

## Boston Big Local Report, April - June 2023

### Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Service – Environmental Volunteering

#### The Friendly Bench

The Boston Big Local funding has allowed us to continue having monthly events at the Friendly Bench and to maintain the bench and flowerbeds.

In celebration of the King's Coronation, we created a painted pebble garden by the side of the Friendly Bench. Local people were asked to paint a pebble with a design to commemorate the King's Coronation and we set these in concrete by the bench. Nearly 300 pebbles were painted by people aged 3 to over 80 years old and lots of local groups were involved including: Cubs, Boston in Bloom, Age UK, Carlton Road Primary School, Thistles, Memory Lane, Ancaster Court, Singing for Fun, BEAM café and Boston College. The concrete bed was made for us by a resident of Ancaster Court (a retired builder).

On 5<sup>th</sup> April we held a celebration event, open to everyone, at the Friendly Bench for the King's Coronation. Singing for Fun provided the entertainment, there were crafts, games and a quiz plus refreshments for everyone to enjoy. It was attended by around 100 people.



During Dementia Awareness week we invited Fran Taylor from Boston Borough Council along to the Friendly Bench to provide information on dementia services and we planted planters with wildlife friendly plants, played games and chatted to residents about what was available to support people with dementia and their carers. We had 12 people attend but it has also led to a connection being made with Ancaster Court and Grounds Court as they have requested more information on dementia services for their residents.

In June we welcomed Jane Keightley (Boston History Tours) to give a talk on the history of Boston and 10 people attended this very enjoyable and informative talk.



*Dementia Awareness Week at the Friendly Bench*



### **Town Jewels Project**

I have been working with Transported supporting them with the Town Jewels project. I have attended events with them at Pilgrims Patch and at Scott House planting wildflower plugs, making wildflower seed bombs, mini bug homes and bird feeders. They are going to support me with my Naturehood projects at Pilgrims Patch and at the Centenary Methodist Church.



*At Pilgrims Patch working in partnership with Transported.*

### **Planting Wildflowers in Central Park**

We invited Thistles Market Garden to come along to Central Park and add wildflower plugs to the corner of park.

*People from Thistles Market Garden in Central Park in May 2023*



## RiverCare

### Haven Litter Pick

We were joined by 15 people at the litter pick along the Haven on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April and we collected 35 bags of litter. We were supported by Wyberton Wombles of Boston Common, the Co-op, ASDA and some of our lovely regular volunteers. Boston Borough Council came along at the end and collected all of the bagged litter.



*Haven Litter Pick, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023*

### RiverCare Annual Conference –

This was held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, located just outside of Huntingdon, and two Boston RiverCare volunteers attended.

### Men's Shed

The ecological studies carried out at Pilgrims Patch and the Centenary Methodist Church suggested that the sites would benefit from the addition of a couple of bat boxes. The Men's Shed have made us up some bat box kits to use at the community events at these two sites. We also wanted to put living roofs on the bug hotels and the Men's Shed have made these for us.

### ASDA Funding

I am delighted to inform you that we received £720 from the ASDA Foundation as funding towards the Naturehood project. Along with BBL funding, this will allow us to carry out a Naturehood project on Pilgrims Patch and at the Centenary Church.

### BBC Radio Lincolnshire

Melvyn Prior from the radio was broadcasting live from the Market Square and he interviewed Leanne Hills from the Friendly Bench committee and me about the events we hold at the Friendly Bench.



## **Future Plans**

### **Working with local secondary Schools**

We are going to be working with two local schools getting their young pupils involved in regular activities in Boston including taking care of the Naturehood sites we have created and litter picking.

### **Friendly Bench**

In August we will be working with local artist Jane Kay and will invite people to the Friendly Bench to help create mosaics. These will then be used in a public art project.

### **Naturehood**

With Boston Big Local Funding and the additional funding from the ASDA Foundation we will be carrying out a Naturehood project on Pilgrims Patch. We are working with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, RSPB and Boston in Bloom to create a wildlife area on this site. We will be making a bug hotel, bird, bat and hedgehog homes, plus planting wildflowers. We will also be working at the Centenary Methodist Church to extend the mini wildflower meadow created their last year, we will be refurbishing the bug hotel and making other wildlife habitats. We also have plans to carry out a naturehood project at the Geoff Moulder Community Garden.

I will be taking part in the judging tour of Boston in Bloom talking about the work we are doing on Pilgrims Patch.

### **Beach event**

I will be attending the Beach event on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> August to promote volunteering environmental projects.

### **RiverCare**

I had a meeting with the RiverCare and BeachCare Programme Officer and we discussed doing some conservation activities with volunteers along the river so that as well as litter picking local people can get involved in carrying out additional activities to improve our local river. This will involve for example survey work and getting rid of invasive species in the river.

A quote from the RiverCare and BeachCare Manager: *I just want to say thank you for all your work with me and RiverCare over the past couple of years. It has been a genuine pleasure to see you start Boston RiverCare, and to see how much of a difference the group has already made in such a short space of time. I wish you and all your volunteers all the best for the future.*

### **Young People's Learning Provision (YPLP)**

I will be doing another project with YPLP starting in September where they will get involved in regular activities to improve the environment. This is a small group of young people aged 18 to 23. We now have a good selection of gardening and litter picking tools for the group to use (kept in the locked store in Central Park). These will also be used by the two school groups.

### **Good News Stories:**

#### **The Men's Shed**

We continue to have a very successful partnership with the Men's Shed and we were able to put Boston in Bloom in touch with them and they have made planters for them for siting outside the Salvation Army. I

also invited our Area Officer to meet the Shedders and we are discussing with them steps to take to become a properly constituted group. They have now agreed a constitution and have a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. The next step is to set up their own bank account. The Men's Shed is growing, and they need larger premises. They also have a long list of people wishing to join but they currently have limited space. They are fortunate that they use their current premises free of charge (TaylorITEX, Fenside Community Centre) but new premises would result in additional expenses and funding is therefore essential for them to grow. The Area Officer will be able to support them in applying for the funding they need to go forward. They continue to support my projects and will be making a wildlife habitat on Pilgrims Patch by drilling various size deep holes in a tree stump which will make an ideal home and nesting site for bees, lacewings, etc.

### **Quote from a volunteer**

One of our regular volunteers, John, commented "Getting involved in the Naturehood project has really been good for me – I have got out of the house more, made new friends and it has really helped my mental health."

### **Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust**

LWT are changing the way they work with the community and wish to support community champions so instead of coming along and delivering education activities they want to train volunteers in the community so that they can pass their skills on and work with other volunteers. LWT will be delivering a course in August at the Geoff Moulder Community Garden on how to create a hibernaculum and will also be doing a tree audit in Boston and local people can join in and learn about the trees in Boston and a complete record of public trees in Boston and their condition will be created.

### **Number of Volunteers engaged in projects in quarter April – June 2023**

Friendly Bench Pebble Project	approximately 200 people
King's Coronation Celebration event	approximately 100 people
Dementia Awareness event	12 people
History talk event	10 people
Haven Litter Pick	15 people
Town Jewels Projects (Pilgrims Patch/Scott House)	50 people
Men's Shed	10 people
Wildflower plug planting in Central Park	10 people

Plus supporting individuals in their efforts to keep their neighbourhoods tidy by providing litter picking equipment.

Total number of volunteers engaged in environmental projects this quarter: approximately 420.

Jackie Lane, Environmental Project Coordinator, Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service.