

A vibrant field of yellow buttercup flowers in full bloom, set against a clear, bright blue sky. The flowers are in various stages of development, with some fully open and others as buds. The green stems and leaves are visible, creating a dense, textured foreground. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, capturing the essence of a sunny day in a meadow.

The Longlander

JUNE 2023 ISSUE 11

Welcome



A very serious photo of Ben and some flowers, on Long Lands Common

Welcome. Well, hello again friends, and thank you to our editor, Artemis for wrangling the Longlander issue #11 into existence!

Summer brings some pretty huge news to our Newsletter: Knaresborough Forest Park is joining the Long Lands Common family!

So, I'm going to ask you to immediately skip ahead to the Knaresborough Forest Park article later in this issue, and digest it all. Then come back here, and read the rest of my introduction.

Did you go? Did you return? Well then, hello again friends, again!

It's a huge development for Long Lands Common. Instead of our three thousand plus members co-owning 30 acres of land between Harrogate and Knaresborough, now it will be increased up to more than 90 acres, stretching all the way from the Nidderdale Greenway at the edge of Bilton, past Starbeck, and then on down to within shouting distance of the Conyngham Hall Car Park at the edge of Knaresborough.

This is gigantic news for the Long Lands society, and the elected committee have been hard at work preparing everything required for effective and competent management of the newly acquired land. To finalise those required changes to how the committee is structured and operates, we'll be holding a membership vote at the Long Lands Common Annual General Meeting, on July 1st.

Hold that date, come along, exercise your right as a member of the Long Lands Common Society to vote for the new committee structure and elections to the board of directors. We'll also be hearing from our teams on how progress has gone on developing the Long Lands Common site over the last year, and what plans we have for the next year. There'll also be exhibition stalls, a raffle, and simply a chance to wander the land and enjoy the summer day.

Again, that's July the 1st, and I hope to see you there!

Ben Skinner – Chair of Long Lands Common

If you would like to contribute to The Longlander by writing an article, or want to send us your letters and photographs, then get in touch at: thelonglander@yahoo.com

Keeping In Touch

There's several ways that you can keep in touch with us here at Long Lands Common and keep up to date with news.

Social Media



[Long Lands Common](#)



[YouTube](#)



[@longlandscommon](#)



[Twitter](#)

E-mail



info@longlandscommon.org

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The Longlands Team

Knaresborough Forest Park

An Update



Illustration: James McKay

By Ben Skinner

Knaresborough Forest Park is joining Long Lands Common. Quick to say, but what does it mean in practice?

Well, Knaresborough Forest Park doesn't technically exist yet – it's been the aspirational project of a group of campaigners who have been aiming to arrange to purchase some local land in the same way as we did with Long Lands Common. The plan is to open it up to the community both in the physical sense of facilitating public access and in the ownership sense of running a share offer so that local people can take ownership of the precious green spaces between Harrogate and Knaresborough.

That's sixty more acres saved from the risk of concrete, tarmac, and a distinct lack of wildlife.

Well that too, is easy to say, but could it be made easier?

The Knaresborough Forest Park team approached us at Long Lands Common with a proposal. They had some significant funding already arranged to purchase at least half of the land outright, and a loan with two years at zero percent interest tentatively agreed to cover the other half of the purchase.

Knaresborough Forest Park

While on the Long Lands Common side, we have an existing Community Benefit Society legal entity (which is neither quick to set up nor a simple thing to maintain), an enthusiastic team with previous experience of running a share sales campaign, and an environmental and social ethos aimed at everything they wanted for the purchased land.

So... could we pull together, and arrange for Long Lands Common Ltd (the Community Benefit Society that owns the Common as-is) to incorporate Knaresborough Forest Park into our organisation? Yes! So, a plan was formed. Going forwards, the shareholder Members of Long Lands Common Ltd will have co-ownership not of just one site, but three; Long Lands Common, Long Lands Community Food Forest, and Knaresborough Forest Park.

Each site will be managed by its own team of volunteers, and the LLC Ltd committee will oversee the management of all three, according to our existing principles of protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of our local environment.

The purchase process has already begun, using a combination of donations (particularly including a large donation from the George A. Moore Foundation), and that zero percent loan I mentioned before...

We'll be wanting to run a share sales scheme in the near future, to pay off the loan (provided by the philanthropist organisation We Have The Power), so if you're looking to buy more shares in the Long Lands / KFP project, or know anyone who is interested in doing so, the first opportunity since our initial share sales scheme in 2020 will be coming around soon.

And we'll be wanting to have a brace of new volunteers to come aboard to help with managing the new land too, so if you have any relevant skills (be they horticultural, biological, financial, or any other-al), or even just a clueless but enthusiastic can-do attitude like myself, there's never been a better time to get involved.

The satisfaction of seeing the land restored step-by-step is worth every effort; you can not only have part ownership of our local future, you can be a guiding hand for it too. Send us an email to volunteer.

This is an incredibly exciting time for the Long Lands Common society, and if you want to learn anything more, please send us your questions, and also please come along to our Annual General Meeting on July 1st on the Common.

Volunteer Opportunity

Call for Stewards



Photo Credit: Edward Lee

As you all know, our annual general meeting is on 1st July, and we need your help to make it a success. Specifically, we need stewards to help guide people to Long Lands Common and to give them a warm welcome.

Starting at 9.30 on site for a briefing, the key job of stewarding is to 'meet and greet' members at the various access points as they arrive for the meeting and point them in the direction of the top field.

This is our main event of the year and very well attended, a great opportunity to meet like-minded individuals, and to share the experience of our growing community. So, if you're willing to don a high-visibility vest and a friendly smile, and help us make this year's AGM the best one yet, please do get in touch.

We need all hands on deck!

Please contact us at info@longlandscommon.org

Diary Dates

Notice of working parties at Longlands Common



Photo Credit: Artemis Swann

Here are some dates for diary if you would like to get involved in a working party day:

Friday 30th June prior to AGM

Saturday 1st July AGM (we require help setting up the AGM and taking down afterwards)

Sunday 6th August

Saturday 2nd September

Sunday 1st October

Saturday 4th November

10-00am to 3-30pm

Alternate Saturdays / Sunday

You may book on a working party by following the [link on our website](#) or the link on the email invitation you will receive before the event. Alternatively you can call John on 07779 516 285.

Over the Spring and summer there will be a wide variety of work needing to be done, i.e., boarding out and insulating the shed (container), setting up a nursery area with a tunnel, hedge maintenance and lots of others jobs.

Volunteer Achievements

740 Native Trees Planted in One Day!



Photo Credit: Edward Lee

Over 40 keen volunteers gathered to plant a mixture of nine native broadleaf trees: sessile oak, English oak, wild cherry, bird cherry, common alder, aspen, field maple, hazel and goat willow. The occasion was captured on film by Long Lands Common's Ed Lee, and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/h05bxwUv7YQ> The project has created 1.62 hectares of woodland creation at the 12.08 hectare site, which is a mixed habitat of grassland, meadow, wetland and ponds.

Ian Butterfield, from [YORGreenCIC](#), was on hand to guide and train the enthusiastic volunteers. The trees were staked for support and protected with tree guards to prevent deer from nibbling them. The event took place at the end of the tree planting season in March, when there was a light covering of snow. Trees are dormant during this time and less likely to be damaged. Long Lands Common's site rangers have been visiting daily to make sure all the trees are healthy, and remain protected.



Photo Credit: Artemis Swann

Volunteer Achievements

The White Rose Forest funded the project through its Trees For Climate programme, part of the Government's Nature for Climate Fund. Long Lands Common's Ian Fraser applied for the funding and hopes to unlock more in the future from the White Rose Forest.

Volunteer days, such as tree planting, are organised each month by Long Lands Common's John Jackson. Anyone interested should visit www.longlandscommon.org and fill out the form to register your interest.

People do not have to be members to take part in volunteer events.



Photo Credit: Ian Morris

Volunteer Spotlight

Kaya



Photo Credit: Edward Lee

Kaya lives in the Harrogate district and is a Long Lands Common member and our tree planting day was her first-ever time planting a tree.

"I've been experiencing a lot of climate despair over the last few years, and it has severely affected my ability to focus on my job. And with other crises like the pandemic happening, I've felt myself becoming increasingly isolated and trapped. The tree planting event helped renew my sense of hope and allowed me to connect with other like-minded people. I was blown away by how enthusiastic everyone was and how much work we all managed to do in such a small amount of time. It just goes to show how powerful collective action can be when everyone is on the same page, and has a shared vision for the future. As soon as I returned home, I shared some photos of the event on social media and managed to get some other people interested in re-wilding.

"There's too much despair and gloom these days - a general feeling that it's already too late and nothing will ever improve. But actually, change is not only possible, but more within reach than people realise. I think people just need to be shown their true potential."

If you'd like to volunteer at Long Lands Common then you can register your interest [here](#)

Site Rangers Corner

Site Observations

The wildlife on Long Lands Common has been busy waking up this spring! Here's what our Site Rangers have spotted over the last 3 months!



Thanks to: Angela Jex, Sandra Sweeny, Rick Sweeney and the "junior rangers from Oxford", Cate Quinn, Brian Quinn, Geoff Foxall, Ian McKintosh, Ian Morris, Kate K, Margaret, Miranda Dunstan, Mary Schofield, Neill Littlejohn, Richard Hutchins, Tony, Tina Harper, Jane Johnston and Wendy Taylor

Artwork by : Edward Lee

Site Rangers Corner

Meet The Rangers - Ian Burl



Photo Credit: Miranda Dunstan

By Miranda Dunstan

LLC: Hi Ian, many thanks for chatting to us today. To start off, could you tell us a bit about your background - your upbringing, occupation, interests? Don't worry we won't ask your age!

IB: Married to Susan with my two wonderful grown children James & Danielle and one year old Grandson Franklin Thomas Burl. I am born and bred in Harrogate although I lived in various other parts of the UK & Cyprus (for 26yrs) during my careers with the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Kent County Council (KCC), Skill for Care (SfC) & finally Morrisons Head Office. I took early retirement (after 42 yrs) in 2017 at 58 and I'm loving it. My careers include Aero-Engine Manager, Analyst Programmer, Computer Manager, Programme/Project Manager, Change Manger, Service Delivery Manger, Programme Office Manager, Quality Assurance Manger & finally Knowledge Manager. My main interests are Travel, Reading, Socialising, Wildlife & Sport (particularly Football) and I also have a copy of every Rupert Bear Annual since the first in 1936.

LLC: How long have you been a Site Ranger and what attracted you to the role?

IB: I have been a Site Ranger since they first began in May of 2022. I was attracted to the role because I love walking and wildlife and the chance of being involved in Long Lands Common and the development of the land greatly appealed to me with the added bonus of meeting new people.

Site Rangers Corner

LLC: *Can you give us an idea of what you do as a Site Ranger? How often do you 'Range', what do you do whilst on site, and how do you interact with other members of the group?*

IB: As a Site Ranger I attend Long Lands at least once a week and tour the site checking the property and completing a Site Ranger Report detailing such things as Wildlife, Birds, Insects, Flora & Fauna plus Site Observations. Meeting members of the Public on such visits is an added bonus. The Site Rangers WhatsApp group is a great way of exchanging views, comments and sightings. We also arrange Site Ranges together along with Site Projects and Social Events.

LLC: *Can you tell us about some of the changes you have seen at Long Lands Common since you've been a Site Ranger?*

IB: The changes at Long Lands Common have been amazing already and include; the massive Planting of Trees & Bushes, digging of Ponds, building & installation of Buildings & Sheds and the rewilding of fields.

LLC: *What's the most exciting thing you've seen at Long Lands Common?*

IB: Probably the most exciting but ultimately saddest thing I've seen at Long Lands is an injured Buzzard which I took home to try and save but which unfortunately died. Having said that at least once a week I am still excited by sightings of Roe Deer. Red Kites & Buzzards.



Photo Credit: Ian Morris

Site Rangers Corner

LLC: *Are you involved in any other interesting projects you'd like to tell us about?*

IB: Up until recently I was a Farm & Bird Garden Ranger at Harewood House, which was wonderful and I was very sad when the facility had to close.



Photo Credit: Artemis Swann

Species Spotlight: Buttercups



Photo Credit: Sandra Sweeney

By Artemis Swann

You can't help but notice the swathes of yellow buttercups around meadows, roadsides and the Long Land Common site. Their appearance means there's no doubt that summer has finally begun! Here are some Buttercup facts that I bet you didn't know:

- 1 - There are nearly 2000 different species of buttercup.**
- 2 - Some species of buttercup have red, orange or white flowers.**
- 3 - The scientific name of the buttercup is 'Ranunculus'. This translates from the latin language as 'little frog'. This is because buttercups are often found to grow near water like small frogs.**
- 4 - All parts of the buttercup are poisonous to both humans and animals.**
- 5 - Buttercups possess a pool of nectar on the bottom part of their petals. This is unique to the buttercup and cannot be found in any other yellow flowers. The nectar attracts many insects and helps with pollination.**
- 6 - Buttercups are part of the Ranunculaceae family and is a type of herbaceous plant.**
- 7 - Buttercups have a layer of reflective cells, which gives them their lustrous appearance.**
- 8 - The reflective cells can be seen in action, in the popular childhood game to determine if a child likes butter. The buttercup is placed under the chin and if it reflects, the child is said to like butter.**
- 9 - These reflective properties can also during the right conditions, create a bright flash of light which attracts insects from a distance.**
- 10 - Buttercups are 'heliotropic' which means their heads turn to follow the sun.**

Your Nature Spots

Thankfully summer has finally arrived. Long Lands Common has burst into life with insects gathering pollen from the meadow flowers. The deer are making the most of the new shoots and leaves whilst over in the ponds we have the beginnings of new life!

Many thanks to Sandra Sweeney, Ian Morris and Niall Littlejohn for this months photos!



We would love it if you sent us your captures of what you've spotted and we'll do our best to feature them!

Email your photographs to: thelonglander@yahoo.com

or

Tag your pictures on socials with [@longlandscommon](https://www.instagram.com/longlandscommon) or [#longlandscommon](https://www.instagram.com/longlandscommon)