



Clara Vale NEWS

WINTER 2021



Clara hedgehog update

Following the article from Steve and Cate Hilton in the last edition, here is an update on hedgehogs in the village.

There have been at least six hedgehogs released in Clara from the rescue hospital in Woodside (Hope for Hedgehogs). All six hedgehogs (four boys and two girls) were orphaned, and they required incubation. All have been hand reared with volunteers bottle feeding them every three to four hours (Ron Weasley is pictured below). They were released only when reaching

a healthy weight to enable them to survive and learn to forage. They would not have had a chance to learn this without their mothers. None of these hedgehogs would have survived without the help and care they received from Hope for Hedgehogs volunteers. They have been regularly spotted around the village, boosting our natural hedgehog population.

As you may know, the hedgehog population in the UK is in decline and they are on the red list of British mammals. There is real concern because their numbers have declined

so much in recent years. So it's great to see the hedgehog community in Clara doing so well. This could be due to a combination of our conservation efforts, and the fact that we have quieter roads in Clara where people drive more slowly and with care. However, please note, hedgehogs can suddenly appear from undergrowth or from under parked cars to cross the road and can be difficult to spot – so keep your eyes peeled!

Village Hall News

What next in the Hall

Lunch club and breakfasts are back, and we have organized a series of smaller scale Christmas events instead of our usual Christmas Fair, including a pizza afternoon on 28 November and breakfast on 4 December, both with stalls.

Looking forward, it would be helpful to have feedback and your ideas for Village Hall events/use. Prior to lockdown suggestions have included a regular Friday social evening (bring your own bottle), reviving Toastie Tuesdays (morning coffee, toast, scones etc), a pop-up pub is another favourite. All these require some, but not a lot, of volunteer help, so if you have a preference or can lend a hand just let me know. If you have any other suggestions for activities or events you would like to see in the hall do get in touch g.hale168@btinternet.com.

Gill Hale

Library

Very happy to say 'book corner' is back, but in a different place - it's in the kitchen area. Books can be borrowed and all you need to do is write your name, title of the book and date borrowed on the sheets provided. See the back of the newsletter for times when the hall will be open. Non-fiction, hobbies, fiction, it's all there, not forgetting the children's shelf. Have a look! Happy reading! **Babs Clark**



Christmas cards



FOR SALE! Quality greetings cards all photographed locally by locals! Pack of 6 for £3.50, or £1 each, all proceeds to the Village Hall. Contact Rachel to purchase 07543 281301 email bookings@claravale.org.uk.

Does a quiet study space appeal to you?

With more people continuing to work from home, space in our homes has been under pressure and it can be difficult for young people to find a place to concentrate on their studies. The Village Hall is offering free, quiet homework and study space for young people studying for GCSE's, A levels, university, and other courses. The meeting room offers free Wi-fi and will be available on a trial basis every Monday and Tuesday from 3-6pm. Once you've registered you are free to work quietly in the room when you choose. NB- the space will be unsupervised and is not registered. If interested, please text/call Rachel on 07543 281301 or email bookings@claravale.org.uk.

Call out for musicians!

Event: Village carols outdoors followed by festive fair in the hall
Wanted: Musicians to join the band off the cuff with no rehearsal (a bit of sight reading required)
Date: Tuesday 21 December 6pm
Contact: Annie 07972 178 702
Email: annie.c.ball@hotmail.co.uk

Some thank you's and an introduction

Thank you to John McLetchie and Iris Priest who kept our Hall so beautifully clean and orderly during all the lockdowns who have now moved onto other jobs and projects. Welcome to Freddie, Don and Rory who make up our new caretaker/cleaner team, Freddie is covering weekdays and Don and Rory weekend bookings. **Gill Hale**

Insulation

As part of the 5 year strategic plan, the Village Hall committee has recently had insulation installed in the roof space above the Village Hall and business centre. We are hopeful that this will be a step towards reducing our energy consumption and costs. With concerns about climate change and sustainability, insulation forms part of our aspiration to have a zero-carbon rated building.

Rachel Kirkman

Help support the Great North Air Ambulance by donating your used inkjet cartridges.

If you have used inkjet cartridges they can be donated to The Great North Air Ambulance to be refilled and sold again to help them raise funds for this life saving service. Also, helps all that plastic and electronics end up in landfill.

To make it easier to donate Mike and Suse at 4 West View are collecting them and will arrange a collection once there are enough to make a van collection worthwhile. You just need to put them in our yard. It's inkjet cartridges only, not laser toner cartridges.

Full details of their recycling at <https://www.greatnorthairambulance.co.uk/support-us/fundraising/recycle/>
Mike McFarlane



Hedgehog hibernation



Hibernation

(This section is taken with our thanks from hedgehogstreet.org where you can find lots of top tips from the world of hedgehogs) Hedgehogs are one of the few mammals that are true hibernators. During hibernation hedgehogs are not really asleep, instead they drop their body temperature to match their surroundings and enter a state of torpor. This allows them to save a lot of energy but slows down all other bodily functions making normal activity impossible.

Hedgehogs usually hibernate from October/November through to March/April. Research has shown that each individual is likely to move nesting sites at least once during this period and so can sometimes be seen out and about. During mild winters hedgehogs can remain active well into November and December.

While in hibernation the hedgehog's fuel supply comes from the fat stores it has built up over the summer. Eating enough before hibernation is vital and this is when supplementary feeding can prove important to hedgehogs.

Any disturbance during this period can be extremely dangerous, as hedgehogs use up their precious energy reserves in order to become active again.

How to help

Hedgehogs tend to be most active at night and so should not normally be out during the day. If you do see one during daylight hours it probably needs help. For instance, juvenile hogs might not have gained enough weight to hibernate and so might need our assistance – you can contact our Facebook page outlined below.

- Please don't use slug pellets or pesticides- hedgehogs are nature's way of ridding your garden of slugs!
- Please check before you mow or strim your lawn or garden.
- Consider helping to build a hedgehog highway – make a 13cm by 13cm hole in the base of your fence if you own the fence, and your neighbour is in agreement.
- Consider supplementary feeding using either dry or wet cat/dog food – but only meat flavours and no gravy! Perhaps discuss with neighbours to

co- ordinate one or two feeding areas for a row of houses.

- Provide a water source, and if you have a pond make sure you have a ramp to help the hogs get out. Cover drains to avoid falls. Never give a hedgehog milk – they are lactose intolerant.
- Check any woodpiles or bonfires for hogs before lighting, and check compost areas before disturbing them.

If you think you might have spotted a hedgehog in distress, or if you would like to donate or volunteer to help hedgehogs then please contact Hope for Hedgehogs Greenside on Facebook. If you have any thoughts or queries you can come and talk to Pam or Maria. Here's a list of everyday things that we often need – you can deliver these straight to us: Old newspapers, fleece blankets or towels, paper towels, bin liners, dog or cat food (meat flavours no gravy).

Maria – 25 North View
Pam – 23 North View

Seed library

Incredible Edible Clara Vale

What is the Clara Vale Seed Library? The seed library is just what it sounds like – a library of seeds which anyone from first-time growers to experienced gardeners can borrow from and donate to. The Library is based at The Village Hall (in the kitchen), it is free to use and anyone from the village can use it whenever the hall is open to the public.

Why a Seed Library? Saving and sharing seeds has many advantages - not only does it save money and is better for the environment but it can also breed stronger, healthier plants which are more adapted to local conditions including having greater resilience to pests and diseases. By growing and sharing seeds we develop a strong seed provenance and local seed sovereignty i.e. we know exactly where and how our seeds were grown and harvested and it makes us, as growers and consumers, less reliant on big companies to provide our seeds, plants and ultimately food and flowers. An additional benefit of seed saving (apart from being fun and interesting) is that it can help produce larger harvests since we only save seeds from the best plants – it is a way of taking natural selection into our own hands!

How does the seed library work? The library works very much like a traditional library – you choose which seeds you would like to grow from the catalogue (the book labelled 'Incoming') and then find the seeds in the corresponding seed drawer. For example, if you wanted to borrow Broad Beans you simply look up "B" for Beans, select which variety you want from the list of available beans in the catalogue and then find them in the drawer labelled "B". Once you have found the beans (or whatever seeds you are taking out) just make a note in the 'Outgoing' catalogue and take your seeds home. NB. This step is important so that we have a record of which seeds are out on loan. Once you have grown your plants, save the seeds and return some of these to the library for the next growing season (whenever possible)*.

How do I donate/deposit seeds? If you would like to donate seeds, or are returning seeds you have borrowed, simply:

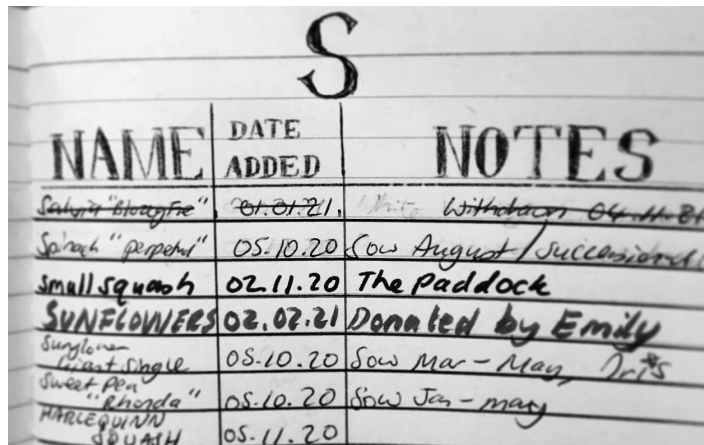
1. Take a seed envelope from the top of the library cabinets and write on the details of your seeds i.e. Name of seed, date deposited and ideally a note about when to sow. You can also add your name or any other information you like here.
2. Once you have put your seeds in an envelope simply seal the envelope (there is washi tape on the drawers for this) and pop your seeds into the appropriate drawer e.g. for Habanero Chillies put it in drawer "C" for Chillies.
3. Fill in the 'Incoming' library catalogue with the details about your seeds (Name, Date Added and any other Notes).

What kinds of seeds are there in the Library? At the time of writing this (15th November, 2021) there are 52 different varieties of vegetables, herbs and flowers already in the library with many more waiting to be catalogued and deposited. All kinds of seeds are welcome in the library - the more the merrier! Seeds do not just have to be edible plants, they can be flowers or any other types of seeds. The only requirements are that seeds are fully dried at the time of depositing and are organic and open pollinated i.e. not treated with chemicals and no F1-hybrid varieties, please.

How many seeds can you take out? We are not putting a limit on how many seeds anyone can take out at a time but instead ask that borrowers be mindful of what they can realistically hope to grow and return. As this is a growing and living project we will review how the lending and returning process goes over the next year and may change it if it feels necessary to balance incoming/outgoing seeds.

How do I save seeds? Different seeds require different approaches but a few general rules of thumb are;

- Whenever possible allow seeds to mature on plants before collecting. Clues for maturity might include a hard seed coat and a darkened colour.





Kath Patton

Obituary

14 August 1947 – 30 July 2021

- For seeds contained in a pod (like peas or beans) let seed pods dry on the plants and harvest individual pods as they dry. If freezing weather or heavy rains arrive while seed pods are still ripening gather pods to finish drying indoors.
- or many plants, e.g. sunflowers, lettuce, or broccoli, it is easiest to harvest the whole seed head or pod at once but to dry seeds it is generally better to separate them out and remove any chaff (to avoid damp and mould growth) which you can usually do by simply rolling the seed head between your hands over a piece of paper.
- Collect seeds and dry them by spreading them on newspaper, paper towels or a screen in a cool, dry place. Dry seeds as quickly as possible to preserve the best germination rates. Drying time varies but most seeds dry in 5-7 days. You will know your seeds are dry enough as they will be brittle and hard.
- If you are storing your seeds before depositing in the Seed Library ideally keep them in a cool, dark, dry place in glass jars, paper envelopes or plastic bags. For every 10 degrees that storage temperature decreases, seed longevity doubles so - the cooler the better!

How can I get involved in the seed library? The Seed Library is intended to become a self-running project i.e. everyone who uses the library (borrows and/or deposits seeds) contributes to it's ongoing development and growth. But if you would like to get more involved with harvesting, sorting and/or cataloguing seeds, or if you would be interested in joining a local talk on seed saving, please contact incrediblebleedibleclara@gmail.com or message Iris on 07578670371

For more information about saving seeds and online resources we recommend some of the free online publications from Seed Sovereignty www.seedsovereignty.info and Real Seeds Company <https://www.realseeds.co.uk>

*Some seeds are harder to grow and harvest than others and generally so it is not expected that all seeds will be returned (but this should balance out with new donations going forwards). In addition, when saving seeds from herbs or vegetables, you will need to leave one or two plants solely for the purpose of growing and harvesting the seed as most things once they "go to seed" or "bolt" become bitter and/or inedible e.g. lettuce and onions. In addition, growing plants from seeds can be difficult and sometimes crops fail or there is a problem during cultivation, as such, the library does not assume all seeds will be returned after borrowing – gardening is a great learning opportunity and often the best lessons come through things going wrong or failing! **Iris Priest**



Kath lived in the village for 25 years and served on our committee for 8 years as Treasurer and committee member. Sadly, Kath passed away on 30th July after an illness lasting a few months. Kath had a career as a teacher and subsequently worked in the voluntary sector, her experience proved invaluable when the Hall was under threat of closure in 2013 when she was instrumental in setting up the CVVH as a Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO). The improvements that you see in the Hall today are testament to the time and effort Kath put into numerable successful grant applications and careful financial planning. Kath was always calm, reasonable, and hugely generous in the time that she gave to the village hall. Her impaired vision was a challenge, but it never stopped her enjoying a wide range of activities. Her loved sunflowers, she liked singing and was a member of 2 choirs, she had a razor-sharp mind and enjoyed quizzes and crosswords. She liked a glass of wine and enjoyed good food, especially puddings, key lime pie being her favourite. She was a friend, and we all miss her.

The Village Hall will pay tribute to Kath with a photo displayed in the meeting room. We will also, with her family's good wishes, be moving Kath's favourite scented climbing rose from her house to the village hall grounds. **Gill Hale**

Clara Vale volunteers

We're as ever grateful to our village volunteers who have run events such as the Village Hall Breakfast, Lunch Club, Coffee Afternoon and helped with the tasks of clearing gutters and drains, keeping the yard clean and tidy, putting up our wedding bunting and setting up the new library and seed library.

If you'd like to be involved, please complete the form below and return it to the Village Hall post box by the business centre entrance.

Name

Address

Best contact number

Whatsapp

Email

Preferences/expertise for volunteering (tick all that apply)

☐ Baking

☐ Cooking

☐ Food prep

☐ Kitchen orders

☐ Serving

☐ Bar

☐ IT

☐ Accouts/Finance

☐ Grant bids

☐ DIY

☐ Working at height

☐ Decorating

☐ Gardening

☐ Art/Design

☐ Photography

☐ Music

☐ Other (please specify)

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Keelman's Way update from Liz Twist, MP

As you may be aware, I have been providing regular updates in relation to the closure of the Keelman's Way footpath between Clara Vale and Wylam following a landslip at the start of 2021.

Recently I hosted an update meeting with all the partners with an interest in the land.

The key update from the meeting came from Network Rail. They had previously commissioned an options report which laid four ways in which the train track could be future proofed for safety.

Network Rail has confirmed that they have agreed on an option that was considered the most environmentally friendly of the options and also secures the restoration of the path and its protection going forward.

They have also pressed forward with the next stages of the technical design of that option.

They are currently working on confirming the timescale for completion of the work, this will depend upon if they can move projects and push this into the next financial year. They are working very hard to make this happen.

This is a really encouraging step forward, Network Rail hope to confirm the timescale in the next month and are also working with the Environment Agency on the necessary permits for the work.

Renewal of play park equipment

As you may be aware the Council will be renewing the play equipment in Clara Vale park in the 21/22 financial year.

There is a limited amount of funds available for this and it is likely to be a case of replacing like with like unless additional funds can be raised.

We are currently looking for:

- donations
- fundraising ideas
- people to help with grant applications

If you are interested in collecting your copper coins for this cause we can get you a tin!

to get involved please contact Helen Haran at 13 North View or on cllr.hharan@gateshead.gov.uk

Helen Haran

CONSERVATION GROUP NEWS



Winter is coming...

It's that time of the year again and the Conservation Group has started feeding the birds for the coming winter. We've had to replace the roof on the woodland hide and there are some other repairs to complete but both hides are now open. Tree sparrows, yellowhammers, greenfinches, long-tailed tits, to name a few of the birds that are already making use of the feeding stations. Many birds come to the UK from the continent in winter. A lot of the blackbirds and robins that you see in winter have come from Europe to escape the colder, continental winter. Winter always brings in redwings and fieldfares, "winter thrushes", which feed on the hedgerow and garden berries. Other winter specialities are siskins, redpolls and, if we're lucky, waxwings. Kingfishers visit regularly; the Alex West Hide is the best place to spot them but you may also see one on the ponds in the Reserve, particularly the dipping pond.

You will need a key to get into the hides. They cost £5 and can be used for all the hides in Gateshead. If you want one, contact Gordon on 4138287.

Thanks to the Moorland Mousie Trust, the Exmoor ponies are back helping us maintain the reserve's biodiversity. Please do not feed them as it can make them ill and also makes it more likely that they will follow people. They will be here until around Christmas.

There are 33 nest boxes in the Reserve. 16 boxes were used by 16 pairs of tree sparrows. Seven pairs raised two broods each and two pairs raised 3 broods! Richard ringed 96 nestlings, one brood fledged before he could ring them. Blue tits raised 36 young and great tits 24. We think this indicates the importance both of the nest boxes but also the Reserve in providing enough food to sustain this many young birds. Thanks to the Dickinson Memorial Trust for the grant to buy 10 nest boxes (sadly one was stolen).

Richard will be ringing from the hides on the first Saturday of the month until April. He may be ringing at other times in the wider Reserve once the ponies have left. If you want to see birds really close up, go along to one of Richard's sessions. He'll be very happy to show you what ringing involves and answer any questions you might have.

The swift nest boxes on the Village Hall have still not attracted a swift. It

can take several years before swifts use artificial boxes so we'll keep trying. In the mean-time house sparrows, whose numbers are also falling fast, are making use of them.

We aim to maintain a balance between scrub, grassland, wetland and woodland by, among other things, scything and coppicing. If you would like to help contact Don on 07709820907.

By the time you read this you should have received an envelope asking for a donation to the Conservation Group. Our main expense is bird food. This winter prices are significantly higher. We've also had the cost of replacing the roof on the Woodland Hide and having to replace the feeders that were stolen in October. Any donations are much appreciated by the Group and the wildlife it supports.

Our bank details are:
Lloyds Bank
Sort code: 30-19-54
Account number: 01477367

Annual General Meeting

The Clara Vale Conservation Group AGM will be held on Monday 13 December in the Village Hall at 8pm. All welcome. Festive refreshments will be provided. **Gordon Pollinger**

Big Garden Birdwatch

Don't forget the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, 28-30 January. More information at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>. The Big Garden Birdwatch started in 1979 and has proven to be a valuable guide to what is happening to UK birds. Take part in your own garden or come along to the hides on Saturday 29th at 11 am and help us with the count.

WHAT'S ON IN THE VILLAGE HALL



Wishing
everyone a
merry
(and safe)
Christmas
and a
happy
(and healthy)
New Year

December

Village Breakfast and Stalls
Saturday 4th, 9-11.30am

Wreath making workshops
Sunday 5th, 11am-1pm and 2.30-4.30pm
£30 p/p all materials and refreshments included

Acropolis Greek Takeaway
Thursday 16th, 5-8pm

Conservation Group AGM
Monday 13th, 8pm

Christmas Lunch
Friday 17th, 12.30pm
Booking essential.
To order Turkey or Nut Roast (vegan)
ring Cate 07738 399666

**A Musical Evening
with Semibreve**
Saturday 18th, 7.30pm
Details to follow

Village Carols
Tuesday 21st, 6pm
In the Memorial Garden followed by
refreshments in the hall.

January

**RSPB Big Garden
Birdwatch**
Saturday 29th, 11am
Nature Reserve bird hides

Save the date

Wylam Winter Tales
comes to Clara Vale!
Friday 4 February
More details to follow

REGULARS

MONDAYS

N-Core Pilates 6-7pm
Clara Vale Voices 6.30-8pm

TUESDAYS

**Akasha Yoga & Therapies,
Dru Yoga** 9.30-11am
N-Core Post-Natal Pilates
1.30-2.30pm

WEDNESDAYS

Dog Club 8-9pm

THURSDAYS

Toddlers 9.30-11.30am
Iyengar Yoga with Sian
Thursdays 7-8.15pm

FRIDAYS

Barre 9.30-10.15am
N-Core Pilates 10.30-11.30am
Karate 6-8pm

(You can hire the hall for table tennis,
just get in touch!)

BOOKINGS

Book the spacious main hall for £7 per
hour. Use of outdoor space at the Village
Hall should be booked to ensure safety.
Email bookings@claravale.org.uk or
contact 07543 281 301. Thank you.

CLARA VALE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

Gill Hale, Chair,
8 East View, 0191 413 5435
William Coburn, Secretary
33 Bracken Way, Crawcrook
0191 4139761, 07960 016652
Steve Hilton, Treasurer
10 South View, 0191 413 1535
Martin Church
4 Edington Gardens
John Kelly
20 South View, 0191 413 3247
Veronika Richter
14 Maryside Place, 0191 413 1186
Ben Thomas
1 Edington Cottages
Mary Hughes
15 East View
Helen Haran
13 North View, 0191 4131973
Val Murray, Safeguarding Officer
'Norbreck', Stannerford Road
Kath Patton
3 Tyne View, 0191 4136542

KEYHOLDERS

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