



BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGY GROUP

Newsletter

Issue 2 2021

Q1 2021





In this issue:

In this, our second newsletter we provide an update on the progress of our phase 1 project, news of further success on the funding front plus a preview of our phase 2 project. Also, in this issue we provide the latest information on our possible partnership with Buglife (Scotland).

A summary of our latest progress and plans.

An update since our last newsletter in summary, Page 3.

Initial phase 1 project



A brief update phase 1 progress, Pages 4 & 5.

Phase 2 project plan



Objectives for phase 2. Page 6.

Fundraising update



Full details of the latest grant funding and donations from other groups and individuals, Page 7.

Information links

How to find more information about the BEG group, its members and its activities, Page 7.

Becoming a Member or volunteer?

How to become a member and/or volunteer. Page 7.

Partnership update



Update on the partnerships we have developed and who we are working with on our plans and activities. Page 7.



Summary

We have made good progress since our first newsletter just one month ago with the first phase of our long-term plan to increase biodiversity across Peebles Golf Course and are now looking towards the second phase. This second update details the progress so far with funding, our current work, phase 2 plans and how to get involved.

The initial task of preparing 2500m² of rough area adjacent to the 7th hole, to be planted with wild-flower meadow seed has been completed and is now showing good signs of growth.

Following the successful raising of £1200 from the generous donations from club members and a £1500 grant from the Scottish Borders Council Tweeddale Community Fund, we have been the recipient of further donations plus a further successful grant application towards the second phase.

We continue to receive excellent help and advice from Lorna McCullough from "The Bridge", being kept right up to date on any new funding possibilities.

We have successfully obtained 10 free Alder, Crab apple and Goat willow trees from the Borders Forestry Trust.

The potential partnership with Buglife (Scotland) has taken another step forward following a very positive site visit in May. A number of areas around the golf course were identified as having good potential for further wildflower meadows including the possibility of a wetland meadow next to the 12th tee area.

We are currently waiting for the detailed proposals to be delivered from Buglife (Scotland) which will then be submitted to the golf club for approval.

A small number of bird boxes were put up in April with some already being successfully occupied. A further 29 plus 5 bat boxes are due to be positioned around the golf course before the coming winter.

The excellent publicity we received from articles in April's "Peebles Life" and "The Peeblesshire News" has resulted in new volunteers joining us.

Talking of volunteers, we continue to get terrific support for our initial wildflower meadow project which has needed some real hard graft in its preparation and will continue to do so until it gets well established.

A huge thanks to all of you.

Phase 1 and the early beginnings. Fingers crossed for good germination



A hardy band of members and new recruits making light work of the seed sowing



Initial Project 7th hole wildflower meadow progress



The picture above shows some of our dedicated volunteers sowing the seed at the beginning of May. The seed was sourced from Scotia Seeds providing us with a seed mixture containing 19 perennial flowers and 6 grass types with all the seeds sourced locally in Scotland.

Full details of the plants included can be obtained using the following link:

<https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/mg5-meadow-mix/>

Most of the colour from the perennials sown this year is not likely to be highly visible until next year. So, to help provide some colour this year a small percentage of annuals have been added to the seed mixture. Hopefully the poor cold then very dry growing conditions since sowing won't deter the annuals too much.

Following seed sowing large areas became overgrown with tall thistles prior to the seeds gaining a foothold and a small but hardy group of volunteers went in and manually dug a large number of them out. There are still some areas to be tackled but the largest area has now been cleared. However, we won't be removing all the thistles as the tall thistle itself is a native annual wildflower and is a big favourite among pollinator insects. The abundant nectar and pollen found in thistle flowers make them one of the most popular plants among both pollinator and non-pollinator invertebrates.



The following images outline the chronological progress since sowing with the last few days seeing quite a growth spurt after some very welcome rain.



The image to the left was taken on June 17th (6 weeks after sowing) and things were not looking too good.

We were starting to worry that the cold and dry conditions were going to produce very poor germination.

However, rain finally came along plus a little heat and by June 19th things were looking a bit better.

By June 25th things were really taking off with some quite thick growth and even the first signs of some flowers. Given a bit more heat, the meadow will continue to flourish although we still have a bit of additional work to do to ensure the whole area gets fully established.



First signs of flowers.
Meadow Vetching





Phase 2 project plans.

Primula panting

Our next project is to clear the banks on a section of the small burn which runs through a wooded area from the top of the golf course. We intend to clear the branches either side of the burn to provide a bit more light and give an unrestricted view from the top of the course right down over Peebles. The banks once cleared will be planted up on either side with primulas which will give some early season nectar for pollinating insects as well as a welcome bit of colour.

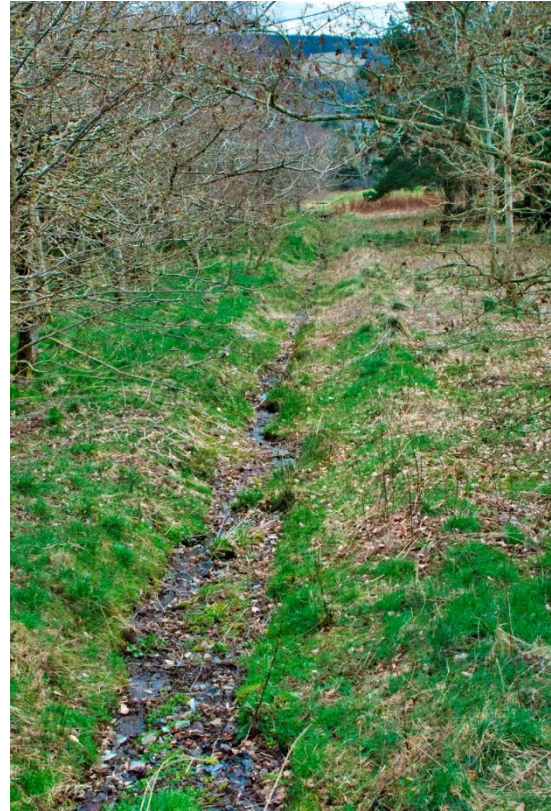
We have over 500 primula (vulgaris) plant plugs on order with Pentland Plants and will be ready for collection and growing on prior to planting out in October/November.

Crocus planting

In addition to planting out the primula plants we will be planting out a large number of purple crocus bulbs (the best colour for attracting pollinating insects) around some of the tee areas. These will also provide a good source of early season nectar and colour.



We will need more volunteers for these projects so if you would like to get involved in any of the above you can register your interest using the contact information on page 6.



Bird box installation

We have a large number of bird boxes still to be put up. The boxes are a mixture of types suitable for a wide range of species.

It is intended to get these in place prior to November so that they can provide roosting and shelter over the winter and hopefully then be more likely to be used for nesting next spring. At the end of each year the boxes will be cleaned out and information on which ones have been occupied will noted to help in any survey work.



Fundraising update:

Since our fund-raising success in April via crowdfunding and an SBC grant award we have received a very generous donation of £500 from the Peebles Community Trust along with a £50 individual donation. In addition, and following up information from “The Bridge” regarding the possibility of funds being available via “Volunteering Matters Action Earth” small project grants, we have been successful in obtaining £240 towards the plants and bulbs needed in phase 2 of our long-term project.

We will continue to seek any possible avenues for further funding as this project has a long way to go and we badly require a wide variety of equipment to make working on the various projects possible, safer and a lot easier.

Where to get more Information and get involved.

Peebles golf club (PGC) have kindly given us our own page on their web site, you can find all our current information on that page at: <https://www.peeblesgolfclub.com/biodiversity>

You can request more information from the group using the email: Peebles_BEG_Group@yahoo.com

As a constituted group, we need to ensure we have a formal process in place for new members and new volunteers, just so we know who is who, it only includes your name and email, no other details are held. Membership is open to anyone in Peeblesshire and beyond, to apply to become either a group member or volunteer and its free to join), please email: Peebles_BEG_Group@yahoo.com

Partnership Organisations:

This month we welcome the addition of **Volunteering Matters**

Buglife (Scotland)	https://www.buglife.org.uk/get-involved/near-me/buglife-scotland/
PCT	https://www.peeblescommunity.org/
The Bridge	https://onlineborders.org.uk/community/thebridge
The Men’s Shed	https://peeblesmensshed.co.uk/
PGC	https://www.peeblesgolfclub.com/
Volunteering matters	www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk/actionearth

We are working closely with the above partners on our current and future plans, our funding approach, our constitution and policies, our governance and finances.