
Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood
ANNUAL REPORT
2024



February 6 2024

Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood

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Contents

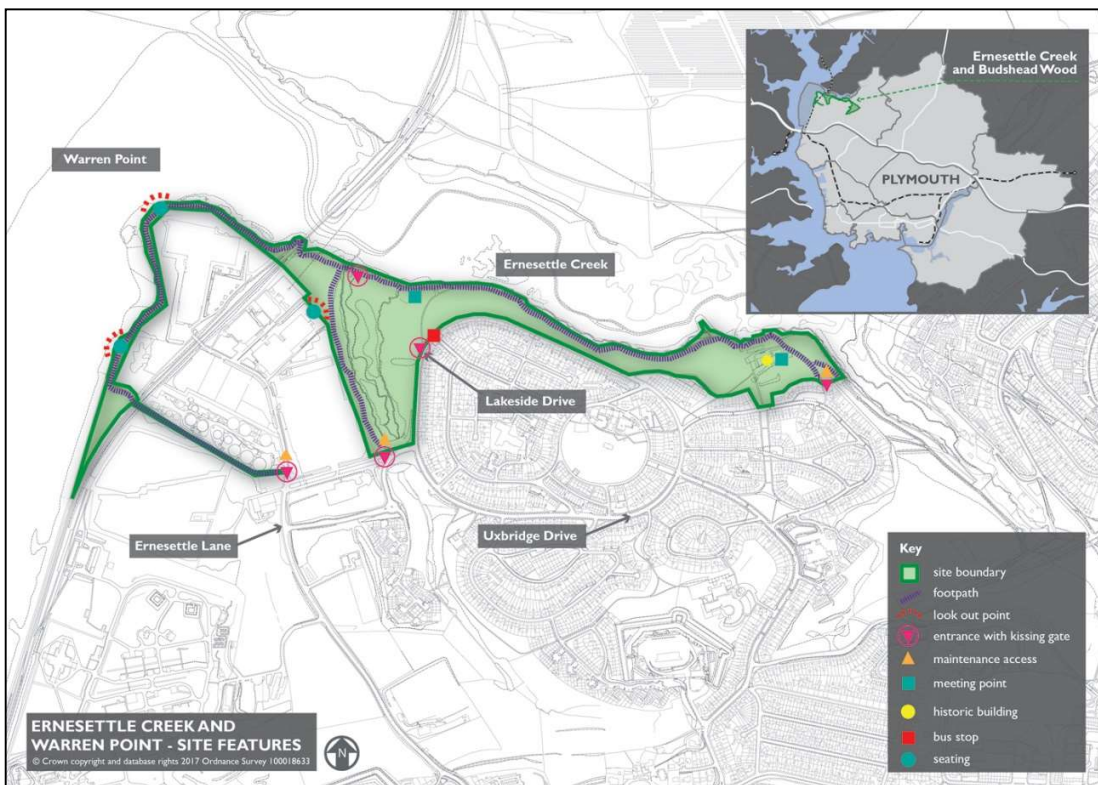
Overview	3
The Greenspace:.....	3
Ernesettle Creek & Warren Point	3
Budshead Manor	4
Budshead Wood	4
The Blue Space:	5
LA Boundary Map	5
Tamar River	5
Tamerton Lake.....	5
Budshead Mill Pond.....	6
Budshead Creek.....	6
Budshead Wood Pond	6
Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood	7
Works Schedule & AGM	7
Projects operating in the Green & Blue spaces during 2024:.....	14
The Plymouth Natural Grid project	14
Plymouth Sound National Marine Park	14
How to Help the Sea (and Nature Recover) Funding Bid	14
Other works associated to this group:	14
River Surveys & Leaky Woody Dams	14
Signage Repairs	14
Community Noticeboards	14
Rainwater collection system	14
Asset of Community Value (ACV) application	15
Finances – 2024	16
Appendix 1 - Manifesto for Tamerton Lake & Budshead Creek Explanation	18
The Tamerton Lake & Budshead Creek Manifesto.....	19
Appendix 2 - Constitution of Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood Group.....	20
Vision.....	20
Aims & Objectives	20
Membership & Voting	20
Duties	22
Meetings.....	22
Dissolution.....	23
Appendix 3 - Brief Tree background.....	25

Overview

This document has been created for the purposes of information only and summarises the work of the group throughout 2024, including collaboration opportunities with other groups and organisations such as Ernesettle Community Forum Fund (ECFF), Solomon's Porch Community Church (SP), Clean Our Patch (CoP), Plymouth Natural Grid (PNG), Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT), Mill Ford School (MFS), All Ways Apples (AWA) and Plymouth Sound National Marine Park (PSNMP) alongside our ongoing voluntary works under Plymouth City Council's Natural Infrastructure Team (NIT).

The Greenspace:

The site is owned by Plymouth City Council (PCC) and the site is currently managed by PCC through the Natural Infrastructure Team with the help of the Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood group, which was created as a legacy from the Active Neighbourhood project.



Ernesettle Creek & Warren Point

Ernesettle Creek is a 14.8-hectare public open space in north-west Plymouth, bordered by the Tamar Estuary to the north and west, Budshead Wood LNR to the east, and housing along Lakeside Drive to the south.

Ernesettle Creek:

The western part of the site includes grassland, recent tree plantings known as the Pylon Field, and a narrow strip of woodland, saltmarsh, mudflats, and stream south of the old mill causeway. This area, called Budshead Mill Pond during

high tide, divides a large mown grassland in the eastern bloc of the site. A remnant woodland strip runs along the northern edge between the estuary and this grassland, with several large, scattered trees.

In 2015, a community orchard and wildflower meadow were created at the western end, and a hedgerow was planted in early 2017. Additional native tree planting occurred east of the site next to Budshead Wood. In December 2016, wildflower seeding created a central meadow. The site also includes a playing field and the ruins of Budshead Manor near Budshead Wood.

Warren Point:

Warren Point County Wildlife Site consists of a diverse mosaic of amenity land, situated adjacent to an industrial area. It is bounded to the east and north by Ernesettle and Tamerton Creeks and to the west by the River Tamar, featuring associated inter-tidal mudflats. A newly established headland path offers excellent vantage points of the creeks and the Tamar Estuary. The site encompasses a variety of habitats, including broadleaved woodland, scrub, brackish grassland, small areas of saltmarsh, and mown grassland connecting to Ernesettle Creek.

The site also contains remnants of an anti-aircraft structure, now serving as an accessible viewpoint since 2017. Additionally, the community installed a crab and fish bench as part of the Active Neighbourhood project.

Reasons for the designation of the Warren Point County Wildlife Site include the presence of nine Devon Notable species: sea aster, sea purslane, sea couch grass, English scurvy grass, saltmarsh rush, common saltmarsh grass, glasswort, greater sea spurrey, and annual seablite. The wooded areas align with the W10 English Oak-Pteridium aquilinum-Rubus fruticosus woodland classification, the Prunus scrub corresponds to the W22 Prunus spinosa-Rubus fruticosus scrub classification, and the saltmarsh aligns with the SM15 Juncus maritimus - Triglochin maritima salt-marsh community classification.

Budshead Manor

The site includes ancient walls, buildings, and archways that are Grade II listed, first listed in 1954. Families that have resided at the site include the Budockshide, Gorges, and Trelawney families. The site is initially recorded in the Domesday Book as belonging to Alfred le Briton and is known for having the first church dedicated to St Budoc.

Budshead Wood

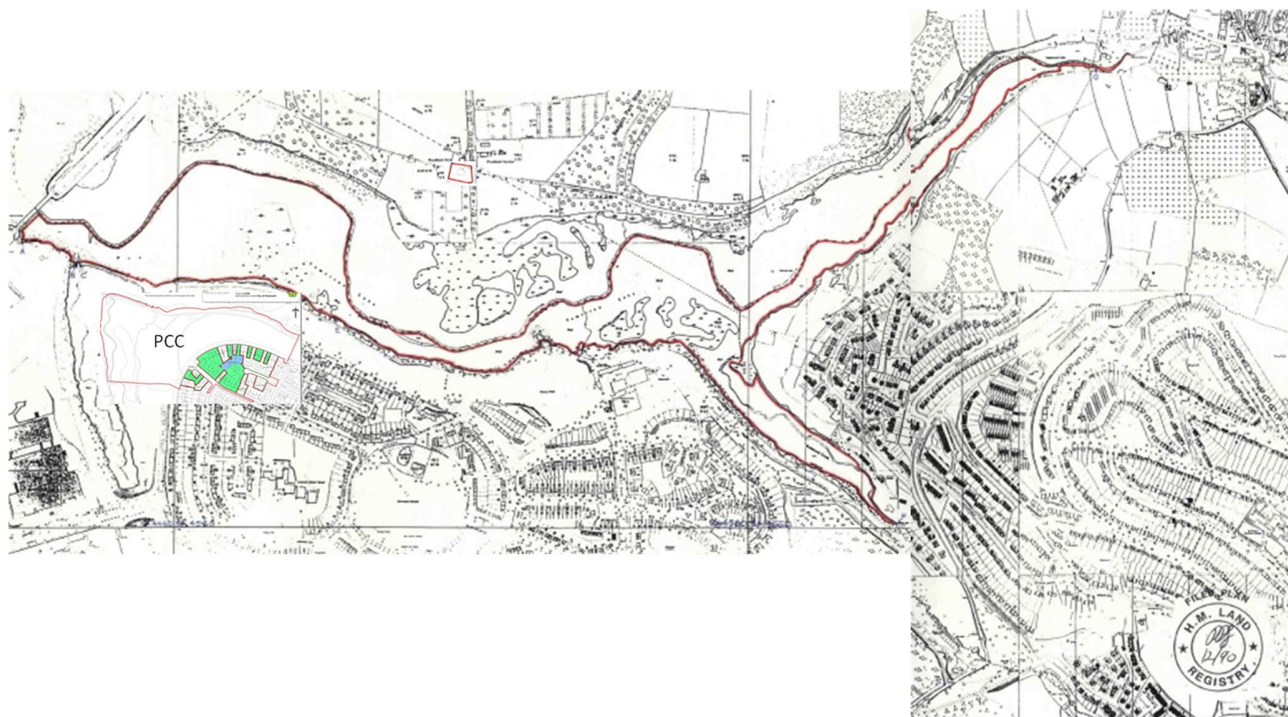
Budshead Wood is a Local Nature Reserve situated in the northwest of Plymouth, immediately east of Ernesettle and south of Tamerton Creek. Spanning 14 hectares, this site offers opportunities for relaxation, walking, play, and nature exploration.

Budshead Wood is an ancient woodland adjacent to a tidal creek that connects to the Tamar River. The reserve contains a significant population of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). The timber of the Hornbeam is characterized by its pale, creamy white colour with a flecked grain, and it is noted for being the hardest wood of any tree in Europe. Currently, Hornbeam timber is primarily used in furniture, flooring, and wood turning. Historically, it was employed in the making of ox yokes, which were used to join teams of ploughing oxen, possibly influencing the tree's name. However, it is more likely that the name 'hornbeam' derives from the hardness of its wood ('horn' meaning 'hard' and 'beam' being the Old English term for a tree).

Additionally, Hornbeam wood had various traditional uses, including butchers' chopping blocks, piano hammers, wood screws, coach wheels, and cogs for windmills and water mills. It was also regularly coppiced and pollarded for producing poles. The wood's excellent burning properties make it suitable for firewood and charcoal production. A tonic derived from Hornbeam was believed to alleviate tiredness and exhaustion, while its leaves were utilized to stop bleeding and aid wound healing. The year-round leaf cover provided by Hornbeam trees makes Budshead Wood a winter sanctuary for wildlife.

The Blue Space:

LA Boundary Map



Tamar River

Responsibility for the Tamar River stretch from Warren Point Headland to Tamerton Bridge lies with the Harbour Authorities, including Cattewater Harbour Commissioners, which consist of the Kings Harbour Master team, Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF), a User Group (CHUG), and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

Fishing and baiting activities are managed by Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities (IFCA). The beaches along the river near Warren Point and the Headland are well-used with minimal anti-social behaviour, though occasional hypodermic needles are found. Littering, rag, and discarded fishing lines are ongoing issues, prompting regular Beach Cleans. The area could benefit from more cleans, especially around the embankment, a former landfill site, where historical rubbish surfaces, providing interesting finds for beachcombers, such as art deco ink wells, bones, and intact lime cordial bottles from the 'Scurvy days' when British sailors were nicknamed 'Limeys'.

Tamerton Lake

The Tamar-Tavy Estuary, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Protection Area (SPA), supports overwintering bird species, grasses, mudflats, and marine plant life.

Plymouth City Council manages the land up to the mean high tide mark, while private owners control the fundus. Fishing activities, boat moorings, and baiting fall under private ownership, with the Deputy King's Harbour Master re-licensing existing moorings. Plymouth City Council is responsible for Gabion Baskets and the Causeway.

Since 2020, fly-tipping and littering around Creek Car Park have decreased. However, abandoned vessels and anti-social activities persist, monitored by MoD Police. The Gabion baskets suffer damage from moored vessels.

An area behind the car park used as a 'public toilet' needs cleaning and regeneration. Volunteers avoid this hazard-prone spot.

Stone steps created by locals assist recreational water users and emergency rescues. Plans include completing the slipway, pontoon, and repairing the Causeway and Gabion baskets.

Eutrophication and untreated waste from South West Water's Ernesettle Lane treatment plant impact Tamerton Lake. Despite efforts to address these issues with the SWW Community Engagement Officer, communication has stalled after initial discussions.

Budshead Mill Pond

The surrounding land and fundus of Budshead Mill Pond are now managed by Plymouth City Council, previously under the Duchy of Cornwall Estate. Created in the late 1790s by building a dam, sluice gates, and wheel housings, the pond captured tidal waters to power a Grist Mill. The area is prone to fly-tipping; although much was cleared during 2020 lockdown, recent waste like bathtubs and traffic cones have appeared. The removal of fly-tipping has helped marsh samphire (glasswort) thrive.

Budshead Creek

The land up to the mean high tide mark falls under the responsibility of Plymouth City Council. The fundus is owned by the same owners as Tamerton Lake. During the Plymouth River Keepers project, water testing revealed significant pollution in the watercourse due to misconnections, with no river-fly detected. WRT has identified over 20 misconnections and collaborated with SWW to correct them. Some misconnections still require investigation and resolution. However, recent collaboration with NT Rangers on Leaky Woody Dams has led to the discovery of multiple insect larvae, indicating that the waterway is regenerating and becoming more habitable.

Leaky Woody Dams have been introduced in areas that could benefit from controlled land erosion, aiming to affect the flow and create a meandering waterway rather than its current straight path. By placing dams in areas with adjacent low-lying land, it is hoped that during high flow periods, the water will overflow and create wetland habitats, thereby increasing biodiversity.

An adjacent business (Woodland Nurseries) to a large stretch of Budshead Creek has failing fences, causing debris to spill into the creek, potentially contributing to water pollution levels. Additionally, there is a significant amount of fly-tipping on the fundus of Budshead Creek, including items like rusty bicycles, shopping trolleys, and tyres. Due to the location, accessibility issues, and potential for personal harm, resolving this problem with volunteers would be challenging.

Budshead Wood Pond

The surrounding land and pond are managed by Plymouth City Council. The pond was created through a culvert that diverts road runoff. Despite minimal levels of pollution, life continues to thrive in the pond. Overflow from the pond flows directly into Budshead Creek. Water-testing conducted by Plymouth River Keepers has indicated that the pond naturally filters out road runoff pollutants, effectively preventing contamination of the creek and supporting a healthy ecosystem.

This woodland pond is typically bustling with activity throughout the year. With the assistance of Plymouth River Keepers in 2021 and 2024, efforts to address the invasive Azolla fern issue have been made through the introduction of North American weevils. As a result, pond life has improved, and native wildlife such as palmate newts, toads, common frogs, and a wide range of invertebrates including pond snails, dragonflies, and damselflies are flourishing once again.

The surrounding land is periodically managed to control Giant Hogweed and remove fly-tipping. While further repairs to the fencing are needed, there may be an opportunity to assist PNG with planting willow in this area instead.

Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood

Works Schedule & AGM

February - Annual General Meeting 2024

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was conducted on 7 February 2024, with a commendable turnout of volunteers, residents, and Local Councillor Keith Moore in attendance. The existing officeholders retained their positions, and the committee election proceeded accordingly. The financial accounts were audited by Mark Rowles (FGCT) and were found to be in good order, and we give thanks to our Treasurer for always recording the finances exceptionally well.

March

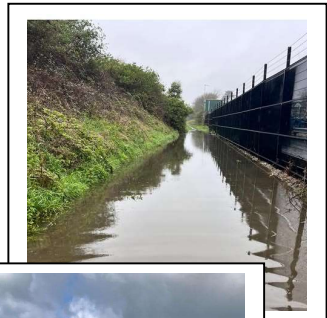
A few group members cleared the pathway to Budshead manor barn and unclogged the drain. Plymouth City Council was asked to have Andy Ball manage the overgrowth around Digby Way, as in previous years.

Plymouth City Council contractors finished pointing work on the arches, and access to the scout hut was restored with the removal of Heras fencing.



April

A suspected pollution event at the South West Water treatment plant was reported to the Environment Agency (2247559). Flooding affected the public pathway, and walkers were advised to avoid it. The issue was traced to a manhole outside the bund area, which has been fitted with a float and sensor to prevent overflows. The nearly fully treated wastewater is not considered harmful to the area.



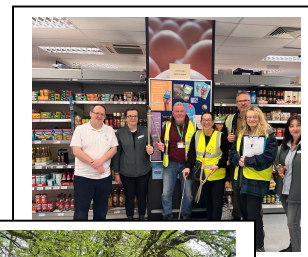
We supported Ernesettle Community Forum Fund (ECFF) and Solomon's Porch Community Church (SP) with the annual Easter Egg Letter Hunt on Sunday 7 April. We placed clues around Budshead Wood for the children to find, eventually collecting all the letters needed to make an easter themed word. Refreshments were offered within the Scout Hut and colouring & information supplied by NSPCC Together for Childhood. All the children were presented with an easter egg that was funded by Plymouth Community Homes.



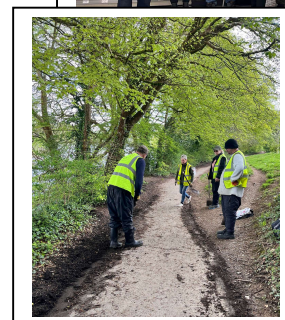
We tended the community orchards by lightly pruning to assist with growth, checking for signs of disease or damage, and adding potash to the mulch. We appreciate Dave Curno (Friends of Ham Woods) for providing his expert advice.

Additionally, a few members met with Randy (Plymouth Natural Grid) to discuss the upcoming tasks required within Budshead Wood. This meeting led to the scheduling of a series of dates and work plans.

On the 24th, we visited several local Co-op stores to promote our project, understand how the stores can assist in promoting our work, and encourage Co-op members to select us as their local cause. This was after our successful application to repair and install pathways around the green spaces to benefit both people and nature.



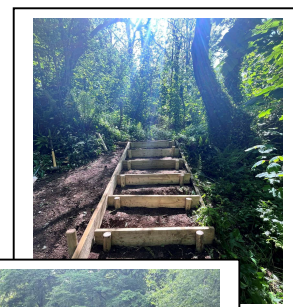
A resident made a request regarding the difficulty of accessing the main pathway from the creek to Budshead Manor. We addressed the issue by clearing the affected areas, which were primarily obstructed by runoff from the adjacent bank and accumulation of plant matter from the tree canopy. This task took considerable effort and multiple sessions. In the future, we plan to seek assistance in clearing this main pathway from additional volunteers or through Plymouth City Council, via Theo.



May

We discussed the Tudor planting project (£1000 funding from Local Councillor Phil Partridge) and reviewed the plan. We held two sessions in Budshead Wood with Plymouth Natural Grid (PNG) to repair steps and replace anti-slip measures on the bridges.

On the 15th, a guided walk was provided through Budshead Wood at the request of the Plymouth Urban Tree Festival. The discussion covered various species and the historical uses of both the trees and the area (see Appendix 3).



A few of us attended a project meeting with ECFE and PSNMP to discuss our involvement with the Pasty & Cider Walk and Summer Fun Day.



Ray undertook a river-fly monitoring training opportunity at Poole Farm, which will aid in our monitoring of the recovery of the waterway Budshead Creek and Budshead Pond.

On the 25th, we held a Beach Clean from the creek car park to Ernesettle Lane. Led by Collecting Youth CIC and many volunteers, we collected 14 bags of litter, beach rags, and dealt with some fly tipping (FS-Case-612301642). We returned to the car park for refreshments and cake.



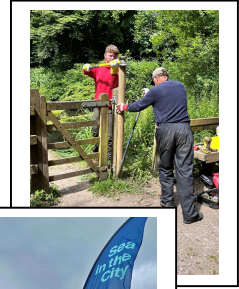
June

The month kicked off with more laborious path clearing, during which an elderly couple with visual impairments passed-by to thank us for our efforts. The work was particularly meaningful to them, as they usually must traverse in single file holding hands whilst trying to pass this overgrown stretch.

We had another pollution incident by the South West Water treatment plant with the pathway being covered in what looked like raw sewerage. The EA reported back (2275049) that it was partially treated waste, and they would recommend better working practices to the company in future.



We spent another day in Budshead Wood, fixing pond fencing and replacing anti-slip measures on bridges.



On the 12th, we conducted some Headland Path maintenance and litter picking in preparation for the annual Pasty & Cider Walk. This was done to ensure accessibility throughout the summer months.

On the 14th, a litter pick and tidy up were conducted at Budshead Wood. In the evening, signs for the Pasty & Cider Walk were placed in preparation for the morning start.



On the 15th, we assisted with the ECFF Pasty & Cider Walk by setting up, manning stations, and storing equipment at the end. Over 80 individuals participated this year, with stations managed by our partners including Plymouth Sound National Marine Park, NSPCC Together for Childhood, among others.

July

In July, at Budshead Manor, we began the Tudor planting project to create a community garden with plants and flowers from the Tudor period, highlighting the site's rich history. Work on this project is ongoing and will need to be scheduled during 2025.



On the 27th, we provided support for the ECFF Annual Fun Day by setting up, volunteering throughout the event, and storing away at the conclusion. The event was successful, with many attendees expressing their preference for the creek location over the Green. Plymouth Sound National Marine Park organised a foraging workshop in collaboration with Incredible Edibles, which was well received by all participants. Additionally, there was an opportunity to compose a letter to the sea, led by Dr. Rosemarie Corlett, a Creative Writing Lecturer, Poet, and Plymouth Laureate of Words. We also arranged an introduction to willow crafting, led by local experimental archaeologist Angie Fogarty Wickenden.

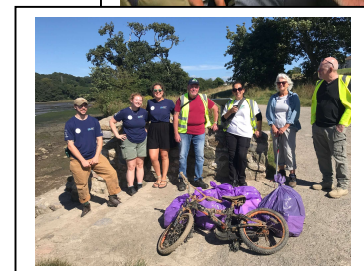


August

On the 6th, we repaired Forefathers Steps in Budshead Wood with Plymouth Natural Grid (PNG). Passers-by praised our efforts. Despite the hard work, the day passed quickly, and we soon parted ways.



We supported Plymouth Sound National Marine Park on the 14th with a Coastal Clean Up event, joined by Local Cllr Keith Moore. At Tea Leaf Bay, we found whelk shells, crab shells, and seaweed. Afterward, we returned to our starting point and displayed the collected litter.



September

The invasive Azolla Fern at Budshead Wood Pond presented another challenge. Representatives Brenda, Taran, and Ray from Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood collaborated with Dave Moreton and Tom Ayres from Westcountry Rivers Trust to address this issue.

Dave provided information about the Azolla Fern, highlighting its impact on the pond. When the fern dominates a pond, it can cover the entire surface, leading to several negative effects. It prevents oxygen from entering the water, blocks sunlight necessary for submerged plants, and eventually causes the death of fish and other aquatic organisms. Although suitable for a contained garden pond, this fern poses issues in natural wetlands.

To manage this, Dave and Tom introduced North American Weevils into Budshead Wood Pond. These weevils are natural predators of the Azolla Fern and are expected to help control its spread by consuming the plant.

Plymouth City Council (Theo) organized the placement of a sign advising people and pets to avoid using the dipping platform or entering the water to prevent further spreading of the fern and to allow the weevils to work effectively.

On the 11th, a dedicated group of volunteers from Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood convened to further their ongoing project to enhance the historic Budshead Manor Barn. The team, consisting of Angela, Taran, Kim, Steve, and Ray, worked efficiently under bright autumnal sunshine, making significant improvements at one end of the barn.

Steve provided valuable insights, offering suggestions for future enhancements.

Although time was limited, the team promptly engaged in clearing various overgrown plants, including brambles, bindweed, dock leaf, and ivy. The bindweed, which had developed vine-like structures, presented a particular challenge, yet the team successfully managed it using sharp hand tools and gloves. The presence of beautiful wild rose bushes across the site served as a testament to nature's resilience amidst the clutter.

Passers-by paused to observe the volunteers' work, appreciating the transformation underway. It was rewarding to participate in this community initiative, with further progress anticipated, as brush cutters are scheduled for the next session.

October

On the 11th, we organized a litter pick in Budshead Wood, our cherished local nature reserve. This community-driven initiative not only contributed to cleaning the area but also encouraged greater engagement with the natural environment. The event took place on a crisp, golden autumn day as we proceeded along the Forefathers Steps trail, which appeared stunning with leaves turning vibrant shades of red and gold.

We commenced by addressing a particularly unsightly fly-tipping site at the back of Rochford Crescent. Although the task initially seemed daunting and unpleasant, the camaraderie within our group made it an enjoyable experience. As we ventured deeper into the woods, we appreciated the tranquillity and natural beauty surrounding us, admiring the rich canopy of trees overhead and the way sunlight filtered through the branches. Nature offered a calming reminder of the importance of our efforts.



On the 23rd, Tess Wilmot and Dave Curno led an apple pressing event. Staff and students from Mill Ford School participated in preparing apples for juicing. The apples were sourced from various locations around Plymouth and were carefully selected for the process.

The preparation began with cleaning and washing the apples thoroughly. Next, they were cut, and any spoiled parts were removed. To extract the juice, the prepared apples were placed into a pulping machine and then pressed to release the fresh juice.

The leftover apple bits were taken back to the school to feed the goats housed at Mill Ford School, ensuring that nothing was discarded.



November

On the 6th, a group gathered at Digby Orchard in Ernesettle for a day of work and community engagement. With a dedicated team of locals including Paddy, John, Kim, Richard, Barbara, Sarah, and Ray, the orchard was prepared for an upcoming mulching project.

The day's activities included tending to the orchard's fruit trees, which are now ready for their scheduled mulching. The participants expressed gratitude for each other's contributions, ensuring that the day's objectives were met efficiently.



On the 9th, we set off along Ernesettle Headland Path for a litter pick. There was a good number of participants, and members of the public were enjoying the views of the River Tamar.

We cleaned the trails, collecting sweet wrappers, cans, and various other litter. We also combed the beaches, finding items washed in on the tide, such as buoys, fishing gear, and non-flushable waste carried by South West Water's outflow pipe.



During the litter pick, we identified some future tasks, like building steps down to the beach and trimming vegetation to improve access and visibility.

The event concluded with a collection of 10 bags of litter.

On the 20th, staff and students from Mill Ford School assisted with mulching fruit trees at Ernesettle Community Orchard (Lakeside Drive). Several wild robins observed the work.



Using plastic buckets, shovels, and wheelbarrows, mulch was efficiently delivered to several fruit trees to promote the orchard's growth. Steam was visible from the mulch as it was moved.

Gratitude is extended to Mill Ford School's volunteers for their assistance, which helped expedite the task. Their participation is appreciated, and they have expressed interest in future activities. New volunteers are always welcome, and the community is invited to join in these events to support local environmental efforts.

On the 22nd, We received a massive £5803.97 from Co-op Causes to be spent on creating and repairing pathways - to help create a buffer between us and nature but also to ensure you can keep walking safely around our beautiful Green Spaces.

This, in addition to the £3675 Active Neighbourhood under-spend, means we now have a huge £9478.97 ring-fenced for pathways and repair.



On 29th, we supported ECFE with the Christmas Extravaganza event by helping to set up/close the event and volunteering throughout. We thank PCH and SP for funding this year's selection boxes for the children. The Co-op for supplying all this year's free mince pies. Tesco for donating some raffle prizes. All Ways Apples for volunteering and providing free s'mores, mini mallet making, mulled apple juice and litter picking. Plymouth Football Boot Bank for the free target shootout game. Connecting Youth CIC for Santa and his elves.

We also supply all the care of the Community Christmas Tree and Kim decorates the tree for all the events beautifully!



December

On the 19th, we joined a Winter Wader's bird walk by Plymouth Sound National Marine Park (PSNMP). Despite the brisk north-easterly wind from Bodmin Moor and occasional chilly rain, the event was well-attended. When the sun appeared, it revealed a stunning landscape.

The walk was successful, and we spotted several bird species including Sandpiper, Curlew, Spotted Redshank, Little Egret, Kingfisher, and Mallard Duck.

We gave a talk about the history of Budshead Mill and Farm, sharing stories about the Black Bridge. The event ended with tea, biscuits, and reflections on the day. We then headed home, grateful for a wonderful experience.



On 23rd, we supported Solomon's Porch Community Church (SP) with the Carols 'round the Christmas Tree event by helping to set up/close the event and volunteering throughout. Thanks go to Tess Wilmot and Dave Curno, for supporting this event with s'mores and mulled apple juice, to ECFE for supplying the mulled wine and to Co-op for the mince pies.

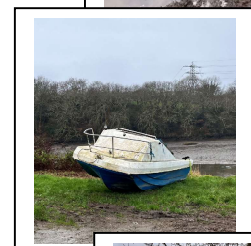
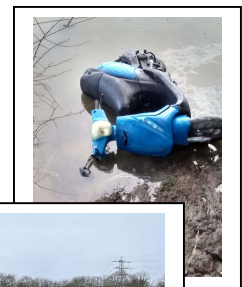


January

After the storms, we submitted several reports of fallen trees and hung-up limbs to Plymouth City Council via the portal and advised, via local social media, for people to take care when walking in wooded areas. FS-Case-674351921, FS-Case 676894166, FS-Case 676899759 and FS-Case 676903787.

We submitted multiple reports regarding a discarded motorcycle, which was potentially leaking oil and fuel into Tamerton Lake. The Environment Agency Reference is 2342764, and the Devon and Cornwall Police Reference is 20250109-0770. Ben Mitchell from Port Conservancy (KHM) coordinated the removal of the motorcycle to land, utilizing pads and sheets to prevent ground pollution. After police investigation, Plymouth City Council collected the motorcycle, reference FS-Case-677756774. During the site inspection, it was also identified that a boat had been seemingly dumped. This issue was reported to Plymouth City Council under FS-Case-677497085 and to Mike Goble, the PCC Pier Master.

On the 18th, a few of us gathered with Dot & Kyle (PNG) and Jess & Tom (NMP) to provide easier access to the main beach at the Headland. We had a fun time and were greeted by lots of interested walkers along with a group from Mill Ford School, who tested out the new steps and their comments on how much nicer it was to have steps made us instantly pleased with our hard work. A handrail will be installed shortly to aid even further!



On 22nd, we gathered for a Plymouth Sound National Marine Park event, and our team included Jess, Tom, and Brett from PSNMP, as well as Wayne, Robyn, Amelia, and Gemma from Mill Ford School and their post 16 students. Paddy, Sarah, John and I from Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood, were there too. We quickly set about clearing the area of brambles, blackthorn, and weeds, giving the long-overgrown surroundings a much-needed trim. The students and helpers from Mill Ford School worked tirelessly, bringing enthusiasm and energy to the task. Before long, the Lookout Point was looking pristine, with its stunning view restored for everyone to enjoy. We also managed to clear some of the overgrowth from the pathway in that area.



We were joined by Jackie & Lyndsey from NSPCC later in the afternoon, along with a worker from PCC Streets team and we undertook the installation of some plaques on the benches provided by NSPCC Together for Childhood, as part of the Breaking the Taboo project we have been involved with.



We also received notification from a solo litter picker that, back in November 2024, he had been litter picking on the Headland Beaches without gloves. A subsequent blood screen advised that he had contracted Hepatitis E (faecal-oral) likely from a contaminated watercourse and he would not be able to donate blood until May 2025. Although we are all aware that the SWW treatment plant is legally permitted to expel untreated waste following periods of heavy rain, this incident served as a reminder to us all that we must maintain safety & hygiene when working in areas contaminated by SWW such as the Headland beaches and Budshead Wood (including pathways we know to suffer sewerage pollution). All volunteers and partner project staff have been reminded to always wear gloves and always use hand sanitiser before a lunch break!

The next AGM is scheduled for 18th February 2025 and, following this AGM, we will need meet again to arrange our next works schedule.

Projects operating in the Green & Blue spaces during 2024:

The Plymouth Natural Grid project is managed by National Trust Rangers, Plymouth City Council Officers, and Apprentices. This project involves managing woodlands, repairing and installing steps, maintaining the leaky wooden dams, and potentially installing willow hedging around Budshead Wood Pond across the green spaces.

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park is a new initiative funded by the National Lottery Heritage Horizons Fund (NLHF). Our involvement focuses on the Ernesettle Creek/Tamerton Lake area and the ancient ruins of Budshead Manor. The development phase has concluded, and we are currently awaiting news regarding funding for the delivery phase, expected to commence in 2025.

We anticipate feedback about the capital bid and the allocated budget for rejuvenating the Creek area. Coordination with the new private owner will be crucial for implementing some of the proposed works (see Asset of Community Value pg. 15). Additionally, we will be collaborating with Together for Childhood and Plymouth Natural Grid, as they have expressed an interest in installing signage in the area. We believe that a collaborative approach will serve the community better than multiple individual signs for each project.

How to Help the Sea (and Nature Recover) Funding Bid

We applied for this funding, which is separate from the NLHF main bid by PSNMP, to extend the Headland Path and address the access issues through the Pylon Field. We are awaiting a response from PSNMP regarding this bid. It is understood that a pathway across the Pylon Field may now be included within the capital bid.

Other works associated to this group:

River Surveys & Leaky Woody Dams

Brenda continues to monitor water quality and regularly conducts river surveys and feeds back to this group and Jenny at Westcountry Rivers Trust. At present the Azolla Fern seems to be under control with the surface coverage now being duck weed. Some damage was caused to the leaky woody dams during the storms and high-water flow, which has been reported to Theo (PNG) for repair.

Signage Repairs

The sign at the headland has been stored at my home for over a year and, with the help of Jess (PSNMP) we hope to have this reinstalled at Lookout 1 soon!

The sign at the creek car park was damaged by the storm or by vandalism. Again, with help from Jess (PSNMP) we hope to have this repaired and reinstalled shortly.

Community Noticeboards

Repairs are needed for both the community noticeboards and there is currently a survey out for the community to complete and feedback to Deborah Beadle (PCH) as to whether they are useful and where the best location is. The results of this survey will determine whether PCH spend funds on replacement noticeboards.

Rainwater collection system

WRT supplied and installed a rainwater collection system for us at the Scout Hut to collect rainwater from the roof to use on the orchards during periods of drought. We also have a towable bowser and wheelbarrow kit to transport the water. The group has insured the equipment and is responsible for its maintenance and use.

Asset of Community Value (ACV) application

We have on file the completed applications for the fundus of an estuary, commonly known as Tamerton Lake (also referred to as Ernesettle Creek) and Budshead Creek, along with adjoining land, including woodland to its north, to be registered as an Asset of Community Value. This registration is contingent upon any plans by the new owners that may restrict community access. This application is supported by the community of Tamerton Foliot, who are also considering applying for an ACV on Tamerton Creek. The Community Interest Company (CIC) supporting our application is Four Greens Community Trust CIC.

We need to submit the application and accompanying title deeds and documents to both South Hams District Council (SHDC) and Plymouth City Council (PCC), as the fundus is managed by both local councils in addition to a private owner.

A decision needs to be made regarding whether we should contact the new owner (on behalf of the community and boat owners) to inquire about their intentions, as they have not yet responded to the King's Harbour Master concerning the renewal of the mooring license on Tamerton Lake. It is anticipated that the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park (PSNMP) will support the community with this application and the regeneration of the area where boat owners in Ernesettle access their vessels and tenders. Coordination with all marine agencies and landowners is crucial to ensure future community access to the fundus (river/lake/creek bed).

Finances – 2024

			Income	Expenditure	
31/12/2023		B/fwd	1,573.54		
		Ref			1,573.54
25/01/2024	SC - Poster for Co-op Display	1		13.24	1,560.30
05/03/2024	Co-op Causes 1st payment	2	2,024.10		3,584.40
03/04/2024	PCC - Local Cllr Phil Partridge (TG)	3	1,000.00		4,584.40
12/04/2024	31st Scout Hall Hire	4		20.00	4,564.40
02/05/2024	PCC - AN Underspend	5	3,675.00		8,239.40
10/06/2024	PC - Fuel for event equipment	6		46.35	8,193.05
10/06/2024	UTC Advert fee - ECFF	7		25.00	8,168.05
01/07/2024	Zurich Insurance & PL	8		215.83	7,952.22
21/10/2024	All Ways Apples crowdfunder	9		300.00	7,652.22
28/10/2024	31st Scout Hall Hire	10		50.00	7,602.22
28/10/2024	PC - Fuel for Orchard (Digby)	11		16.09	7,586.13
01/11/2024	Co-op Causes 2nd payment	12	3,779.87		11,366.00
14/11/2024	PCC - Local Cllr Zoe Reilly (AWA)	13	300.00		11,666.00
15/11/2024	AW - Tudor Garden (TG) sundries	14		325.74	11,340.26
20/11/2024	KA - Water Butt sundries	15		43.80	11,296.46
20/11/2024	PC - Certification (FH&S Level 2)	16		10.00	11,286.46
	Totals		12,352.51	1,066.05	11,286.46

In addition to the £11,286.46, we have £27.34 in petty cash held by the Treasurer, giving an overall total of £11,313.80 - of which £10,217.69 is ringfenced - as detailed below - leaving £1,096.11 available in non-ringfenced funds.

			Income	Expenditure	
	Ringfenced Funds:	B/Fwd			64.46
05/11/2021	Co-op Causes (2020/21) B/fwd				1.06
19/12/2019	Lillies donation B/fwd				63.40
	Tudor Garden project				
03/04/2024	PCC - Local Cllr Phil Partridge		1,000.00		1,000.00
15/11/2024	AW - TG Sundries			325.74	674.26
	Pathway Repair & Creation				
02/05/2024	PCC - AN Underspend		3,675.00		3,675.00
01/11/2024	Co-op Causes (2023/24)		5,803.97		9,478.97
	Total Ringfenced				10,217.69
	Petty Cash				
25/02/2023	Refreshment donations B/fwd		19.82		19.82
15/10/2023	Refreshment donations B/fwd		7.52		27.34
	Total Petty Cash				27.34

It should be noted that the group have an estimated spend of £420 per annum (variable and subject to inflation), as detailed below:

First Aid renewal at £35 per person	£105.00	3 yearly	£35.00	p.a.
Forestry First Aid module renewal at £50 per person	£100.00	3 yearly	£33.34	p.a.
Lantra Training renewal at £50 per person	£200.00	5 yearly	£40.00	p.a.
Insurance renewal	£230.00	1 yearly	£230.00	p.a.
PPE replacement	£80.00	1 yearly	£80.00	p.a.
Totals	£715.00	(variable)	£418.34	(p.a)

Appendix 1 - Manifesto for Tamerton Lake & Budshead Creek Explanation

Many groups and individuals value and care for the Tamerton Lake area of NW Plymouth. These include people who use the water, litter pickers and those who engage with land management activities on behalf of Friends of Ernesettle & Budshead Wood. Following numerous conversations about changes people would like to see in the area and based on feedback from the ongoing ErneVoice survey and input from regular volunteers, the Friends group has decided to create a Manifesto (a broad starting point of wishes) for Tamerton Lake—known locally as Ernesettle Creek—and Budshead Creek.

Plymouth has been awarded £9.5 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to protect the area's 1,000 marine species within an offshore 'park in the sea' to help tackle the impact of climate change. A portion of this funding has been ring-fenced to regenerate Tamerton Lake.

The Lake's fundus (riverbed) is currently for sale as part of an area of land that includes woodland—trees whose roots make the banks more resistant to erosion. Now is a good time for the area to be acknowledged by future landowners, stakeholders and authorities as a natural asset valued by the community. Also, to ensure that the local community's relationship with the land and the water is respected and valued into the future.

The Friends of Ernesettle & Budshead Wood group is working with the Bioregional Learning Centre, local councillors and Westcountry Rivers Trust (Plymouth River Keepers) to achieve this. A further step, should the community show its support, would be to undertake a wider collaborative process resulting in a River Charter for Tamerton Lake & Budshead Creek like that recently undertaken by the community for the River Dart (<https://bioregion.org.uk/project/river-charter-for-the-dart-at-dartington/>).

What can you do?

This is an opportunity to help define what people locally most want and value in relation to this important natural resource. As a first step, the Friends group is asking for feedback and suggestions on the draft Manifesto—if there are lots of requests for a particular point then that point will be incorporated.

The Tamerton Lake & Budshead Creek Manifesto

The Ernesettle Community proposes this Manifesto for the sustainable use, enjoyment and protection of Tamerton Lake, referred to here as Ernesettle Creek, and Budshead Creek. We ask that visitors, current and future landowners, the Council and other authorities, consider the importance of this waterway for local communities and nature.

In Ernesettle, we value and name as our shared assets:

Safe, respectful and agreed access to the Creeks for the enjoyment of the shared water.

Creeks that are valued and understood as a central part of our community's pride of place, enhancing our mental and physical well-being.

Clean and unpolluted water for safe recreation and healthy wildlife.

The Mill Pond dam (known locally as the causeway) which is integral for access to the headland walks and protects important mudflat habitats for protected species.

Respected environmental protections and improvement of the Creeks' habitats for nature.

The trees and shrubs of the banks of the creek that maintain its integrity and provide important habitats.

Appendix 2 - Constitution of Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood Group

Name

The name of the group shall be Friends of Ernesettle Creek & Budshead Wood (referred to in this document as 'FoEBW').

Vision

To work in partnership with Plymouth City Council (PCC) in respect of the Green Spaces of Ernesettle Creek, Warren Point & Budshead Wood to preserve and improve the spaces for the benefit of people & nature in line with a site management plan.

To work in partnership with the Pier Master (PCC), private fundus owners and other river and/or marine-based organisations in respect of the Blue Spaces of Ernesettle Creek (official name Tamerton Lake), the Tamar River and Budshead Creek and Pond.

To work in partnership with Plymouth City Council, 31st Plymouth Scouts group, Historic England and other heritage-based organisations in respect of the historic remains of Budshead Manor and associated Barn.

Aims & Objectives

Work in partnership with organisations and groups to encourage public interest in conservation and heritage

To protect the wildlife and habitats of the green & blue spaces

To advance the community's awareness of the spaces by promoting its plants, wildlife, landscape, sustainability and supporting recreational activities for the benefit of both the people and wildlife

To develop and deliver information and educational opportunities for the areas by way of activities & events

To raise funds for the purposes of achieving these aims

Represent the FoEBW group when communicating with other organisations to achieve the vision outlined herein

Promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors through encouragement of the use of the green and blue spaces as an amenity and recreational area

Work to safeguard residents and visitors in connection to the use of the areas and prevent anti-social behaviour within it by working with Plymouth City Council, Devon & Cornwall Police, Environment Agency and other relevant authorities and youth groups

Membership & Voting

The FoEBW group shall be voluntary and self-supporting

Committee Members and Rangers shall be referred to as 'members'

Rangers can also be Committee members and *vice versa*

Membership shall be open to anyone interested in taking part in the group and furthering its aims and is willing to abide by the rules of the FoEBW group

All members shall be bound by this constitution

Only members may vote

Any complaints against the Committee or Rangers shall be made in writing to Plymouth City Council (theodore.nickols@plymouth.gov.uk)

Any member may resign by giving written notice to the Secretary

Conduct

Members shall always conduct themselves in a reasonable manner and will be asked to leave the meeting by the Chairperson if they contravene reasonable standards of behaviour or the aims of the group

If anyone is asked to leave a meeting following the majority decision above but fails to do so the Chairperson will close the meeting immediately and any unfinished business will be discussed at a following meeting. If this occurs at an AGM, then the meeting will be closed and a new general meeting called by the Secretary within four weeks.

The Committee

The committee should aim to consist of nine members. This number of members is to be reviewed at each AGM

Four of these committee members are to each have one of the following named roles: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary

Additional roles can be created if required and voted for at an AGM

No member shall exercise more than one vote

In the event of equal votes, the Chairperson shall make the casting vote in the best interests of the FoEBW group

Conflicts of interest: Members must not vote on issues where there is a conflict of interest e.g., they are a member of another group that would benefit from the decision

Members may not benefit financially from FoEBW but may claim expenses if agreed by the committee and signed for by two members

The Committee shall have the power to refuse, or withdraw, membership to, or from, any person found to be acting against the interests of the FoEBW group. The member or representative of the member shall have the right to make representation to Plymouth City Council before the final decision is made (theodore.nickols@plymouth.gov.uk). If the decision of the Committee is upheld by PCC the Secretary shall notify the member in writing

Any complaints against the Committee or its members shall be made in writing to Plymouth City Council (theodore.nickols@plymouth.gov.uk)

Committee members are expected to attend at least quarterly meetings or give a valid reason for not attending with as much notice as possible

At least one person from the committee is expected to represent FoEBW at relevant meetings in conjunction with Plymouth City Council and other Friends groups within the city, including Plymouth Open Spaces Network meetings

The Committee has the right to expel members if they continuously do not attend committee meetings, achieve their committee duties or coordinate with FoEBW and Plymouth City Council or other organisations

Should a vacancy occur in the positions of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary, every member shall be contacted to seek out a member to cover until the next AGM

The maximum term of any committee member shall be twelve months. At this time, they could be re-elected or step-down at the AGM

The sharing of duties and named roles within the committee is to be encouraged prior to AGMs to allow all interested parties to step up or down from these posts and prevent a sense of ownership of a specific role or a sense of 'having to stay' from being formed

Subgroups can be formed for specific purposes. These subgroups must work within the remit of the Committee and all financial decisions must go through the Committee. Subgroups can be made up of the committee members and members of the wider community

Duties

Duties of the Named members:

The duties of the Chairperson are to: chair meetings of the Committee and the Group; represent the Group at functions/meetings that the Group has been invited to; act as spokesperson for the Group when necessary

The duties of the Vice Chairperson are to cover any duties of the Chairperson as required

The duties of the Secretary are to: take and keep minutes of meetings; prepare the agenda for meetings of the Committee and the Group in consultation with the Chairperson; maintain the membership list; deal with correspondence; collect and circulate any relevant information within the Group

The duties of the Treasurer are to: supervise the financial affairs of the Group; keep proper accounts that show all monies collected and paid out by the Group

The duties of the Rangers are to: provide quarterly reports; raise any issues to the Chairperson for discussion with the members as necessary

Meetings

Committee meetings are to be held at least every quarter

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is to be held every year, with at least four weeks' notice given to the members and wider community – this meeting will also be the Annual Open Meeting

The Agenda for each AGM is to be strictly adhered to and must include the presentation of the year's accounts or balance sheet as well as the election of members

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) can be called at any time to deal with specific issues that require the input of all members

The Agenda for an EGM should be strictly adhered to

The committee should aim to give members at least two weeks' notice prior to an EGM

Volunteers, Collaborators & Local Counsellors may attend meetings but not vote

Accounts

Accounts shall be kept by the Treasurer, submitted to an annual audit and approved at a member's meeting. Any bank account in which part of the FoEBW funds are deposited shall be in the name of FoEBW

The Treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of FoEBW (ensuring an online banking facility is available) and ensure that all funds held elsewhere are transferred to this account under the group's name

The Treasurer shall ensure any donations received in the groups PayPal account are transferred to the main bank account on a regular basis and in advance of an AGM or audit

The Treasurer and two other committee members shall be nominated as cheque signatories

All cheques, online banking, transactions and instructions to the groups bankers shall require two of the agreed signatures. These should not be from the same household, nor should you sign a cheque for yourself

The Treasurer shall have the accounts checked by an independent person with adequate financial experience at the end of the financial year

The Treasurer shall ensure that the checked accounts are agreed by a Committee meeting before the AGM where they will be presented

Petty cash and spending: Authorisation will need to be given by the Committee for all spending. Before each event, a decision should be made about who should count the monies - this needs to be at least 2 people, of which 1 should be independent of the group

Alteration of the Constitution

Proposals for alterations to this constitution or dissolution must be delivered to the Secretary in writing. The Secretary in conjunction with all other members shall then decide on the date of a General Meeting to discuss such proposals, giving members at least four weeks (28 days) notice

Any changes must be agreed by at least two-thirds of the members present and subsequently approved by Plymouth City Council

Dissolution

The FoEBW group may be wound up at any time if agreed by two-thirds of the members present

Any assets remaining after the payment of all debts and liabilities shall be given to an Ernesettle charity or Not for Profit group working in or for the benefit of Ernesettle according to the wishes of the members present

Any unused funding from Plymouth City Council or any other organisation shall be returned to them

Quorum

No General meeting shall take place if less than two thirds of the committee are present

A minimum of five committee members are needed for an EGM to take place

A minimum of five committee members are needed for an AGM to take place, plus 6 members of the wider community

Constitution Agreement

This constitution was agreed on (date):

Chairperson (print name & sign):

Vice-Chairperson (print name & sign):

Secretary (print name & sign):

Treasurer (print name & sign):

(print name & sign):

(print name & sign):

(print name & sign):

(print name & sign):

(print name & sign):

Rangers:

(print name & sign): PATRICK COLWILL*+^#

(print name & sign): RAY MORTON*+^

(print name & sign): RICHARD LILLICRAP

(print name & sign): JOHN CLOUGH^

*First Aid Level 3

+Forestry First Aid

^Lantra Brushcutter

#Food Hygiene & Safety Level 2

Appendix 3 - Brief Tree background

Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)

Type: Deciduous (year-round leaf cover make it a winter haven for wildlife).

Lifespan: more than 300 years, any tree over 225 years is considered ancient.

Naming: ‘horn’ means ‘hard’ and ‘beam’ was the name for a tree in old English.

Modern Uses: The hardest wood of any tree in Europe. Nowadays, it’s mainly used for furniture, flooring and wood turning.

Traditional Uses: the wood was made into ox yokes which were used to join a team of ploughing oxen together (Budshead farm kept oxen). The wooden ‘beam’ would have been attached to their horns which may have contributed to the tree’s name. It’s more likely, however, that the hornbeam is so named due to the hardness of its timber. Other traditional uses were butchers' chopping blocks, piano hammers, wood screws, coach wheels and cogs for windmills and water mills (of which there were two in Budshead). It was also coppiced and pollarded for poles. The wood also burns well and makes good firewood and charcoal Budshead farm had kilns).

Medicinal: A tonic made from hornbeam was said to relieve tiredness and exhaustion, and its leaves were used to stop bleeding and heal wounds.

Historical/Mythological: Romans used Hornbeams to make their chariots because of the strength of the wood.

Oak, English (*Quercus robur*)

Type: Deciduous tree growing up to 20–40m tall. Also known as common oak, this species grows and matures to form a broad and spreading crown with sturdy branches beneath.

Lifespan: it is believed that an oak can live for up to 900 - 1000 years. It is said that an oak takes 300 years to grow, 300 years to live and 300 years to die.

Modern Uses: The timber, prized for its strength and durability, is still used in the construction of houses, furniture making and of course, shipbuilding.

Traditional Uses: The English oak has always enjoyed a close association with the Royal Navy, whose ships were constructed from oak timbers until the middle of the 19th century, earning the Senior Service the nickname ‘the Wooden Walls of Old England’. Since the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 there have been eight warships called HMS Royal Oak, and ‘Heart of Oak’ is the official march of the Royal Navy.

Culture: The ruling majesty of the woods, the wise old English oak holds a special place in our culture, history, and hearts. It supports more life than any other native tree species in the UK, even its fallen leaves support biodiversity.

Historical/Mythological: Druids would worship in oak groves, couples would marry under their spreading branches and the Yule Log, decorated for Christmas with holly and mistletoe, was traditionally cut from oak. Acorns, the fruit of the oak, were carried by folk as charms to bring good luck and good health.

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

Type: Deciduous.

Lifespan: Ash trees can live to a grand old age of 400 years. When fully grown, ash trees can reach a height of 35m. Tall and graceful, they often grow together, forming a domed canopy.

Nature: Ash trees make the perfect habitat for a few different species of wildlife. The airy canopy and early leaf fall allow sunlight to reach the woodland floor, providing optimum conditions for wild flowers such as dog violet, wild garlic and dog's mercury. In turn, these support a range of insects such as the rare and threatened high brown fritillary butterfly.

Modern Uses: People have worked with ash timber for years. It is one of the toughest hardwoods and absorbs shocks without splintering. It is the wood of choice for making tools and sport handles, including hammers, axes, spades, hockey sticks and oars. An attractive wood, it is also prized for furniture.

Traditional uses: In the 19th century ash was commonly used to construct carriages, and Britain's Morgan Motor Company still grows ash to make the frames for its cars.

Medicinal: The young, green, immature seeds of ash are edible and have also been used in herbal medicine.

Historical/Mythological: The ash tree was thought to have medicinal and mystical properties and the wood was burned to ward off evil spirits. In Norse mythology, ash was the 'Tree of Life' and the first man on Earth was said to have come from an ash tree. Even today it is sometimes known as the 'Venus of the woods'. In Britain, druids regarded the ash as sacred, and their wands were often made of ash because of its straight grain.

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

Type: Deciduous, these broadleaf trees can grow to 35m tall

Lifespan: up to 400 years. The seed is extremely fertile, so sycamore has spread quickly across the UK and colonised many woodlands to the detriment of native species.

Historical/Mythological: It is thought to have been introduced to the UK by the Romans. However, other reports suggest it was introduced to the UK in the Tudor era around the 1500s. More widespread planting occurred in the 1700s and the earliest reports of the species naturalising in the UK date from the mid-1800s.

In Celtic mythology, the sycamore was associated with the world tree, a sacred tree that connects heaven, earth, and the underworld. The Celts believed that the sycamore was a home to fairies and other spirits, and they often planted sycamore trees near their homes for protection.

In Christian mythology, sycamore is associated with the story of Zacchaeus, a tax collector who climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus, he called him down and invited himself to Zacchaeus's house. This story is often interpreted as a symbol of God's love and forgiveness for all people, regardless of their social status or past sins.

Interestingly, the sycamore tree mentioned in the Gospels likely refers to a different tree altogether. It was most likely the Middle Eastern *Ficus sycomorus*, rather than *Acer pseudoplatanus*. This is a logical explanation since English translators of the Bible wouldn't have necessarily been familiar with *Ficus sycomorus*.

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 100 years, mature trees can grow to a height of around 6–7m.

Nature: Early flowering, blackthorn provides a valuable source of nectar and pollen for bees in spring. Its foliage is a food plant for the caterpillars of many moths, including the lackey, magpie, swallow-tailed and yellow-tailed. It is also used by the black and brown hairstreak butterflies. Birds nest among the dense, thorny thickets, eat caterpillars and other insects from the leaves, and feast on the sloes in autumn.

Modern Uses: the sloes are still used to make wine, preserves and sloe gin.

Traditional Uses: It was traditionally used for making walking sticks and tool parts. It burns well so is a good choice for firewood.

Medicinal: was used in a wealth of remedies including tonics and syrups that 'cleansed the blood', aided digestive complaints and eased rheumatism. These tonics and syrups made use of the blackthorn's bark, flowers, and fruit.

Historical/Mythological: Blackthorn was long associated with witchcraft, and it is said that witches' wands and staffs were made using blackthorn wood.

Cherry, Wild (*Prunus avium*) – aka Bird Cherry

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 60 years, generally 10-15m but mature trees can grow to 30m.

Nature: The second part of its botanical name – *avium* – refers to birds which play a role in the tree's propagation by eating the cherries and dispersing the seed. In Scotland, cherry is sometimes referred to as 'gean'. The spring flowers provide an early source of nectar and pollen for bees; while the cherries are eaten by birds, including the blackbird and song thrush; as well as mammals, such as the badger, wood mouse, yellow-necked mouse, and dormouse. The foliage is the main food plant for caterpillars of many species of moth, including the cherry fruit and cherry bark moths, the orchard ermine, brimstone, and short-cloaked moth.

Modern Uses: The wild cherry is often used as rootstock for more productive fruit bearing varieties. Its pinkish-brown wood is used to make fine furniture, musical instruments, veneers, smoking pipes and is prized for turned items such as bowls.

Traditional Uses: bird cherries were used to flavour whisky or gin and making cherry brandy. The resin that oozes from the trunk was used by children as chewing gum.

Medical: The bark is used to make medicine. Wild cherry is used for colds, coughs, and digestive disorders. It is also used in cough syrups because of its sedative, expectorant, drying, and cough-suppressing effects.

Historical/Mythological: In Europe, bird cherries date back to the Neolithic period, as proven by archaeological discoveries. The flesh of the fruit is sugary but can be bitter. Wild cherries were harvested throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Ages in Central Europe. From the 4th century BC, cherry trees have been cultivated for their fruit which is still used today to make kirsch. Plus, their flowers bear honey.

Highland folklore, wild cherry had mysterious qualities, and to encounter one was considered auspicious and fateful.

Chestnut, Sweet (*Castanea sativa*)

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 700 years and can reach 35m when mature.

Nature: The flowers provide an important source of nectar and pollen for bees and other insects, while red squirrels eat the nuts. Many micro-moths feed on the leaves and nuts.

Uses: It has been used for general carpentry, furniture-making, for front doors, wainscoting, sculptures and carving, railway sleepers, bands around wine casks (in southern wine-growing regions), and to support grape vines. It was once used for churches and other buildings. Sweet chestnut wood has also been used in the manufacture of cellulose.

Medicinal: In modern herbal medicine, sweet chestnut's bark, leaves, flowers, and nuts are strengthening, calming, astringent, and digestive, even though the tree is not so well used today.

Sweet chestnut leaves may be used to treat diarrhoea, heavy menstrual bleeding and rheumatism, lower back pain, stiff joints, and muscles, as well as occasionally coughs and bronchitis, and sore throats and pharyngitis (as a gargle), because of their mild decongestant qualities.

Historical/Mythological: There is very little mythology surrounding the sweet chestnut in the UK, probably because it was introduced. However, the ancient Greeks dedicated the sweet chestnut to Zeus and its botanical name *Castanea* comes from Castonis, a Town in Thessaly in Greece where the tree was grown for its nuts.

Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 400 years, with 250 years being more typical – considered ancient from 225 years onwards. Mature trees can reach a height of 15m.

Nature: Common hawthorn can support hundreds of other species. It is the foodplant for caterpillars of moths, including the hawthorn, orchard ermine, pear leaf blister, rhomboid tortrix, light emerald, lackey, vapourer, fruitlet-mining tortrix, small eggar and lappet moths. Its flowers are eaten by dormice and provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. The haws are rich in antioxidants and are eaten by migrating birds, such as redwings, fieldfares, and thrushes, as well as small mammals. The dense, thorny foliage makes fantastic nesting shelter for many species of bird.

Medicinal: Historically, hawthorn has been used for heart disease as well as for digestive and kidney problems. It is now promoted for these uses as well as for anxiety, high or low blood pressure, and other conditions.

Historical/Mythological: Hawthorn is a pagan symbol of fertility and has ancient associations with May Day. It was the ancestor of the Maypole and its leaves and flowers the source of May Day garlands as well as appearing in the wreath of the Green Man.

Hawthorn was never brought into the home. It was believed that bringing hawthorn blossom inside would be followed by illness and death, and in medieval times it was said that hawthorn blossom smelled like the Great Plague. Botanists later

learned that the chemical trimethylamine in hawthorn blossom is also one of the first chemicals formed in decaying animal tissue, so it is not surprising that hawthorn flowers are associated with death.

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 80 years, and can grow to 12 (if coppiced, hazel can live for several hundred years).

Nature: Hazel leaves provide food for the caterpillars of moths, including the large emerald, small white wave, barred umber, and nut-tree tussock. In managed woodland where hazel is coppiced, the open, wildflower-rich habitat supports species of butterfly, particularly fritillaries. Coppiced hazel also provides shelter for ground-nesting birds, such as the nightingale, nightjar, yellowhammer, and willow warbler.

Hazel has long been associated with the dormouse (also known as the hazel dormouse). Not only are hazelnuts eaten by dormice to fatten up for hibernation, but in spring the leaves are a good source of caterpillars, which dormice also eat.

Hazelnuts are also eaten by woodpeckers, nuthatches, tits, wood pigeons, jays, and small mammals. Hazel flowers provide early pollen as a food for bees.

The trunks are often covered in mosses, liverworts, and lichens, and the fiery milkcap fungus grows in the soil beneath.

Uses: Hazel wood can be twisted or knotted, and as such it historically had many uses. These included thatching spars, net stakes, water-divining sticks, hurdles, and furniture. Hazel was also valued for its nuts, or 'cobs'.

Historical/Mythological: Hazel has a reputation as a magical tree. A hazel rod is supposed to protect against evil spirits, as well as being used as a wand and for water-divining. In some parts of England, hazelnuts were carried as charms and/or held to ward off rheumatism. In Ireland, hazel was known as the 'Tree of Knowledge', and in medieval times it was a symbol of fertility.

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 300 years, and mature trees can grow to 15m.

Nature: Scientists recently discovered that holly trees adjust their spiky armour in response to hungry animals and changing environments. They can produce some prickly leaves to fend off nibblers while others remain smooth. This leafy transformation happens through epigenetic modification. This is a fascinating way that organisms adjust their gene expression without changing their DNA. So, although the DNA of all holly trees is the same, they can switch off or on different traits to adapt to their environment.

Holly provides dense cover and good nesting opportunities for birds, while its deep, dry leaf litter may be used by hedgehogs and small mammals for hibernation. The flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. The leaves are eaten by caterpillars of the holly blue butterfly, along with those of various moths, including the yellow-barred brindle, double-striped pug, and the holly tortrix. The smooth leaves found at the tops of holly trees are a winter source of food for deer.

The berries are a vital source of food for birds in winter, and small mammals, such as wood mice and dormice.

Uses: Holly branches have long been used to decorate homes in winter.

Historical/Mythological: The tree was seen as a fertility symbol and a charm against witches, goblins, and the devil. It was thought to be unlucky to cut down a holly tree.

Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Type: Deciduous

Lifespan: up to 300 years and can grow to a height of 40m

Nature: The flowers provide a rich source of nectar and pollen for insects, particularly bees. Caterpillars of the triangle moth feed on its leaves, as does the horse chestnut leaf-miner moth whose caterpillars provide food for blue tits. Deer and other mammals eat the conkers.

Uses: horse medicines, as additives in shampoos, and as a starch substitute. Chemicals extracted from conkers can be used to treat strains and bruises. The Victorians wrote recipes for making conker flour. The seeds were shelled, ground, and then leached to remove bitter flavours. It's not a common practise these days and if consumed in excessive quantities conkers are mildly poisonous.

Medicinal: Historically, horse chestnut seed extract was used for joint pain, bladder and gastrointestinal problems, fever, leg cramps, and other conditions.

Historical/Mythological: There's hearsay that if you place conkers around your house, it will keep spiders away, but there's no scientific proof that this is the case. There is little British folklore associated with the tree – probably due to it being an introduced species. However, games of conkers have different rules in different parts of the country and have their own jargon which often requires repeating rhymes or rituals to decide who goes first.

Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*)

The Monterey Cypress, a rare conifer originally from 2 small populations on the Californian coast*, was introduced to Britain in 1838 and is now very common on south and southwest coasts, where its salt tolerance is beneficial. It is normally a substantial tree.

The 'Budshead' Monterey Cypress (aka California Cypress) is unusual, as it was imported much earlier than this by Sir Harry Trelawney, ADC to the Duke of Marlborough, who specialised in ornamental gardens here. H. Montague Evans recorded that 'in 1730 – 1750 he devoted himself to beautifying Budshead Manor, spending lavishly on the terraced gardens and rare trees he planted so that the place, one of great natural beauty, became famous in the country'.

*The Monterey cypress occurs in two natural stands in Monterey County, California. One stand is between Point Cypress and Pescadero Point on the north side of Carmel Bay, Monterey Peninsula. A smaller one is near Point Lobos on the south side of Carmel Bay. Monterey cypress is widely planted and naturalized on the California coast. It has been planted in Hawaii, Europe, South America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Sources: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>; <https://www.historic-uk.com/>; <https://www.kew.org/>; <https://www.forestryengland.uk/>; <https://ecotree.green/>; <https://treesforlife.org.uk/>; <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/>; <https://www.eatweeds.co.uk/>