



## Barbican Wildlife Garden Activity Log July 2024 to December 2024

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### Section A - Community Participation

#### June

Very successful London Open Gardens weekend with 1040 visitors. Refreshment stall made £148.35 and plant stall made £69.80, with a further £30 of donations on the gate. Aryan and Kabir Kaul visited over the weekend, with Aryan spending several hours as our poet in residence. BBC decided against doing any filming over the open gardens weekend. On following wednesday the group held a small celebration for Nic, one of our city gardeners, on the occasion of his wedding, and were joined by the other gardeners. Presentations were also made to Luis, who is retiring, and Ruby who is leaving to take another role.

Culture Mile BID confirmed on 12 June that our application for further funding to lay the Fann St hedge had been successful. This work will be done in the autumn by the Conservation Volunteers. We also have had confirmation from the CoLC Small Grants Programme that we can use the underspend from their grant (for the information boards) to buy some small tools and a new noticeboard for the top gate.

Group hosted Thomas from Sydney Botanic Gardens on 12 June who is visiting London for a few weeks. Ben Bishop came by on 19th June to download the first data from the climate monitoring station. An online meeting also held that day with Zain, an alumni of UCL, about the potential to trial a new bee home that he has developed in the BWG.

The first of two workshops for this year took place on 19 June and was well attended. Six students from The Bartlett joined the group and all said afterwards how helpful it had been. Two local residents also came along. On 25th June, volunteers participated in a workshop at Charterhouse about bees and butterflies, at which data from the BWG was presented.

#### July

Decision taken to participate once again in the BA Summer Party in Thomas More and offer an activity for children; funding will be sought to cover costs. IYN judging took place on 3 July and went well with judges appearing to understand the mission of the garden. Volunteers also attended the first City Pollinator Panel on 1 July.

Second workshop held on 10 July with GiGL talking about the importance of recording and reporting wildlife sightings. Talk attended by some of the Bartlett students and Randall Anderson, one of the Aldersgate Common Councillors. After the talk GiGL sent through extra material on how we can improve the recording of our sightings. One suggestion is that we should pictorially record meadow species on a fortnightly basis.

The BWG has been given a £100 gift card by the City of London Corporation which can be spent at any one of a number of participating City businesses.

A meeting took place in the Garden with Zain Ansari on 24 July to discuss the UCL Apia Bee Home product that his company has developed, and to decide where it might be located if we were to go ahead with a trial.

Nic and Jo have been invited to attend the London Parks and Gardens Trust's annual Summer Reception on 5 September which will be held at the Museum of Brands in W11. The Bartlett summer exhibition will be held on 24 September and hopefully there will be a panel showing the work of The Bartlett volunteers. There is also a suggestion that we should record the meadow plants on a two weekly basis in order to build up a picture of the meadow over time and the impact of climate change.

We have also had confirmation that the £600 left over from the CoLC Small Grants funding can be used to purchase small tools and for a new noticeboard for the front gate. We have also received a £100 gift card from the Culture Mile BID to be used over the next 12 months at one of the participating businesses.

Cutting back along the paths carried out throughout the month to keep paths clear for visitors.

### **August**

We have received a small grant of £50 towards art supplies for children's painting activities at the BA summer party which one of the volunteers is organising. Theme this year will be butterflies. Also two volunteers will be able to attend the LiB awards ceremony which will be outside London this year, at Wisley. BWG volunteers will also have the role of cleaning up after the police horses and will help move tables and chairs before the event.

BWG volunteers have been asked to participate in Pollinating London Together's Wellbeing survey and instructions have been circulated. Following meeting at the garden on 24 July, we have also confirmed with Zain Ansari that we are happy to be one of the pilot sites for his Apia bee home trial with installation to be carried out on 21 August. There will also be a Tempo time credits networking event on 4 September but unfortunately it clashes with our Wednesday session.

Ellen Bidulka and Beatrice from Energy Garden visited the BWG on 14 August. They joined the session then shared with the group some of the work Energy Garden is doing on the 17 pieces of TfL land adjacent to rail corridors and stations. Linda Doolan, a volunteer guide from Wisley, visited with a friend, Laurel, and stayed to have coffee with the group at the end of the session. Patricia Menezes Maya Monteiro, a Brazilian academic doing research into community gardens, was hosted in the garden by Jo on Friday, with connection having come through The Bartlett.

AGM has now been set for 6 November.

### **September**

Group has voted unanimously to give Jo Rodgers the Culture Mile BID £100 gift voucher in recognition for all the work she puts in on behalf of the group outside Wednesday mornings.

Several BWG volunteers volunteered on 18th September at the local Prior Weston School to help them sort out their planter boxes, completed after children had left for the day to negate need for clearances. Decision taken to defer work until green waste collection could be organised. Next session planned for 3 October.

Painted butterflies from BA summer party added to the decorations in the bird hide.

### **October**

One of the volunteers again lead the BioBlitz at Bunhill Fields open day on 13 October. City of London School for Girls has approached the group asking whether it would become involved in a

project to create planters outside the school near the moat with bee friendly plants and bee hotel. Unfortunately the group has had to decline, given the previous commitment to Prior Weston. Old water butts have now been donated to a person who plans to use them on their allotment.

BWG awarded Level 5 Outstanding for the seventh year at the IYN awards on the 3rd October, together with Silver Gilt for Gardening for Wildlife. Police horses are booked to come this year on 20 November (pre-sowing) and 4 December (post-sowing).

Mulch from City Gardeners delivered on 9 October. Dates for 2025 London Open Gardens announced and it was agreed that we would open the Garden on both days, between 11 and 4. Metwins have now installed a section of trellis along the Bunyan ramp where access to the garden has been gained.

## **Section B - Environmental Responsibility**

### **June**

Water butts behind bird hide adjusted so that water can now flow from the first butt into the second and third.

### **July**

Butt water added to meadow pond (seven cans) from water butts in compost area. Butts behind bird hide empty at end of month.

Draining of Anne's pond started at month end using a hosepipe and siphoning off to area behind scrub barrier. About half depth draining last week of July with remainder to be done in weeks to come.

Seed bins cleared out of build up in the bottom.

*Significant sightings:* Lesser spotted woodpecker; tadpoles visible in the meadow pond;

### **August**

Dredging of Anne's pond commenced on 14 August as bottom now down to wet mud. Build up around 1 foot in depth with dredging completed during August; with pond being left to refill naturally during rainfall at the end of the month.

Atmospheric monitoring station in pollinator bed relocated to further down the bed in middle of month. A new trial bee hotel by Phytra called Apia bee homes made from mycelium installed at south end of bee home and will be monitored in months to come.

*Significant sightings:* plantings around meadow pond now attracting a lot of pollinators;

### **September**

Frogs are beginning to re-colonise the pond following the dredging. However, seven dead frogs found around the garden during the first two weeks of the month suggesting the foxes may be active again.

Second bird feeder cage (from the spinney) has now been repaired so thoroughly clean and brought back into service. Only one of the feeders has survived (one is missing and one broken) so filled with peanuts and new feeders will need to be bought for seed and fat balls.

*Significant sightings:* frogs now returning to the pond;

## October

Discussions initiated with TCV about creating a new pond edging for Annes pond. They will provide a quote for creating a pebble edging, similar to the path adjacent to the meadow pond. Francis is also contacting Alex Roebuck about tree work over winter in the vicinity of Annes pond to bring more light into the area. The group will look into applying for a grant for this work from Cory Environmental.

Metwins came by on 16th October to look at the issues we have been having with the water butts. Their advice was that the problems are mainly caused by blockages due to leaf and silt build up and that we should clear the gutters more often. Further efforts, mostly unsuccessful, made to dredge Annes pond. Decision made to leave it until next summer when it dries out again.

*Significant sightings:* colony of flying ants observed mating along edge on meadow; nesting boxes F6 and F3A both had blue tit nests from the nesting season.

## Section C - Gardening Achievement

### June

#### *Activities:*

Pellitory of the wall removed from around the top gate and Fann St border. Stems along palisade threaded and then area mulched and watered. Further threading took place at month end, as there is extensive new growth. Unfortunately it is growing towards the orchard and becoming intermingled with significant amount of bind weed now present. Cow parsley in the orchard now finished and so thinned before it could drop too much seed as it has been very dominant this year.

Clearing carried out around recent plantings to the side of the meadow pond (ligularia, loosestrife) as they were becoming swamped.

Lemon balm in the pollinator bed thinned to provide more space for new plantings. One of the Japanese anemones also removed. Anemone and some of the lemon balm relocated to the top of the shrubbery, with some lemon balm planted near Annes pond.

*Garden Observations:* Hot lip salvia at the gate now blooming; meadow now in full flower with knapweed, meadow cranesbill, teasels, ox eyed daisies, poppies, corncockle, bladder and red campion, yellow medic, wild carrot, vetch, white bony, black horehound and many grasses; cotoneaster starting to flower in the shrubbery; hedge woundwort has appeared in the fernery; ladys bedstraw flowering on the east side of the meadow path; St Johns Wort flowering near the ladys bedstraw; several patches of ragwort in the NE quarter of the meadow; evening primrose now flowering in NE as well;

*Rescue plantings:* Three ferns added to the fernery, Harts tongue fern, Holly fern, and buckler fern;

### July

#### *Activities:*

Some cutting back of nettles in the orchard to allow more light in and encourage flowering species for late summer pollinators. Removal of mugwort, nipplewort, sent garlic mustard and bind weed from the pollinator bed continued.

Selective removal of mugwort and prickly ox tongue from NE quarter of meadow, as well as removal of nettles, dock and bindweed. Recent rain has saturated the ground at the south end of the meadow but it remains dry at the north end.

The cobbled path to the side of the meadow pond has been weeded and more of it exposed to view, creating an attractive feature near the pond. Fann St tree pits weeded and leftovers from a Crowder order divided between the tree pits and the pollinator bed. Tree pit plantings included 2 rudbeckia, 3 salvia armistad, and 3 succulents. Pollinator bed included 3 rudbeckia, 3 salvias and 3 perspicaria.

Watering of the pollinator bed with a hosepipe throughout hot weather at the end of the month as new plantings not sufficiently established to survive in the heat.

Work started at month end to thread new growth and trim back along the fruit palisade. Last week of month the western end completed, with eastern end to be continued in August.

#### *Garden Observations:*

Self heal and birds foot trefoil flowering around the meadow pond for the first time; bee balm flowering in pollinator bed; white buddleia flowering in the shrubbery; hyssop flowering in the pollinator bed; white bryony in the meadow; teasels and ragwort growing abundantly in NE and NW quarter of meadow; greater knapweed in NW, NW and SW, ox eye daisies (NE), wild carrot (NE, NW), common mallow (NW), yarrow (NE), wild marjoram (NE), wild geranium (SE); bupleurum now flowering by the meadow pond and covered in pollinators; at month end tufted vetch flowering in southern meadow (new to meadow) and orchard, and ragwort continuing to flower throughout meadow; meadow buttercup reflowering in SE quarter and orchard; teasels growing in numbers in the NW quarter and spear thistle in NE quarter; bloody cranesbill in NW quarter;

*Rescue plantings* -rescue plants from LOG planted into the Fann St tree pits; one rudbeckia planted into the pollinator bed (leftovers from a Crowder order); two rudbeckia, two salvia armistad and three succulents added to the Fann St tree pits; at month end 2 more rudbeckia, 3 more salvia and 3 persicaria added to pollinator bed.

### **August**

#### *Activities:*

Five (5) huddersfield foxgloves planted near the gate. One (1) salvia armistad, two (2) persicaria amplexicorus and three (3) aster amelius planted in the pollinator bed, leftovers from a City Gardens Crowders order. Rosemary in the pollinator bed cut back to a stump to encourage new growth. Three (3) foraged salad burnet plants added to the Fann St tree pits and watered in. Foraged birdsfoot trefoil and St John wort added to the meadow, in NW and SE quarters respectively. More foraged rudbeckia and salad burnet added to pollinator bed later in month. On last week, three foxes and cubs (foraged) added to Fann St tree pits and pits weeded.

Decision taken to request the purchase of spring flowering crocus bulbs for the southern end of the pollinator bed with the order placed at the end of the month.

Threading along the palisade continued and finished second week of the month. Some longer shoots tied in with twine. Watering of trees needed middle of month as becoming stressed. Pellitory of the wall removed along the Fann St border on the street side where it was impinging on the footpath. The hedge will also need cutting but this will be left until the autumn.

Dock and nettle removal from the SE quarter commenced the last week of August. Also some nettle removal from behind the meadow pond which revealed some stinking iris which was planted last year. Care will be needed during scything to protect the sandy bank and plantings currently being obscured by the nettles.

#### *Garden Observations:*

Teasels finished flowering by middle of August with colour from ragwort remaining; purple lythrum, water buttercup and red clover all in flower around the meadow pond;

*Rescue plantings* - five (5) huddersfield foxgloves; one (1) salvia armistad, two (2) persicaria amplexicorus and three (3) aster amelius in the pollinator bed; three salad burnet plants (foraged from disused planter) added to the tree pits; three (3) rudbeckias planted in pollinator bed; foraged St Johns wort planted in SE quarter of meadow near the path; foraged birdsfoot trefoil added at bottom of NW quarter near the path; foraged rudbeckia and salad burnet added;

## **September**

### *Activities:*

Pellitory of the wall removed from along the fence at the bottom of Bunyan ramp. Flowering ivy cut back along the car ramp to ensure safety lights remain exposed and provide better access to the footpath. Hazels at bottom of ramp cut back where they are overhanging the driveway. Bed at top entrance weeded, pebble border restored and fox gloves replanted. Newly planted birds foot trefoil and St Johns wort (in the meadow) watered.

Nettles removed along the back of the meadow pond and bindweed removed from around the fruit trees. Mulch spread along the palisade and hoed in. Cutting back of dead branches (especially hollyhocks with seeds shaken off and scattered in the bed) in pollinator bed and more removal of bind weed and prickly ox-tongue, as well as further taming of the lemon balm. Foraged violet planted at front of fernery.

Nine (9) further foraged fox and cubs (hawkweed) added to three of the Fann St tree pits. Salvias rescued from troughs at Smithfield and relocated to garden. Four (4) salvia guaranties and one (1) scarlet salvia added to the pollinator bed in an area cleared of brambles and mallows. Further available for planting stored in compost area. Roses at back of pollinator bed cut back.

Meadow seed ordered on 18th, from Plantlife, a peat free nursery including "Feet in the sand" mixture deemed to be the best suited for our soil conditions, and 10g of yellow rattle which will be used in the SW quarter.

*Rescue plantings* -foraged violet planted at front of fernery; foraged fox and cubs (hawkweed) added to Fann St tree puts; scarlet salvia and four salvia guarantica added to pollinator bed; salvias planted in bed at top gate and behind meadow pond; rose and mondo grass planted behind meadow pond;

## **October**

### *Activities:*

Meadow scything carried out on 3 October with NW quarter left unscythed. Lobelia cardinalis foraged from Postmans Park where it was to be disposed of to green waste to allow winter bedding plants to be added. Tricolour early spring crocus bulbs planted along front of pollinator bed. Around 20 foraged echinaceas planted in the pollinator bed on the 9th and another 12 added on the 16th.

Repairs to the damage in the Bunyan hedge to be carried out by City Gardeners with help from Metwins. Trellising to be added to the metal railings to raise height and plantings lifted, re-staked, and trained onto the trellis (trellis added on 16th October). Large maple branch lopped behind Anne's pond.

Winter aconite (100) and anemone blanda (50) bulbs planted near the top gate, top of shrubbery and along palisade (20 winter aconite). General clearing near entrance to remove pellitory of wall before planting.

Arisings from scything moved from meadow to side of steps and left to rot down in situ. Hazels in the copse selected for coppicing this year as they are now blocking light into Anne's pond, particularly in winter months. Trees for attention from City's tree surgeons selected and will be discussed with Alex Roebuck.

*Garden Observations:*

Cyclamens now flowering in fernery; fungi now appearing in fernery and along paths;

*Rescue plantings* -Lobelia cardinalis, foraged from Postmans Park, added to pollinator bed, including 6 red, 4 blue and 2 white; 4 rudbeckias added by city gardeners; 20 foraged echinaceas;