Birds, bees, ponds and trees: threats facing natural



Bumble bee colony Andrew Bourke (UEA BIO)

More than £300,000 has been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to the five projects which focus on how local communities can get involved in securing a bright future for their natural heritage.

Trees

People in Peterborough will sow the seeds of a healthy future for Nene Park's trees. The park's 80 hectares of woodland are populated by a significant variety of ages and species of tree – but they are at risk from disease and under-management. Activities including Tree Detective walks and a Branching Out learning programme will recruit people of all ages to assess the park's trees, discover why they are so important and learn what can be done to help them thrive.

Bees

Two projects tackle the issues surrounding the decline of pollinators. In Bury St Edmunds, primary schools will take part in Science Art and Writing (SAW) projects and be matched up with researchers from the University of East Anglia to

explore the lifecycle of bees, the threats they face and what needs to be done to save them. Working with artist Hedley Griffin they will use their findings as the basis to create a short animated film to share the story with other young people.

Ponds

In Broxbourne, Cedars Park pond, a key part of Theobald's Palace which in the early 17th century was a residence of James I will receive a sustainable filtering system. Surrounding areas will be protected to enhance its heritage value and additional signage will be installed to highlight the history of ponds in ancient palaces, as well as their wildlife with a special focus on plants and flowers for pollinating insects and bats. The area around the pond will be replanted using native plants that have a historic connection to the park and support the National Pollinator Strategy 2014-2024 as set out by DEFRA.

Birds

Challenges facing peregrine falcons will be explored in Norfolk. The birds of prey have increasingly adapted to survive in an urban environment within close proximity to humans and a watch-point at Norwich Cathedral provides a window into their world. Now, 50 new volunteers will be recruited to collect data on peregrine falcon behaviour, diet, prey and breeding activities. The boost in volunteer power will enable other potential nesting spots to be monitored and increase the information shared with communities and online.

Rivers

Pressures on Norfolk's river systems form part of the final project. A new river hide overlooking a newly created reed bed and a new pond dipping facility – both accessible for wheelchair users and big enough to accommodate a school group – will be created at Pensthorpe Estate to enable young people in particular to understand the importance of the River Wensum and the creatures that live in it.

The projects receiving funding today are:

- **All the buzz** in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. SAW Trust awarded £9,700
- **Cedars Park pond revival** in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. Friends of Cedars Park awarded £59,700
- **Natural world of the Wensum** in Fakenham, Norfolk. Pensthorpe Conservation Trust awarded £53,500
- **Moments with trees** in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Nene Park Trust awarded £99,500
- **Urban Peregrine Project** in Norwich, Norfolk. Hawk and Owl Trust awarded £86,700

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: "Whether roosting in a cathedral, buzzing round a pond or growing in a park, our natural world is something to be treasured and enjoyed. It is also something that we all need to play a role in protecting for the future.

"Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we're pleased to support these projects which will equip people of all ages with the skills – and the inspiration – to appreciate, celebrate and protect our wonderful natural heritage."