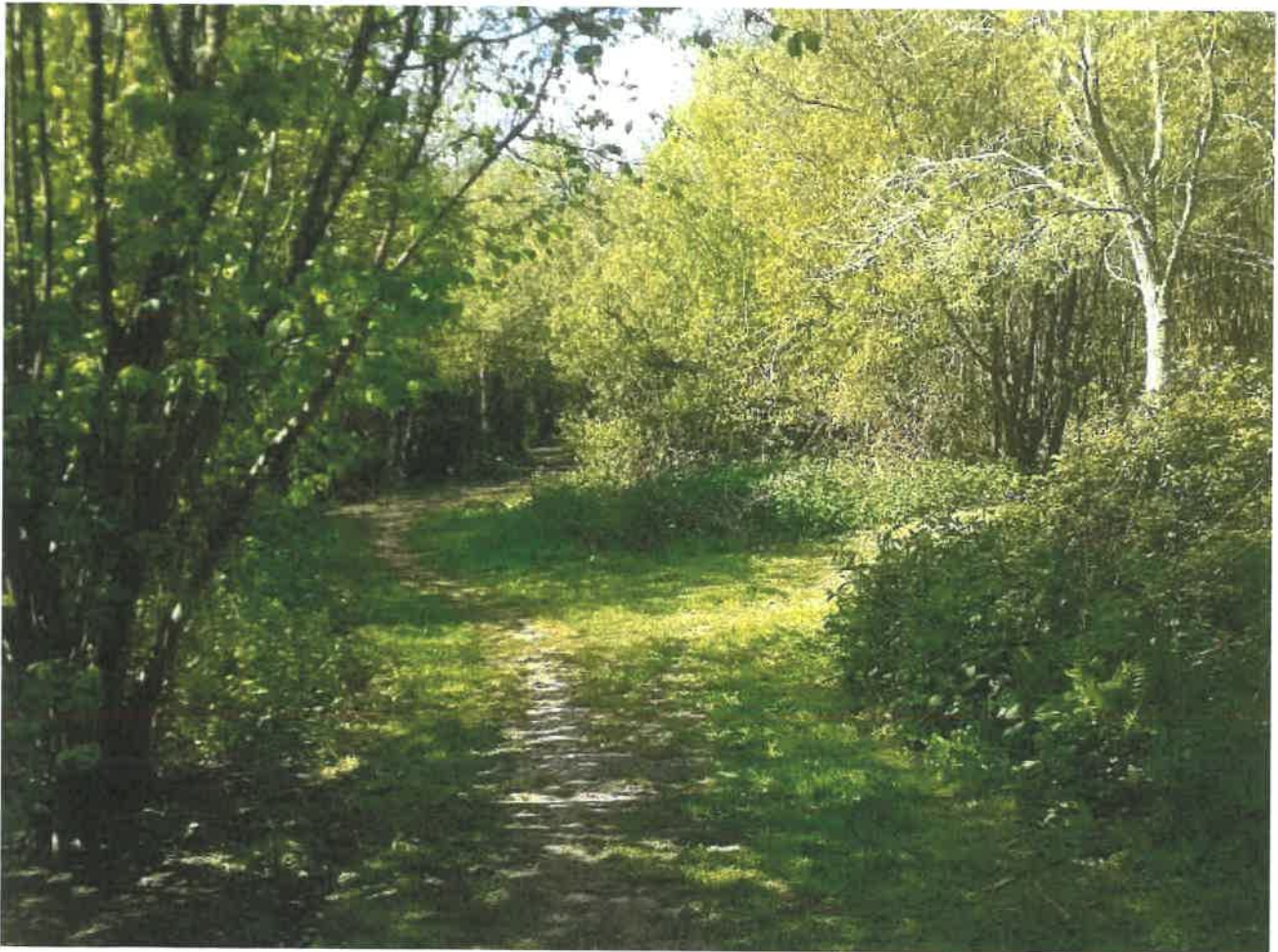


Ryde Reserves

Annual Report 2022 – 2023



Produced for Ryde Town Council



Overview

Looking back, it has been another busy but successful year.

Our Lottery funded Reaching Communities project, aimed to increase the reach and accessibility to the Gift to Nature sites, has delivered a range of improvements and helped us to engage with a broader range of people.

In 2022 all the sites were audited by Isle Access and their report highlighted the need to consider not just mobility, but also other sensory issues and neural diversity. A range of improvements have been introduced.

The Gift to Nature sites remain important to local neighbourhoods, providing free to use access to the natural environment and the countryside, and as the current custodians of these special and important sites it is pleasing to see their increased usage. However this is not without challenge as the incidences and range of anti-social behaviour continues to demand a significant amount of our ranger time.

It remains our approach not to restrict or to try to control how the sites are used but we will continue to try to inform and influence good behaviour and environmental best practice.

In the coming year our aim is to continue our work to protect and enhance the Gift to Nature sites for the benefit of all.

Report – Ryde Reserves

With four of the 31 sites we look after located within Ryde (Pig Leg Lane, Rosemary Fields, Binstead Wood and Haylands Wood) our Ranger team can often be found in the area.

With the exception of Haylands Wood all of the sites are relatively urban, offering a natural retreat from the hustle and bustle of our modern society. All wonderful sites, they offer both challenges and rewards and we are committed to not only looking after them but making them better for all users.

As well as undertaking practical work on the sites, such as cutting grass, pruning or felling trees, upgrading footpaths etc the Ranger Team make regular site visits throughout the year. These visits are to ensure that the sites remain a welcoming and safe place for people to enjoy. During a site visit the rangers will walk the site, collect litter, engage with users, monitor the health of trees and condition of any benches, fences, gates etc and if necessary make plans to return should any works be required.

Alongside the aforementioned four sites in Ryde is the Appley Park Picture Frame site. The result of a collaboration between Ryde Town Council, Goodleaf Tree Climbing, Friends of

Appley Park and Gift to Nature, we have an occasional walk through to check the condition of the frame, with the IW Council responsible for keeping the site in prime condition.

Ranger Team led activity at the four sites includes: -

Pig Leg Lane

Activity 04/22 – 03/23	Comments
Site visits	28 separate occasions
Grass cutting/strimming	2 separate occasions
Meadow cutting	2 separate occasions using BCS, pedestrian flail, brushcutter
Footpath widening	5 separate occasions
Fire site check	3 occasions
Anti-social use	2 occasions, report of motorcycles racing around the site.
Wildlife Warriors volunteer session	2 sessions, cutting back footpaths, particularly through the blackthorn scrub area
Green Gym Volunteer session	2 sessions, thorough litter pick, ditch clearance and path widening

Rosemary Fields

Activity 04/22 – 03/23	Comments
Site visits	23 separate occasions
Grass cutting/strimming	5 separate occasions
Tree works	Cleaned up 1 damaged tree
Scrub removal	2 days use of brushcutter to cut back bramble
Footpath widening	2 separate days widening an existing footpath
Vandalism	Remnants of a New Year party

Binstead Wood

Activity 04/22 – 03/23	Comments
Site visits	11 separate occasions
Path clearance/opening	3 separate occasions
Dead wood removal	4 separate occasions
Ash tree inspection	3 separate occasions
Tree removal	1 separate occasion
Flooding	Inspection after torrential rain
Fly-tipped waste	Mostly garden waste; removed from site.

Haylands Wood

Activity 04/22 – 03/23	Comments
Site visits	13 separate occasions
Grass cutting/strimming	5 separate occasions
Coppicing and tree work	4 days of tree clearance work and 1 day removing a small tree
Picnic table	Installed

Planned Activities 2023/24 – Ryde Reserves

The management regimes for Binstead Wood, Haylands Wood, Pig Leg Lane and Rosemary Fields will in general remain the same with every effort made to attend to the sites as efficiently as possible. In protecting and enhancing the sites for the benefit of all users, both human and otherwise, we need to strike a delicate balance: -

1. Site checks will continue to be made regularly to ensure that the sites remain a safe and welcoming place to visit.
2. Management works will be timed and undertaken sensitively to ensure that whenever possible our efforts do not compromise the value of the sites for their associated flora and fauna. Keeping the sites 'tidy' and useable can be achieved whilst maintaining their wild value; a variety of habitat (for example closely mown grass footpath edged by medium length grass, itself edged by long grass before a transition into brambles or nettles or a hedgerow) is in many cases 'better' for wildlife than either a completely wild or excessively managed area. This is where the training and experience (general and site specific) of the ranger team will be of most value.

Extraordinary works at the Ryde sites will include: -

Rosemary Fields

- We will continue the work to enhance the footpaths, especially the recently established path, opening up the full extent of the site.
- We will install a two new picnic benches/seats.

Binstead Wood

- We will continue the management of the stand of Ash trees that dominate the north-eastern part of the site. The vast majority of the Ash trees, if not all, are exhibiting advanced stages of Ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*).

Engagement Activities – Ryde sites

The Gift to Nature engagement programme has been designed to encourage more people, from a wider background, to visit our sites and connect with nature. It is delivered through a mix of events, activities and presentations.

To broaden the reach of Gift to Nature, we have worked in partnership with other organisations working in the areas of mental health, cultural diversity, young people, care homes, people with disabilities and those from harder to engage communities.

Over the past year, we have worked with 40 groups or organisations, held 41 public engagement activities, with 595 people taking part in a workshop or walk led by the Engagement Officer.

During the summer holidays, families were invited to take part in a free workshop in **Binstead Wood**. The Engagement Officer showed them how to make bug hotels using found and recycled materials. The Mellow Mondays group, whose aim is to support people with mental health issues begin the week in a positive way, helped to create a sensory trail for **Haylands Wood**. (They shall be returning later this month to see the fruits of their labour.) The group surveyed the site but also found time to make autumnal wreaths while they were there. Over one hundred people attended the Easter Explorers event at **Pig Leg Lane**. Children had to hunt for 8 animal stamps before being rewarded with a chocolate treat.



During 2022-3 we visited all five Ryde sites and have produced and published an Access Statement for the site which describes the site and the different ways it can be experienced. Additionally, we commissioned Sight for Wight to produce an audio-visual guide for people with sight impairments.

The Access Statements and Audio-Visual Guides are available from our website pages for each specific site and will be downloadable to a smart phone from our on-site Information Pillars. We are very much ahead of the game with this and are unaware of any other organisation having attempted it over such a wide and varied portfolio of sites.

These can be downloaded from:

<https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/appley/appley-frame-resources-and-activities/>

<https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/binstead-wood/binstead-wood-activities-and-resources/>

<https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/haylands-wood/haylands-wood-activity-and-resources/>

<https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/pig-leg-lane/pig-leg-lane-activities-and-resources/>

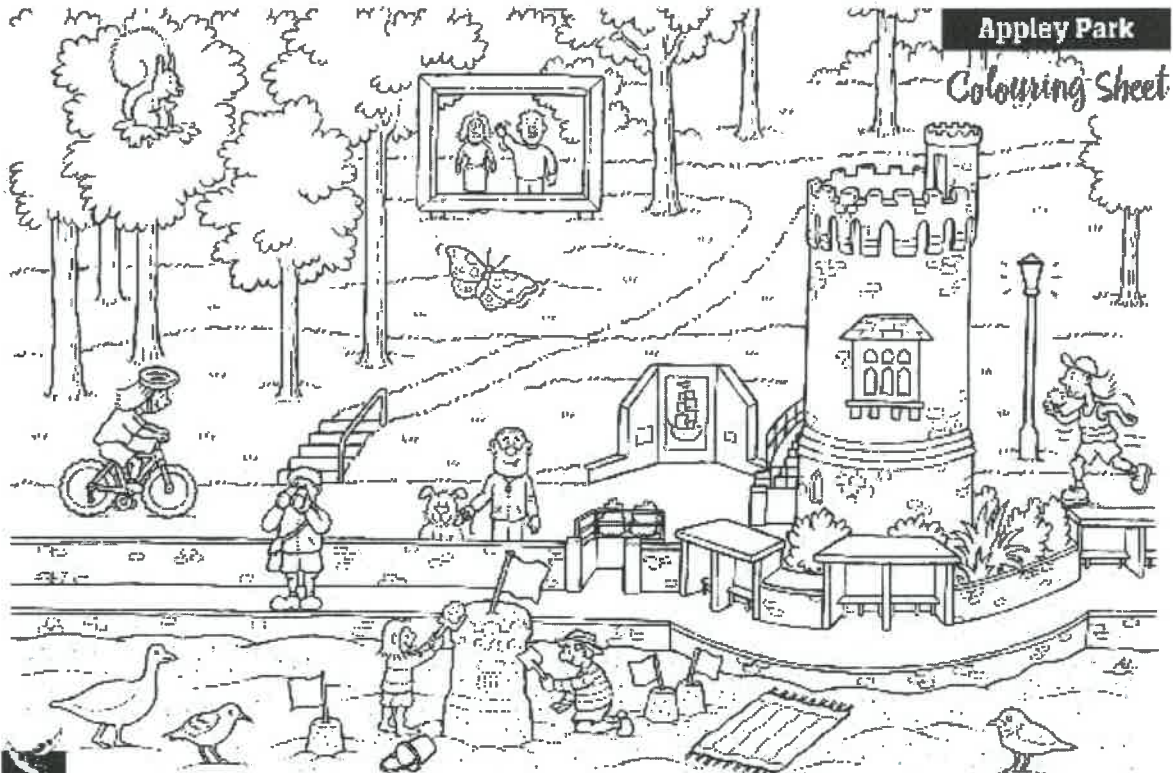
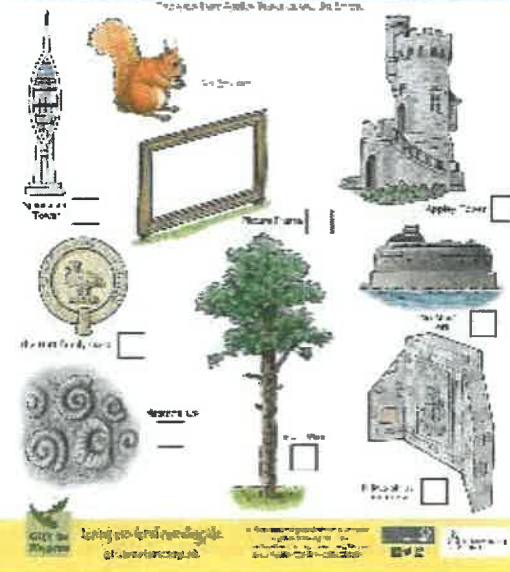
<https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/rosemary-fields/rosemary-fields-activities-and-resources/>

We have been producing site maps (for sites we haven't done previously), postcards, I spy sheets and Colouring-In sheets. Where produced, these are available on our website but will also be available on the Information Pillars on site.

For Ryde we have completed Appley and all other sites will follow in spring and early summer 2023. These can be viewed and downloaded from the above link.

Appley Park

I-Spy



Appley Park Colouring Sheet

Gift to Nature **Loving our local countryside** gifttonature.org.uk Gift to Nature is a not-for-profit charity. Registered in England No. 1073224. Registered Office: 51 St Helens Grove, 5-16 Dales, Harrogate, North Yorkshire YO21 2EJ. Tel: 01430 252244.

Spring and early summer 2023 will see the installation of our Information Pillars across all sites, and cycle racks too. We will also be putting an interpretation board into Haylands Wood as part of a wider site revamp.

We are working on a revamp of our website and all site pages have been updated ahead of this. We have commissioned a year of filming across our sites and each site will have a short clip of sights and sounds on its webpage so that it can be experienced on advance of a visit or by people who are not able to visit. We hope to have this complete by autumn 2023.

The Appley Frame is the only site filmed so far in the Ryde area and includes some super footage of the beach and the Solent. It can be viewed here:

<https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/appley/>

Ongoing engagement with Ryde Town Council

We appreciate the ongoing feedback and support received for our work and if you so wish, please create links to the following pages on the Gift to Nature website:

- <https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/appley/>
- <https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/binstead-wood/>
- <https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/haylands-wood/>
- <https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/pig-leg-lane/>
- <https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/pig-leg-lane/rickard-arethusa/>
- <https://gifttonature.org.uk/discover/sites-in-and-around-ryde/rosemary-fields/>

Gallery

Binstead Wood



Haylands Wood



Pig Leg Lane



Rosemary Fields - new bench



Appley Frame



