of mulled punch and remembering absent friends in the festive season. The event is planned for **Saturday 8 December**. If anyone would like to contribute to the memorial in any way, perhaps by saying a few words or reading a poem, please get in touch with Genevieve.

Chris Packham's Bioblitz at Lagan Valley



On **Monday 16 July**, LVRP's **Mclloy Park** was be one of the 48 UK sites which hosted **Chris Packham's 'UK Bioblitz – Nature Reserves are not Enough!'** citizen science campaign, recording flora and fauna on site with the help of park staff and local experts. The results of the 2018 UK nature audit will be recorded to create a benchmark, which will help measure the rise and fall in numbers of different species on these sites in the future.

A whopping **250 species** were recorded at Mclloy Park on the day!

Board News



Following the retirement of Frank Jordan, Michael McSorley and Jackson Tinto from Lagan Valley Regional Park's Board of Directors this month, the Park is pleased to welcome **Kerrie Sweeney** and **Una McKernan** to the Board.

A third nominee is currently under consideration.

Annual Report

The **Annual Report for 2017-18** is undergoing final corrections and should be available from **mid to late October**. A small number of hard copies will be available from the Park Office and an electronic copy will be uploaded to the website once available.

Upcoming events - Annual events programme

Details of this quarter's annual events programme are outlined below.

Further details can be obtained from our printed programme, available from the Visitor Centre and other outlets, on our website and Facebook page, or by telephoning the Office on 028 9049 1922. Please note that events **must be booked** as spaces are limited.

Events are **free for our volunteers**, though donations are always welcome.

So why not come along to one of our upcoming events, or promote them to your family and friends – there is something there to interest everyone!



For more information and to book a place on an event, please contact the Park Office on 028 9049 1922

LVRP Autumn Events: Oct – S Dec 2018

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Fri 5 Oct	Autumn Discovery Morning	Belvoir Park Forest car park
Sat 6 Oct	Fungal Foray	Shaw's Bridge car park
Sat 27 Oct	The Towpath by Twilight	Shaw's Bridge car park
Sat 17 Nov	Secrets of the Stone Age	Giant's Ring car park
Sun 9 Dec	Yule Logs and Legends	LVRP Visitor Centre

Feedback

Don't forget to provide us with feedback. We are always interested to know of any issues, questions or suggestions you may have.

Volunteer uniforms

If any of our volunteers don't yet have a body warmer or one of our T-shirts, please let the staff know and we will make sure