

**WHJCC MEETING, 16th MARCH 2023, 7PM
FRIENDS OF THE WELSH HARP SUBMISSION**

Since the last meeting, Friends of the Welsh Harp has continued with its grassroots community conservation activities.

Activities since the last WHJCC on 23rd November 2022:

- 27/11/22: Monthly conservation event
 - Approx. 25 attendees = 50 hours of volunteering
 - 1 tonne litter collected around Eastern Marsh up to and including Brent
 - Equates to £552.50 worth of work* done at no cost to stakeholders with statutory responsibility of the Welsh Harp
- 29/01/23: Monthly conservation event
 - Approx. 45 attendees = 90 hours of volunteering
 - 2 tonnes litter collected at the A5 woodland plus work done at the bee garden
 - Equates to £994.50 worth of work*
- 26/02/23: Monthly conservation event teaming up with other grassroots groups: CURB, Friends of the Silk Stream, LAGER Can, Phoenix Canoe Club, Wembley Scouts
 - Approx. 70 attendees = 140 hours of volunteering
 - Estimated 4 tonnes waste removal at the Silkstream plastic flotilla and surrounding woodland
 - Equates to £1547 worth of work*
 - *Question to Barnet Council: Has the collected litter been collected from A5, woodland area, and by the Silk Stream?*
 - *Please also see item 3 in 'issues to be discussed below'*
- 27/02/23: Corporate volunteer day
 - Tree planting of 100 native trees in the field outside Woodfield Primary School
 - 7 attendees, equating to 25 hours of volunteering
 - Equates to £276.25 worth of work*
- 13/03/23: Corporate volunteer day
 - Building of bee bank at bee garden
 - 13 attendees, equating to 39 hours of volunteering
 - Equates to £430.95 worth of work*

STATS AT A GLANCE

4 months * 554 community volunteering hours† * £6,122 work at no cost

* Calculations based on London Living Wage £11.05 per hour.

† Also includes volunteer organising hours of Leila Taheri, Livia Forte, and Daniella Levene.

Current / future activities:

- 26/03/23: Monthly conservation event teaming up with other grassroots groups: CURB, Friends of the Silk Stream, LAGER Can to continue work at Silkstream plastic flotilla plus bee bank
- 30/04/23: Monthly conservation event teaming up with WHCG to make insect hotel chain
- Further conservation days will take place during following months
- Bee garden update
 - Completed: Bee bank built, nutrients added to soil, temporary signage added, some planting done, coppicing (thanks to the Canoe Club and Sailing Club!)
 - Future work: Further planting, permanent signage, maintenance
 - *Question to Barnet Council: Please can the current signage on the pole be removed as discussed?*
- Public bird hide update
 - Local eco-art competition judging event attended by stakeholders
 - Winners announced to schools
 - 'Pasting party' to take place 24/04/23 where art will be installed by children and bench painted
 - *Question to Barnet Council: When can a bin be installed?*

Issues to be discussed:

- Welsh Harp Vision: When is this being published? It has been delayed multiple times.
- Silk Stream Bridge: What is the status of this? We are extremely concerned about this issue given a recent email response from a council officer. The impact of the bridge is being minimised and the incorrect information used in the planning application not acknowledged. Part of the letter states: "We are not aware of any scientific evidence that proves that the bridge would have an adverse impact on the wetlands."
 - *Can Barnet Council provide scientific evidence of how thousands of tonnes of materials being introduced to a fragile ecosystem, extended works carried out over a period of time, and noise pollution will NOT adversely impact the wetlands and its wildlife?*
 - *We'd like to understand how NE could approve a 200 metre bridge to be built across an SSSI while it will not approve some native trees to be planted on its fringes.*
- Regarding the silk stream flotilla: On 08/03/23 Barnet Council commented on Twitter: "Quick update from us: We are arranging contractor-led clearance works in the area, and we will be undertaking a review of litter-picking regimes for the whole Welsh Harp. [1/2] We're also exploring additional measures to

keep waste in the trash screen, especially during periods of increased water levels. [2/2]"

- *Request for Barnet Council: Could we get an update at the next JCC on 1. the agreed dates for the contractor-led clearance, 2. outcome of the litter picking review, and 3. outcome of the explored measures related to the trash screen.*
- Our proposal for a 'Wellbeing Woodland' to be created on the A5 opposite the new St George's development has been received well from the developer. We have a site meeting with them to discuss the potential works to boost biodiversity as well as create an attractive entrance to the Welsh Harp for the benefit of the entire community.
 - *Barnet Council and CRT have expressed their support. Question for Natural England on whether they are open to granting approval for such works to be carried out.*
- A cannabis farm was recently discovered on the SSSI, near West Hendon Playing Fields.
 - *Question for Natural England: Given concerns around planting, would Natural England like to investigate the issue?*