

Improving the GLEDHOW VALLEY for nature and the community

In the last 5 years The Friends of Gledhow valley woods have raised more than £300,000 to invest in Nature Based solutions to Gledhow Beck, Gledhow Lake and the surrounding woodlands. All this work has been delivered in collaboration with our partners: Leeds City Council Climate, Energy & Green Spaces, Leeds Flood Risk Management, Wades Charity, Groundwork Yorkshire, Sweco Leeds, Local Councillors, Inner North East Community Committee and contractors Ebsford Environmental Ltd and The River Stewardship Company.

Work we have completed

Fascines or flow deflectors installed on the steep valley slopes help slow and disconnect water run off and retain sediment. The slopes have been planted with hazel, yew, bluebells and wild garlic to regenerate the woodland floor overtime.



Ponds & Wetlands

New ponds and wetlands are increasing the habitat available for freshwater wildlife such as newts, common toad, frogs, pond snails, bats, mayflies and damselflies and linking fragmented wildlife communities.



New wetland plans

We are planning to develop a new wetland area in Gledhow Valley Woods - opposite Hillside Court flats - this autumn. The area is currently dominated by invasive species including: pygmy bamboo, Japanese knotweed and Skunk Cabbage.

The Wetland area as it is currently



How the Wetland area might look in the future



We will work with four primary schools in Chapeltown, Harehills, Gledhow and Chapel Allerton to develop the new wetland as an outdoor learning resource. We would undertake activities such as pond dipping, nature walks, story-telling and practical conservation sessions.

Activity sessions will increase young people's knowledge and awareness of the areas nature and inspire them and their parents to become involved in its care and support.

Creating an Ark site for the native crayfish



We have worked with the Environment Agency to introduce the rare and endangered white-clawed crayfish into Gledhow Beck. The native crayfish is threatened by the non native signal crayfish, introduced in the 1970's from America. The signal crayfish carries a deadly fungal disease which is lethal to the native crayfish. Testing has shown that the fungal disease is not present in Gledhow Beck.

The introduction is being monitored closely and it is hoped that further native crayfish will be introduced over time.



Hedges

We have planted 2 km of new native hedgerows with the help of the local community. Hedges support a large diversity of flora and fauna and aid the movement of species, this will become increasingly important with the impact of climate change. Hedges make a great shelter and their flowers, berries and nuts are a vital food source for invertebrates, birds and mammals. Hedges also help prevent soil loss, reduce pollution, flooding and are an important carbon store.



Dead Hedges

Dead hedges are piles of branches and twigs arranged to form a barrier. Dead hedges have been installed to help protect vulnerable areas of woodland - preventing them from being trampled - and providing shelter for wildlife.



Creation of bunds

Silt has been removed to the sides of Gledhow lake and planted with native marsh and wetland species. These areas will provide much richer habitat for wildlife as they mature.

Revealing the hidden GLEDHOW BECK

When Gledhow valley road was built in 1926 almost half of the beck running through Gledhow valley woods was channelled underground.

Culverting has had a continuing adverse impact on both wildlife - little lives inside the dark concrete culvert- and the amenity value of Gledhow valley woods.

Many benefits would be gained from opening up the beck from the Gledhow lake outfall down to the Gipton Spa Bath House:

- Significantly adding to the visual attraction of the area.
- Providing valuable wetland/aquatic habitat and aiding species movement.
- Enhancing walking routes along the beck.
- Reducing flood risk.
- Reducing beck pollution.

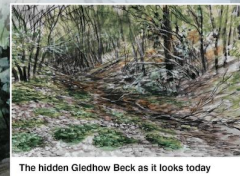
Other Schemes in Leeds

As Gledhow Beck reaches Leeds city centre (now named Sheepscar Beck) Leeds Civic Trust, with partners, are exploring the potential to open up the beck.



De-culverting the beck would be a complex and costly process - involving the co-operation of many different parties. Any scheme would likely need to be led by Leeds City Council working in partnership with a range of local community groups.

Tell us what you think - Please complete our survey!



The hidden Gledhow Beck as it looks today



Gledhow Lake The Culverted Beck



GVCAG

Active travel in the GLEDHOW VALLEY

Currently active travel along Gledhow valley Road is very difficult.

Neglect and lack of regular maintenance has meant that the roadside path is poor or nonexistent, particularly on the south side of the road for walkers and wheelers.

Cycling along Gledhow valley Road can also be hazardous with no dedicated cycle lane.



The Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods carry out maintenance of the roadside path.



Future image - Gledhow valley Road showing a dedicated cycle /walking lane. James McKay, Dreams of a Low Carbon Future.

Much more active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) in the Gledhow Valley and more widely would provide many benefits:

- Decrease road congestion
- Decrease air and noise pollution
- Improve public health and well-being
- Deliver economic benefits to both individuals and communities
- Create more sustainable links between local communities and green spaces

Possible improvements:

- A dedicated cycle and walking path along the south side of Gledhow valley Road.
- Regular maintenance and clearing of the path on both sides of Gledhow valley Road.
- Improvements to the path network within Gledhow valley woods to make them all weather paths and accessible to wheelers - where feasible.
- More effective enforcement of the speed limit along Gledhow Valley and more widely would prove many benefits.



The roadside path as it looks today, due to lack of maintenance and neglect.