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14/04/2015

Survey Report

Greenfield Primary School

A Healthy Biodiversity

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats (see website) are in **bold** print and suggested nest boxes/feeding stations to be placed in the school grounds are in **red** print. Some species and items will be in both **red** and **bold**.

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for showing around your very interesting school grounds. They have considerable wildlife possibilities due to the presence of **Hedgerow, Woodland, Scrub** and **Grassland** habitats. The only possible habitat that is missing is a **Wetland**. The **Hedgerow** along the school field is exceptional in terms of Biodiversity and needs to be preserved. **House Sparrows** were singing and we would suggest a **House Sparrow colony box** to be placed on the highest part of the school roof.

The Entrance WNW of the Main Building.

There are 3 mature Cherry trees, 1 Sycamore Tree and a Hawthorne hedge in this area. Herbicide sprays have been used to clear the vegetation around the trees and along the base of the hedge. The practice of spraying needs to be stopped as it serves no reasonable purpose and is significantly detrimental to a healthy biodiversity. **A Wild Flower seed mix** could be sown along the Hedgerow and Woodland plants such as English **Bluebells, Wood Anemones** and **Snowdrops** could be placed around the trees. We would aim to fund these items. **3 Tree Sparrow boxes** could be placed on the trees.

The Garden Area

There is a good **Hedgerow** with Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Elderberry and Sycamore. **Wild flowers** need to be allowed to grow along the base to provide food (seeds and **invertebrates**) for nesting birds.

The Infants Playground

8 Bat boxes could be placed on the mature Sycamore trees here. Again there is a Hawthorn **Hedgerow** that needs preserving with **wild flowers** growing underneath it. **2 Tree Sparrow boxes** could be placed on the two trees N.W. of the school.

The Entrance Area South East of the Main Building

There a number of mature trees here, some of which could be Black Poplar and a Beech Hedge on the perimeter. Again **wild flowers** could be allowed to grow under this hedge. **3 Bat** and **4 Tree Sparrow** boxes could be placed here. A large tree has been felled and cut into large pieces. This could develop into an important **Deadwood** habitat for invertebrates. **Invertebrates** are the bedrock of a healthy biodiversity. Regarding the edges of the school field consideration could be given to the new grass cutting regimes being adopted by Barnsley Council (contact Trevor Mayne, Biodiversity Officer at TrevorMayne@barnsley.gov.uk . These will help wildlife without interfering with play areas.

The School Field

North West of the football pitch is a chicken run and a proposed duck area next to the fence line. We would suggest that a **wildlife pond** with dipping platform be created here along with a **bird feeding station** and metal, single panelled **bird hide**. We would fund these items (approximate value £3000). The feeding station would be next to the fence line so that birds could escape Sparrow Hawk attacks by retreating into the trees in the Forest School area. The educational value of such an area as opposed to a duck area is great. We would not fund a duck pond because domestic ducks would destroy most wildlife (including plants) that ventured into their area. The only other place for a pond is in the Forest Schools Area but there would have to be some removal of young trees and it would be more difficult to fill it with water or to construct a dipping platform. We have created 7 ponds at different schools and they have been very successful, attracting wildlife (**amphibians and invertebrates**) very quickly.

Care should be taken not to encroach on the football pitch, vital for outdoor physical activity.

The **Hedgerow** to the east of the school is of great biodiversity value. It contains Hawthorn, Bramble, Holly, Field Maple, Blackthorn, Beech, Dog Rose and wild flowers. At some stage it has been layered and should be preserved at all costs. It is **bird, invertebrate and small mammal** friendly. Any spraying by school grounds maintenance contractors along this Hedgerow should be halted immediately. **10 Bee boxes** could be placed along it's base.

The Forest Schools Area

There has been some good native tree planting of Ash, Silver Birch, Cherry, Holly and Oak saplings. Oak trees encourage the greatest number of **invertebrates** on which birds feed their young (moth caterpillars in particular). The areas of Bramble are particularly important for **invertebrates, birds and small mammals** and should be preserved. **4 Tree Sparrow boxes** could be placed on mature trees in the quieter parts of this area. **Woodland** plants such as **English Bluebells** could be encouraged further as they are already in place.

An issue in this area is human erosion. Specific learning pathways for quiet study could be clearly defined to allow the woodland floor to develop naturally.

Hedgehogs have declined in numbers from 30 million in the 1950s to 1 million today. They are in danger of extinction and many of our schools are thinking of running local community campaigns to help this iconic British species. They are largely a suburban species and school grounds can be ideal places for them to forage and hibernate. However, the fencing and walling of both school grounds and nearby gardens is not helpful to a creature that can travel 2kms per night in search of food. Consideration could be given to creating intermittent spaces under the fence line so that **Hedgehogs** can travel freely to new feeding areas. If this was done we could provide **3 Hedgehog boxes** to be placed in appropriate areas on the school perimeter (2 in the Forest Schools area and 1 in the school field Hedgerow). There are already long grass areas where Hedgehogs may be hibernating. These should be maintained.

The Quadrangle

Butterfly/Bee friendly shrubs such as buddleia, hebes and lavender could be grown here.

Conclusion

We would provide all new nest boxes, pond, wild flower seeds, English Bluebell bulbs free of charge, present them at a whole school assembly (not the pond!), help with their installation (Autumn 2015), set up a mapping and recording system and follow up with nest box cleaning and recording nest box contents in the Autumn of 2016. All

activities will involve children and the school community. Please share this report with appropriate staff, governors, volunteers and children and let us know whether you wish us to proceed.

Maintaining a healthy biodiversity is probably the most important challenge human beings will need to face in the future.

Once again, thank you for welcoming us to your school. We look forward to working with you. See you on June 16th for the class presentation.

Kind regards,

Colin Graham

Project Leader.

Biodiversity in Schools