

Case Study – Friends of Diamond Park

Introduction

WTSWW request from a previous WTSWW conservation volunteer to advise on setting up a group, primarily to manage Himalayan Balsam in The Diamond Park and encourage better management of the park for biodiversity. The group were trying to be informal but had not followed the correct procedure with the Ystradgynlais Town Council who own and manage the park. The aim was to formalise the group and set up a working relationship with Ystradgynlais Town Council to enable control of Himalayan Balsam, and work towards improving the management of the whole park for biodiversity and people.

The Project

At the initial meeting, advice was given to set up a constituted group with public liability insurance and contact Ystradgynlais Town Council to secure permission to work in the park. The advice was supported by providing links and contacts. To enable the group members to measure the improvement of biodiversity three training workshops were held. First aid equipment, tools, surveying equipment and FSC identification guides were provided. First Aid training was offered. Advice and support given to aid the development of a draft management plan for The Diamond Park which has been submitted to Ystradgynlais Town Council for discussion. A phase 1 habitat survey for The Diamond Park has been completed.

Project Outputs

Event	Volunteers trained	Species recorded
Himalayan Balsam Pull	8	
Botany intro	11	8
Bug Identification	10	20
Stream survey	8	16



Oak sapling

- 30+ trained volunteers to recognise Himalayan Balsam and distinguish from other plants and how to deal with the pulled plants.
- Health and Safety discussed and advice given to become constituted and get insurance, write risk assessments.
- 3 discovery days learn to identify species and record on the LERC app including Japanese Knotweed locations to pass on to the town council for treatment.
- Liaised with group and Ystradgynlais Town Council to develop working partnership.
- 3 meetings with the group committee to draft a management plan to identify where aspects of the park's management could be altered to increase biodiversity. Including 1 with a town councillor.
- Provided first aid kit, tools, FSC identification guides and survey equipment.

Project Outcomes summary

- A constituted group with committee and public liability insurance.
- Working relationship with Ystradgynlais Town Council.
- People empowered to pass on training to remove Himalayan balsam.
- Training/liaison has enabled participants to improve their habitat management.
- 30+ people have key skills and knowledge to identify and record a variety of species and to find other experts to extend their knowledge.
- A draft management plan submitted to Ystradgynlais Town Council.

Himalayan Balsam

Introduced as a garden plant in 1839 Himalayan Balsam soon escaped and became widespread along riverbanks and ditches. The plant has explosive seed pods which can spread 4 metres in every direction. Because the plant grows near water it is easily spread. Growing to at least 2 metres in height it out competes many native plant species and breaks up the soil structure with its shallow roots. It is now considered an invasive species, forming dense stands that are difficult to eradicate due to sheer numbers.



Pulling Himalayan Balsam



Invertebrate Discovery Day