




The Ranger Service




The Rangers have been looking after and developing Risley Moss since the early 1970s. They are responsible for the day to day running of the reserve, as well as planning woodland and mossland habitat maintenance schedules well into the future. They ensure that the wildlife flourishes and that the reserve offers the public a safe, pleasant and interesting place to visit. Dedicated to the conservation of Risley Moss, the Rangers work with Natural England and volunteers to protect and improve the ecology of the reserve whilst promoting bio-diversity through active management of the site.



The job of the ranger is extremely varied, interesting and challenging. No two days are ever the same and a variety of skills are required to undertake this demanding job. Duties include a whole array of different tasks ranging from practical site management, planning and delivering a lesson to school children or university students, being responsible for organising a large scale event or dealing with a huge variety of queries or requests from the general public. There are two rangers based at Risley Moss, but when necessary other Warrington Borough Council rangers can be brought in to assist with project work.




Planning is the key to managing the workload. Rangers write and follow management plans which help spread out the work over periods of several years to ensure all aspects are covered in a comprehensive fashion. Some jobs are undertaken on a daily basis such as patrolling, when the site is checked for safety and any litter or hazards are removed. Others can only be undertaken at certain times of the year. Spring and summer is a time for grass cutting, strimming and monitoring and recording the wildlife. Autumn and winter is when much of the practical management takes place. Sections of woodland are thinned out and mossland restoration takes place at this time, as it cannot be done during the spring and summer breeding seasons. At the end of the day rangers must write a daily log noting work achieved, highlighting any issues or notable events.



The rangers work closely with RIMAG (Risley Moss Action Group) organising and delivering the annual events programme. The range of events includes the annual open day 'Risley Moss Green Safari', craft workshops and guided walks around the reserve. Practical workdays are also undertaken with RIMAG and a range of other volunteer groups.



Higher Level Stewardship



Rangers are responsible for delivering the Natural England Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme which Risley Moss entered into in April 2011. This ten year scheme aims to support and improve internationally important and declining habitats such as peat bogs like Risley Moss. HLS involves complex environmental management and provides finance, expert technical leadership and support from Natural England's local advisors. The scheme involves building on and improving previous mossland re-wetting works. Corroded metal piling is being replaced by plastic and new bunds and water level controls are being installed. The results of the most recent work can already be seen in the main body of the mossland and in the nearby mini-moss project.



Risley Moss has achieved a Green Flag award since 2004. The Green Flag is a national standard for parks and open spaces to recognise and reward the best green spaces in the country. A comprehensive assessment of the site is undertaken by Green Flag examiners every year. The rangers must ensure that the site is well looked after throughout the year to maintain this prestigious accolade.